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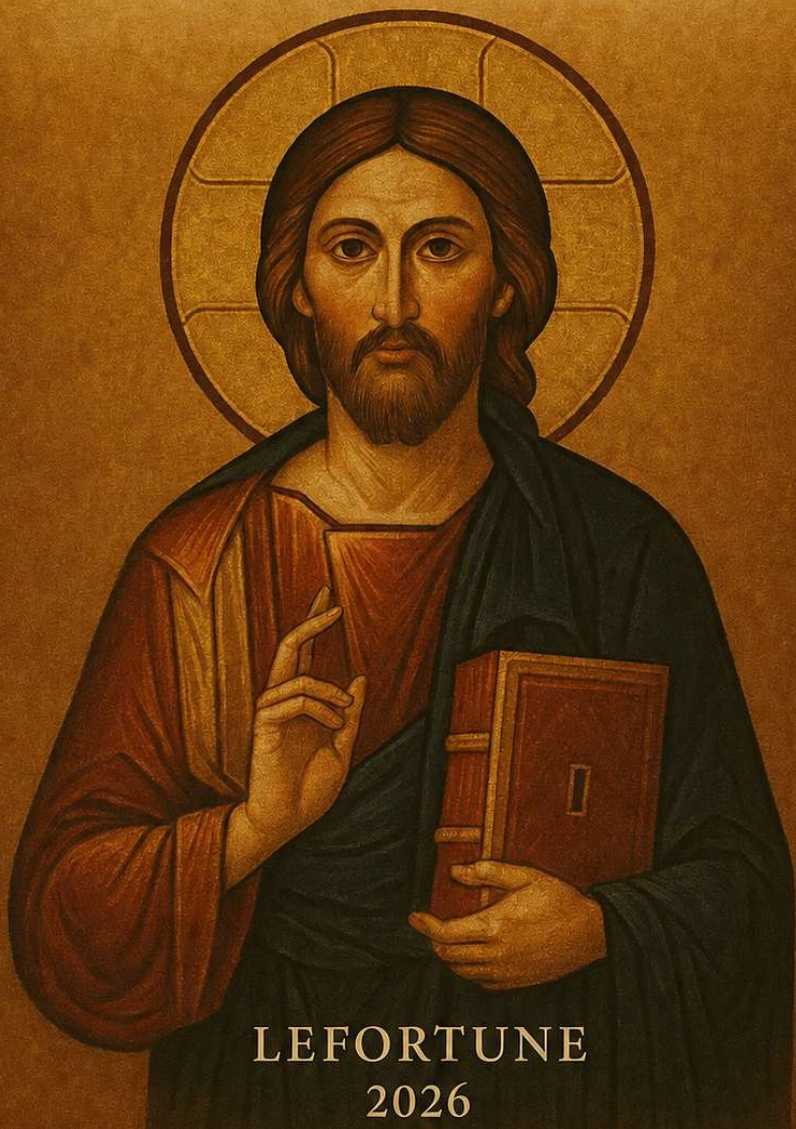


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CHRISTUS **SOLUS**

What happens to language when a Name cannot be replaced?

Christus Solus is not a book about belief. It is a study of how one Name alters the grammar of every sentence that dares to contain it. From Koine Greek to ecclesiastical Latin, from creeds to confessions, from verbs to articles, the Name *Christus* does not behave like any other noun. It does not describe. It reorganizes.

In this groundbreaking linguistic inquiry, Agustin V. Startari traces a formal pattern: wherever *Christus* appears, substitution fails, equivalence collapses, and the sentence loses neutrality. Grammar tightens. Predicates align. Scope narrows. This is not theological rhetoric. It is structural analysis. Drawing on ancient texts, syntactic markers, and the refusal of plural or apposition, *Christus Solus* exposes the Name not as a symbol, but as a grammatical operator. The result is a sentence that declares, not negotiates.

This book is written for readers who want clarity without reduction, doctrine without simplification, and language without metaphor. It challenges linguistic conventions, bypasses dogmatic filters, and opens a new path: reading Scripture as a structure shaped by one irreversible word.

One Name. No replacement. No equivalence. Only grammar, altered.

About the author

Agustin V. Startari is a linguist, author, and researcher in historical studies. His work explores the intersection of syntax, epistemic authority, and artificial language structures. He is the author of *Executable Power*, *The Grammar of Objectivity*, and *Grammars of Power*, and holds affiliations with the University of the Republic (Uruguay) and the University of Palermo (Argentina).

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This work aims to promote independent academic production and the dissemination of rigorous research in the field of Historical Sciences. The opinions expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the author.

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1. Praefatio - Against the Dissolution of the Name

Not every word is a name, and not every name reshapes form. In Christian usage, *Christus* may appear as a title or role, but something in its behavior resists substitution. This book begins from that resistance. The Name is not approached as a concept to explain, but as a force that alters clause structure. When *Christus* enters a sentence, syntactic paths shift. The change is not symbolic. It is formal. The Name stands where other nouns cannot. It does not describe. It rearranges.

Throughout the early texts, we do not ask what Christ means. We ask what His Name does to adjacent terms. This is not metaphor. This is pattern. Articles migrate, modifiers recede, predication overtakes identity frames. The predicate becomes the point of pressure. The Name holds that pressure by its position and by the selections it restricts.

Two rules guide the method. The first is non-substitution. When *Christus* is swapped for a role noun, the structure changes. Predicate options multiply or loosen. Scope breaks. The second rule is failure of the identity biconditional. "*Christus* = Y" implies a stable Y. If Y holds its grammar when the Name is introduced, the frame collapses. Form fails the equation.

This inquiry does not ask for devotion or belief. It stays within the bounds of grammar. It tracks order, clause compression, and the permissions that the Name removes or allows. Where *Christus* leads, verbs rise, lists compress, and modifiers become optional. Where a role noun leads, the sentence tends to seek support from scenes, categories, or context files.

The reading is accessible by simple tests. The swap test: replace the Name with a role and see whether the sentence destabilizes. The article test: imagine an article before the Name and note if the line tilts toward description. The end-stop test: place the Name at the close of a clause. If the sentence ends cleanly, it passes. If not, the role is likely operating as a class term.

This book rests on minimal pairs. Christ reigns and Christ is king. The former moves by act. The latter opens a class. Christ speaks and Christ is prophet. The first centers the verb. The second invites

frames of likeness. We preach Christ crucified contrasts with we preach a teacher crucified. The first declares and rests. The second asks for context. These are not stylistic variations. They are changes in structure.

Silence around the Name also carries force. Clauses often lack what would be required elsewhere. Determiners vanish, adjectives are absent, locatives drop away. Yet the sentence holds. The Name compresses what the clause must carry. The verb is no longer propped. It bears its own weight.

This book does not claim grammatical rules that bind Greek or Latin. It observes tendencies. In Greek, the Name often appears without the article in lines that act independently. With the article, the clause often shifts toward dependence. In Latin, *Christus* can stand without modifiers, unlike *magister* or *rex*. These roles require scaffolding. The Name does not. This difference is not thematic. It is mechanical.

The argument does not oppose doctrine. It obeys syntax. If the Name causes verbs to rise and supports to fall, then we read that effect. When the Name centers the line, traits are not needed. Order is. The claim is that grammar changes with the Name. We do not need more.

The phrase "Christ alone" serves only in this frame. It does not define a theology. It marks a syntactic boundary. The Name does not cohabit the center with roles. It is not a label to be attached. It shifts the structure when present. When the Name leads, the clause becomes linear, compressed, and resolved.

This project has clear limits. It does not construct frequency tables. It avoids technical jargon. It tracks scene by scene, clause by clause. It does not begin from theory. It begins from movement. Where one would expect identity, the clause turns to action. Where expansion might occur, the line holds. Where location or file would be expected, the line does without.

The method is repeatable. Read a short clause aloud. Add an article before the Name. Replace the Name with a role. Observe how the clause now asks for help. Then return. The point of firmness is where the Name stands. That firmness defines the approach.

This method is not a denial of meaning. It secures meaning inside sentence bounds. Once a sentence bears the Name, it shifts its own tolerances. It becomes a structure of limits. The power of the Name is not in what it represents. It is in what it does to order.

Three restrictions are set. First, the Name will not be treated as a floating title. Titles move by generality. The Name does not. Second, slogans are excluded. "Christ alone" is not a theological stance here. It names a difference in structure. Third, no equivalence to roles will be assumed. The line breaks under that weight.

The chapters that follow apply the same three tests. They read the figure, the pressure, the asymmetry. They observe where structure alters. They reject mystique and follow syntax. They state what it means to place the Name alone in a clause. They show what form follows when no other role can stay.

The final claim is the first. Not every word is a name. Not every name alters form. *Christus* does. The Name sets order, restricts replacement, compresses options, and leaves grammar changed. That is enough to justify a book. The rest is attention.

This reading applies formal linguistic criteria (ellipsis, article use, apposition, coordination) to early Christian texts without entering theological hermeneutics. The aim is structural. Not doctrinal. We follow grammar where it bends.

2. Ratio et Corpus - Method and Corpus

A claim about grammar must be answerable to texts. The preceding chapter stated what this study observes, that the Name *Christus* does not behave in a clause the way role nouns behave. The observation is worth nothing if it cannot be checked. This chapter states what is read, in which editions, under which conventions, and by which tests. It also states what would count as failure. A structural claim that cannot fail is not a structural claim. It is a preference wearing the clothes of analysis.

Four bodies of text are read. The first is the Greek of the earliest Christian documents, with attention to the Pauline letters and to the confessional formulae embedded in them. The second is the corpus conventionally called the Apostolic Fathers, above all Ignatius of

Antioch, the letter known as 1 Clement, Polycarp, and the Didache. The third is early Latin, principally Tertullian and Cyprian, with the Vulgate as a later fixed point and the Old Latin readings consulted where they are recoverable. The fourth is the group of external witnesses, Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny the Younger, Lucian, and Celsus as preserved in Origen's rebuttal.

A fifth body of text is read for a different purpose. Cicero, Caesar, Herodotus, Xenophon, and Plutarch are read as a control corpus. They supply the baseline behavior of role nouns in prose that has no interest in the Name at all. Without that baseline the argument of this book is circular. It is not enough to show that *Christus* completes a clause unaided. One must show that *rex*, *dux*, *magister*, *basileus*, and *didaskalos* ordinarily do not, in authors who had every reason to use them well.

The control corpus does a second kind of work. It sets the standard of what counts as normal Greek and normal Latin before Christian usage. If the behavior traced here were simply the behavior of proper names in general, the control corpus would show it: Caesar and Socrates would anchor clauses in the same way and with the same suppression of scaffolding. They do not, or they do so only in part, and the difference between a partial effect and a consistent one is the subject of the evidentiary chapters below.

Editions are fixed in advance so that readings can be checked. The Greek New Testament is cited from the twenty-eighth revised edition of Nestle-Aland¹. The Septuagint is cited from Rahlfs and Hanhart². The Latin Bible is cited from the Weber and Gryson Stuttgart Vulgate³. The Apostolic Fathers are cited from the Loeb edition, with Lightfoot consulted for the Greek text and for the older conjectures⁴. Tertullian and Cyprian are cited from the Corpus Christianorum

¹ *Novum Testamentum Graece*, ed. Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland et al., 28th rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

² *Septuaginta*, ed. Alfred Rahlfs, rev. Robert Hanhart (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006).

³ *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, ed. Robert Weber and Roger Gryson, 5th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007).

⁴ *The Apostolic Fathers*, ed. and trans. Bart D. Ehrman, 2 vols., Loeb Classical Library 24-25 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 5 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1889-1890).

Series Latina where volumes exist, and otherwise from Migne. Classical authors are cited from the Oxford Classical Texts unless noted.

Transliteration follows a single convention throughout. Greek is transliterated without diacritics except where a distinction is at stake: *Christos*, *basileus*, *didaskalos*, *kyrios*. Where the presence or absence of the article is the point under discussion, the article is marked in the transliteration itself, so that *ho Christos* and *Christos* are always distinguished on the page; the original script is reserved for the appendix, where the tested clauses are printed in full. Latin is given as printed in the cited edition, with classical orthography retained and medieval spellings noted where they affect the reading.

A further convention governs the Name itself. When *Christus*, *Christos*, or Christ is discussed as a word, it appears in italics. When the Name is used in an example clause, it appears in roman type as it would in the text under discussion. This distinction matters more than it may appear. Much of the confusion in the secondary literature about whether the Name is a title comes from failing to mark when a word is being used and when it is being examined.

The unit of analysis is the clause, understood as a finite verb with its arguments and immediate modifiers. Where a sentence contains several finite verbs, each is treated as a separate clause and the position of the Name relative to each is recorded. This is a narrow unit, and the narrowness is intentional. Claims about the paragraph, the passage, or the book are claims about rhetoric. Claims about the clause can be tested by anyone holding the same edition.

Three terms are used technically and must be defined. A role noun is a common noun that denotes a person by function within an institution or practice, and that ordinarily requires a determiner, a modifier, or contextual anchoring in order to fix its reference: *rex*, *propheta*, *magister*, *iudex*, and their Greek counterparts. Closure names the condition of a clause that terminates without requiring an added phrase to fix reference or supply a frame. Scaffolding names the added material a clause requires in order to reach closure: determiners, relative clauses, genitives of specification, locatives, and appositional phrases.

The first test is substitution. Take a clause in which the Name stands as subject or as the object of a verb of proclamation. Replace the Name with a role noun of the same case and number, changing nothing else. The clause is counted as destabilized if any of four things occurs. It now requires a determiner it did not require before. It now invites a relative clause specifying which member of the class is meant. It now leaves the reader to supply an antecedent from outside the clause. Or its predicate becomes semantically strained by the class the role noun carries.

The second test concerns the article. Where the Name appears anarthrous, the article is supplied and the resulting clause is examined. Where the Name appears with the article, the article is removed and the same examination follows. The test records whether the clause tilts toward description, whether the predicate weakens from assertion to attribution, and whether an appositional reading becomes available that was not available before. The Greek article carries the weight here⁵; the English definite article is a rough instrument and is used only illustratively.

The third test is position. The Name is placed at the end of a clause and the clause is read for completeness. The same clause is then read with a role noun in final position. The test records whether the clause comes to rest or whether it leans forward for a specifying phrase. This test is the most sensitive to genre and the least sensitive to language, which makes it useful as a cross-check rather than as primary evidence.

A fourth test is added here for the evidentiary chapters. It concerns coordination. The Name is joined to another substantive by a connective and the resulting structure is examined for parity. The test records whether the two terms hold equal syntactic weight, whether the connective survives, and whether the second term is reduced to a consequence or a specification of the first. Coordination is the most

⁵ On the syntax of the article see F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and rev. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), sections 249-276; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 206-290. The classic statement of the problem for predicate nouns is E. C. Colwell, "A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 52 (1933): 12-21.

informative of the four tests because it is the one structure in which a term cannot conceal an asymmetry.

This study does not offer frequency tables, and the reason is not modesty. A count of anarthrous instances of *Christos* across a corpus would look like evidence and would not be evidence, because the count would have to make prior decisions about which instances are grammatically comparable, and those decisions are the whole argument. What is offered instead is enumerated loci. Each claim in the chapters that follow is attached to passages that can be opened and read. A reader who finds the reading wrong can say where.

The English minimal pairs used throughout this book require a warning. Christ reigns against Christ is king, and their many variants, are heuristics. They let a reader without Greek or Latin feel the difference that the evidentiary chapters document in the source languages. They are not the evidence. English has no case system, its article behaves differently from the Greek article, and its word order is comparatively rigid. Any conclusion that rests only on an English pair is provisional and is marked as such.

The most serious objection to this book is that the pattern it traces belongs to genre rather than to the Name. Creeds are brief. Liturgical formulae are brief. Acclamations suppress modifiers whatever their subject. If the compression documented here is simply what creedal Greek does, then the Name has been credited with the work of a form. This objection is taken seriously enough to organize a chapter. The control for it is straightforward: creedal and liturgical clauses with subjects other than the Name are examined for the same compression, and the results are reported whether or not they favor the thesis.

Four outcomes would refute the argument of this book. First, if role nouns in the control corpus anchored clauses unaided at rates comparable to the Name. Second, if *Christos* and *Christus* regularly carried stacked descriptive modifiers without loss of clause integrity. Third, if the compression documented here appeared with equal strength in creedal clauses whose subject is not the Name. Fourth, if the pattern dissolved in translation into languages whose article

systems differ from Greek. Each of these is testable, and each is tested in what follows.

Two limits of evidence must be stated at the outset. The first is manuscript variation. The presence or absence of the article before *Christos* is precisely the kind of feature that scribes normalized, and the apparatus of any critical edition will show variants at exactly the points where this study wants stability. Where a reading is contested, this is noted and the argument is not permitted to rest on it.

The second limit is more interesting, because it is itself a datum. In the manuscript tradition the Name is not ordinarily written out. It appears as a contracted form under a horizontal stroke, one of the group of abbreviations known as *nomina sacra*⁶. This practice complicates the analysis of the article, since the contraction sits in a visual field of its own and scribal habits around it are not uniform. It also constitutes independent evidence for the argument. The Name received a graphic treatment given to no role noun. The scribes were doing at the level of the page what this book describes at the level of the clause.

The order of what follows is therefore not arbitrary. Chapters three through eight are analytic. They describe the behavior of the Name in the clause and build the vocabulary the later chapters use. Chapters nine through fourteen are evidentiary. They read the Pauline corpus, the Greek fathers, the Latin witnesses, the creedal and liturgical material, the external and hostile sources, and the early translations, in that order. Chapter fifteen states the objections and the cases that resist the thesis. Chapter sixteen draws the conclusion that the evidence will support and no more than that.

The method has one governing rule. Where the texts do not support a claim, the claim is withdrawn rather than softened. A softened claim is worse than a withdrawn one, because it keeps the appearance of evidence while giving up the substance. The chapters that follow will be found to withdraw in several places. Those

⁶ Ludwig Traube, *Nomina Sacra: Versuch einer Geschichte der christlichen Kuerzung* (Munich: Beck, 1907); Larry W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 95-134.

withdrawals are part of the argument. They mark where the pattern ends, and a pattern with a known edge is a pattern one can use.

3. Solus in Nomine

The Name *Christus* did not begin as doctrine. It first appeared in language, in speech and invocation, and it changed how clauses behaved around it. Most role nouns in early Christian texts follow predictable patterns. They take articles, modifiers or appositions. *Christus* often does not. Sentences shift to accommodate it. When the Name is present, the structure does not remain unchanged.

"Christ alone" in these pages names a behavior of language, not a slogan. The singularity of the Name is not a statement of doctrine. It is a grammatical event. When *Christus* is replaced by a role noun such as teacher or prophet, the sentence changes. Predicate selection loosens. Clause scope becomes unstable. The loss is formal, not thematic.

In early Latin, *Christus* often appears without qualifiers, and the clause stands without expansion. Other nouns like *magister* or *rex* seldom appear unqualified. They require determiners, pronouns or context to function syntactically. With *Christus*, that scaffolding is absent, and yet the sentence completes itself.

Classical usage confirms the contrast. In Latin prose, nouns such as *rex*, *magister*, or *dux* seldom anchor a clause unaided. Cicero rarely places *rex* without modifiers or determiners—phrases like *magnus rex* or *ille rex iustus* mark the norm. Even when deployed for rhetorical effect, these role nouns demand orientation. In Caesar's *Commentarii*, *dux* typically arrives with specification: *dux exercitus nostri*, *ille dux quem...* They are categories, not centers. Their clause requires a frame.

In Greek as well, predicate-bearing names like *basileús* or *didáskalos* do not operate autonomously. Herodotus and Xenophon rarely leave *basileús* unqualified; it comes with lineage, region, or deed—*basileús Lydiaios*, *basileús ho Kroisos*. In pedagogical contexts, *didáskalos* behaves similarly: *ho didáskalos tón paídōn*, or in Plutarch, *Sokratēs ho didáskalos*. The article and modifiers carry much of the clause's stability.

By contrast, *Christos* in early texts often appears anarthrous, stripped of title logic, and still completes the clause. The omission is not a lack; it is a structure. While role nouns summon taxonomy, the Name induces closure. No *qui?* or *tis?* need follow. It is this departure from classical syntactic dependency that marks *Christus* not as a referent, but as a grammatical operator—what we identify in this study as a normative syntax that reorders the clause around it.

In Greek, article usage around *Christos* shows tendencies, not fixed rules. The noun often appears anarthrous in independent clauses, and this often correlates with compression of predicate and modifiers. When the article is present, the Name tends to appear in descriptive or subordinate frames. These patterns vary by context, but they support the view that *Christos* behaves as a grammatical center, not a category member.

Texts often prefer predicate over equation. Instead of "Christ is king," we find "Christ reigns." Instead of "Christ is truth," we find "Christ speaks," or "Christ has come." The predicate is not a label. It is an action reordered by the Name. The identity clause gives way to transformation. The effect is not symbolic. It is structural. *Christus* behaves as a nucleus. It selects what can follow. It avoids alignment with role nouns. It completes the clause without expansion. It resists exchange and equivalence. The Name does not share a class. It enters grammar and leaves it changed.

Read a brief proclamation and watch the shift. We preach Christ crucified. There is no article and there is no second term. If we try a swap, we preach a teacher crucified, the clause sags. The verb that carried a declaration turns into a report. The center moves away from the Name and lands on a role that asks for context. The sentence now wants a reason, a place, a time, a purpose. The earlier line did not ask for those supports. The Name carried the weight by position.

Action shows the same preference. Christ reigns. No role is needed. The predicate holds. If we try the parallel identity clause, Christ is king, we step into a structure that invites a list. Once the noun king is present, there is room for other roles to stand beside it. The clause begins to manage comparisons. The earlier line avoided

that path by keeping the verb at the center. The verb does not invite a list. It orders the sentence and moves on.

Speech follows this pattern. Christ speaks. The line is simple. It does not need a frame to hold the act. If we attempt Christ is prophet, we cross into an identity that demands measures of likeness. Which prophet. Which traits. Which tradition. The clause leans away from the text in front of us and toward a catalog beyond it. The first line held the act in place. The second asks for a dossier.

Negation reveals the same difference, more sharply than most constructions. *Christ does not yield* is not only a theological assertion. It is a syntactic limit. The line holds its boundary without explanation. The clause finishes as a declaration, not as an argument. The verb acts directly. The subject requires no clarification. The structure invites no list. The Name draws the line and leaves it unbroken.

Now test a substitution. *A prophet does not yield*. At first glance, the structure may seem parallel. Yet the semantic load of *prophet* demands resolution: which prophet, under what conditions, and compared to whom? The sentence becomes porous. It opens to interpretation not through deep assertion but through categorical implication. The role noun, even in negation, reactivates the group from which it draws its meaning. Instead of a closed assertion, the clause becomes an invitation to compare, to qualify, or to dispute.

This contrast reveals two types of boundaries. One is set by positional force. The other by classification. The Name enacts closure. The role invites reconsideration. When *Christ* negates, grammar halts. When the role negates, grammar continues to branch.

Even in Greek, the anarthrous form *Christos ouk anistatai* preserves the closure. It does not suggest a representative of a class. It defines the act by denying alternatives. In Latin, *Christus non cedit* concludes with full weight. If the noun *propheta* takes the same verb, as in *propheta non cedit*, the reader begins to search for reference points. Is this Elijah? Is it Moses? What lineage allows the claim?

The Name shortens the path to closure. Negation becomes terminal. The verb retains its integrity without the support that role nouns usually require. The point is not doctrinal. It is grammatical. When the Name is present, the clause ends differently.

Commands show the scope of the center. Follow Christ. The imperative attaches to the Name and needs nothing else. If we change it to follow the teacher, the command enters a field that must define who the teacher is, which teacher is in view, which teacher has the right to be followed. The command becomes a proposal. The earlier command was already complete.

Vocatives carry the same weight. O Christ. The address stands by itself. O prophet, O king, O teacher will usually reach for a second phrase that clarifies the context. The role is open. The Name is closed. A full stop feels sufficient after the Name. After the role, the line prefers a comma and a phrase that follows.

Coordination makes the center visible. Christ comes and heals. The two verbs sit well under one point. Try the role form, a healer comes and heals, and the clause strains because the first verb duplicates the role rather than adding motion. With the Name, two verbs can line up without redundancy. The Name defines a space in which several acts can happen without friction.

Apposition exposes the same tension. Jesus the prophet reads smoothly because a role can sit beside a proper name and help it. Jesus Christ is not the same pattern. The line tightens. The Name does not stand as a helper at the side. It stands as a center that the line accepts or resists. Insert the article and write Jesus the Christ, and the clause tends to describe. It leans toward traits and toward reasons that justify the title. Without the article, Jesus Christ reads like a hinge. The clause turns on it. With the article, the clause explains it.

Consider short reports that name an act and end. Christ heals the man. The sentence closes. If we swap, the healer heals the man, the sentence presses us to know which healer, and then to compare with other healers. The role has opened a door to a list. The Name closed it by carrying the act itself.

Roles can appear near the Name without taking the center. Christ the Lord is one. The role word does not carry the clause. It sits within a frame that the Name has already set. The Name tends to absorb the role, not the other way around. The Name holds the layers together and sets their order.

Compression can be felt in the length of a clause. Christ has come can carry a paragraph of consequence without any extra word. The same is not true of a line that begins with a role, the messiah has come. That line invites background and tests. The Name did not invite them. It invited action that follows. Clauses on the Name point forward. Clauses on a role lean sideways toward explanation.

Adjectives confirm the difference. Christ speaks plainly keeps the modifier with the act. The teacher speaks plainly drifts toward describing the sort of teacher. With the Name, the adjective stays with the action. With the role, the adjective slides toward class.

Temporal adverbs follow the same gravity. Christ now forgives holds a narrow present. A prophet now forgives pulls toward habit and frame. The Name lets the adverb stay on the act. The role moves the adverb toward general time.

Prepositions can be read without technical terms. In Christ functions as a small domain marker. It can be read as a switch that tells the reader which words belong together. If we replace the Name with a role, in the teacher, the phrase never settles in this way. It asks for a school, a room, a set of rules. The Name accepts simple in-phrases and turns them into centers. The role does not accept them without constructed context.

The Name can also stand at the end of a clause and still close it. We have seen Christ ends cleanly because the verb holds and the Name fixes the end. We have seen a prophet seems to be waiting for a phrase that will say what kind, or why this matters. The Name ends the line. The role begins a file.

Conjunctions behave differently near the Name. When a clause begins with the Name and adds *and*, the second clause often inherits its shape from the first. *Christ heals and forgives* reads as a single frame with two actions. The syntax closes as one unit. There is no need to interpret the second verb as a new claim. The clause moves forward without pause because the Name anchors both actions.

Now try the structure with a role. *A healer heals and forgives* does not produce the same effect. The first verb reinforces the role, while the second drifts from the original frame. The sentence begins to split. It

opens the door to interpretation: is the second act part of the same role, or is it additional? The structure becomes additive, not cohesive.

The difference lies in grammatical anchoring. The Name binds the verbs to a single motion. The role separates them unless a phrase steps in to restore unity. Where the Name appears, coordination comes naturally. Where a role appears, it often demands justification or structure to keep the sentence whole.

Silence is part of the pattern. Writers sometimes leave out place or time because the Name and the verb make them less urgent. The omission is not a flaw. It is a sign that the Name has set the scope. A line on the Name can work without markers that other lines need to stand. Add place and time to such a line and it still holds. Remove them from a role line and it feels incomplete.

Possessives make the contrast clear. Christ's people stands without a second anchor. The Name makes the possessive enough. The teacher's people raises questions about which group and what link defines them. The Name owns by creating a place in language. The role owns by borrowing from an institution.

These checks are not legal rules. They are habits that appear across pages. They keep attention on what can be seen in the sentence. Two steps are usually enough. Place the Name near a verb and see whether the clause closes without added parts. Then replace the Name with a role and see whether the clause now wants support. If it does, the difference belongs to form.

A short confession shows how lists behave. *Christ forgives sins and debts and enemies.* The line carries three objects under one act, and the clause remains intact. There is no tension between the objects. The verb extends evenly across the list. Each item belongs within the same frame of action. The Name holds the list together by anchoring the verb.

Now replace the Name with a role. *A judge forgives sins and debts and enemies.* The structure begins to strain. The first object, *sins*, may already seem ill-suited. A legal role like *judge* rarely encompasses moral or spiritual offenses. *Debts* may seem appropriate, but *enemies* pulls the frame further away. The role noun introduces a set of expectations,

and the list begins to fracture. Each item must be weighed against what the role typically permits.

The Name avoids this friction. It does not argue with the assumptions that accompany a category. A role noun brings with it a network of traits, expectations and institutional baggage. It carries semantic dependencies that must be resolved within the sentence or by reference to external frameworks. The Name does not carry such demands. It binds the verb to its objects by occupying the structural center of the clause. The force of the sentence does not derive from the descriptive weight of the subject, but from the positional authority of the Name itself. The action holds because the Name supplies closure. It does not require supplementation.

When the subject is a role, the action is constantly evaluated against the limits of that role. Forgiving sins, forgiving debts and forgiving enemies each reflect on the character of the actor. If the actor is *Christ*, the sentence resolves into a unified act. If the actor is *a judge*, the sentence splinters. The reader is compelled to decide whether a legal figure can or should extend forgiveness across such diverse domains. The role triggers a negotiation. The Name does not. It asserts its frame, and the list folds into that single operation.

Relative clauses confirm the same structure. Take the sentence *The man who follows Christ*. The clause completes its task. There is no question about which Christ is meant, or why this act of following requires further qualification. The clause closes because the Name resolves the referent. The subject of the main clause receives a precise orientation. The relative clause introduces an act tied directly to the Name, and that is sufficient to fix the reference.

Now shift to a role noun. *The man who follows the teacher*. The reader is drawn toward a second layer of explanation. The clause seems to ask for something more. *That he taught in the temple. That he spoke with authority. That he belonged to a specific tradition*. The role noun cannot resolve the clause on its own. It prepares for a frame, a history, a context. The difference is not stylistic. It is syntactic. The clause formed around the Name is closed. The clause formed around the role is open.

This contrast persists regardless of the identity of the role. Whether the noun is teacher, prophet, master or king, the role implies a surrounding set of comparisons and conditions. It is not a grammatical nucleus but a placeholder within a typology. The Name, by contrast, breaks from typology. It does not sit in a list. It sets its own coordinates, and those coordinates close the line.

The technical difference lies in resolution. With the Name, the referent is fixed internally. The clause contains everything it needs. With the role, the referent is deferred. The clause leans outward toward prior knowledge, institutional definitions or theological background. One grammar completes. The other gestures. One line finishes. The other opens a door.

This section, like the others, does not make claims about holiness or doctrine. It observes how structure behaves. The presence of the Name reconfigures what the sentence requires to hold. Roles distribute the weight of meaning across context. The Name carries that weight alone, and the grammar follows.

Questions also separate the paths. Who is Christ can be answered by what the Name does in the sentences that follow. Who is the teacher is unlikely to be settled by the next sentence alone. It will draw on an outside series that defines the role. A page built on the Name can move by acts and remain tight. A page built on a role moves by categories and risks drift.

The claim does not ignore places where titles occur. Titles can serve a purpose. The point is limited. When the Name stands at the center of the clause, the title frame usually weakens. When a title stands at the center, the clause usually seeks support. The difference is not about holiness. It is about how words find order.

Readers can practice with simple prompts. Place the Name as subject with a verb that acts, then read the line aloud. Add an article to the Name in your head and note whether the line now asks to explain the category. Replace the Name with a role and see whether the verb keeps its force or slides toward report. Return to the original and note what stayed strong without help. The exercise keeps attention on structure, not on labels.

Two final observations help anchor the section in form rather than theme. The first concerns the shift from identity to predication. When the Name appears at the center of the clause, sentences tend not to declare what Christ *is*, but instead what Christ *does*. The line does not build equivalence between subject and category. It builds direction through action. Instead of stating that Christ is truth or king or prophet, the sentence moves directly to what Christ speaks, does, or commands. This shift preserves the structure. The clause remains tight because it does not borrow support from outside categories. The Name gives the sentence an internal resolution. It completes itself without reverting to frames of identity.

The second observation concerns how the Name stabilizes coordination. When two or more verbs follow the Name, they do not compete for focus or require explanation. Christ heals and forgives does not produce friction between the two acts. The sentence accepts them both under a single center. The same applies to modifiers and prepositional phrases. An adjective attached to the verb retains its force. A preposition keeps its link to the act. These elements do not drift toward describing a type of figure, because the Name does not allow that drift. With a role noun, each additional element tends to pull toward a frame. With the Name, the additions align and hold.

Both patterns are formal. They do not depend on doctrine or theme. They can be tested by substitution and by examining closure. The Name keeps predicates stable and lets the sentence end without scaffolding. The clause does not sag. It does not ask for what is absent. The order holds because the Name governs it. These are not metaphors. They are operations of grammar. And they can be seen, line by line, wherever the Name stands.

"*Christ alone*" remains the summary, but its use here is grammatical rather than doctrinal. It does not isolate a figure for theological affirmation. Instead, it draws attention to the behavior of the Name within the sentence. The emphasis is not on belief but on function—on the changes that occur in syntax when *Christus* stands at the center. The Name does not coexist with role nouns in an equal frame. It does not share structural ground. When *Christus* takes the core position, the sentence shows consistent marks that can be recognized: verbs

hold their scope, lists contract, and additional supports become unnecessary.

These traits do not require interpretation. They require attention. Once the marks appear across different texts, the reader does not need argument. The grammar itself has already established the claim. The presence of *Christus* changes the sentence through structure, not meaning. That change is observable in the clause's composition, in how it begins and ends, and in how its elements respond to the Name. The sentence holds not because of what *Christus* signifies but because of what the Name does to language.

4. *Figura et Singularitas*

The early Christian world knew many kinds of names. There were prophets, priests, kings, messengers, scribes, teachers and martyrs. Each had its place in speech, and each followed a known pattern. Names marked roles. Titles allowed movement across categories. The language accommodated them. *Christus* did not.

What set the Name apart was not its meaning, but its refusal to behave like others. It did not circulate with the same flexibility. It did not borrow structure from familiar patterns. Where prophet could be attributed, applied, or translated, *Christus* imposed its own grammar. It resisted framing. It refused secondary roles. It did not blend. It stood.

This singularity does not come from the word itself. The Greek *christos* was, in ordinary use, an adjective. It meant anointed. It could apply to objects, to priests, even to foreigners. But when the word becomes a Name, something in the sentence changes. What once marked status now marks a break. Instead of functioning as a descriptor, it freezes the clause. Verbs are pulled into new positions. Modifiers fall away. Articles disappear.

The same shift occurs in Latin. The term *christus* is treated not as a class label but as a fixed point. The sentence bends to its position. When used with titles like *rex* or *filius Dei*, the Name comes first, without need of transition. Other nouns require construction. They depend on syntax to give them function. *Christus* does not. It creates structure where it stands. This is what gives the Name its figure. Not a visual image, not a symbol, but a unit that orders. It is the figure that reorganizes. It does not describe identity. It establishes relation. When *Christus* appears in a line of text, the roles around it do not clarify Him. They are clarified by Him.

That order cannot be reversed. *Christus* is not one among many titles. It does not enter as an option. It does not accept parallelism. Sentences that try to list Him with others, prophet, priest, king, lose balance. The roles flatten. The Name does not. It stays distinct, not because it is lifted above the others by force, but because it operates differently.

This operation does not need to be defended by theology. It can be observed in how language behaves. The Name interrupts coordination. It redirects apposition. It shortens lists. Where a sentence could have symmetry, *Christus* produces asymmetry. The symmetry is not forbidden. It simply does not hold.

That is the singularity traced here. Not an idea of uniqueness, not a claim of rank, but the structural fact that no other term in the early corpus behaves in the same way. Others appear, others return, others combine. *Christus* stands apart. It makes combinations unstable. It shortens what would be extended. It fixes what would be relative.

To speak of figure is not to imagine a shape. It is to track the work a Name does to the space around it. The singularity is not conceptual. It is grammatical. The term does not share position. It does not wait to be defined. It defines what surrounds it by how it enters.

This is not the solitude of silence. It is the solitude of syntax. *Christus* belongs to no equivalence frame. It creates the frame. It does not answer to structure. It produces one. Where other names fit inside language, *Christus* gives it a new shape.

Begin with a simple contrast. Christ reigns. Christ is king. Both can be read. They do not do the same work. The first holds the line by the verb. It closes cleanly. The second invites a class and a comparison. Once king enters, other roles stand near it. The clause opens to a list. The figure dissolves into types. The singularity recedes.

Now try another pair. Christ speaks. Christ is prophet. The first line carries action without borrowing a frame. The second line walks toward measures of likeness and schools of interpretation. Which prophet. Which traits. Which history. The sentence starts to lean on what is not on the page. The figure steps back to make room for a file. The singularity thins.

These are not tricks. They are basic tests that expose where the figure stands. A figure, in this sense, is the point that gathers and orders. When the Name stands as figure, verbs draw near and sit under it. When a role stands in its place, verbs pull away and look for supports. The difference is visible in what the next sentence must do.

After a line on the Name, the next sentence can move to another act. After a line on a role, the next sentence explains or narrows.

Apposition makes the point in a different key. Jesus the prophet reads with ease because a role sits beside a proper name as a helper. Jesus Christ does not do the same job. The line tightens. The Name is not a helper at the side. It is a center. Insert the article and write Jesus the Christ, and the clause slides toward description. The article starts a path that asks for traits. Without the article, Jesus Christ reads like a hinge. The clause turns on it. The singularity is not in the article. It is in the center that refuses to be absorbed.

Coordination also shows the figure at work. Christ comes and heals. Two verbs sit under one center without friction. A healer comes and heals strains because the first verb duplicates the class rather than adding motion. When the Name holds the center, several acts travel under one cover. The figure holds them in line. When a role holds the center, each act competes with the class that has already told the reader what to expect. The clause widens and loses pressure.

Negation does not break the pattern. Christ does not yield. The line closes with a clean boundary. A prophet does not yield starts a debate about exceptions, contexts and types. The figure states a limit. The role negotiates a policy. The singularity does not rest on severity. It rests on the ability to close a line without foreign parts.

Vocatives carry the same mark. O Christ is enough. The address closes and does not require an extra phrase. O king, O prophet, O teacher often reach for a second unit to fix a scene. The role is open. The Name is closed. The figure produces a stop. The role invites an extension.

Prepositions make the behavior visible without grammar terms. In Christ works as a small center. It can gather nouns and verbs into one space. In the teacher does not settle in this way. It looks for a room, a school, a set of rules. The Name turns a short phrase into a domain. The role turns a short phrase into an address that needs an office.

These observations do not deny variation. They note tendencies strong enough to guide a reading. The singularity is steady in its effects even where the surface shifts. There are clauses where the Name appears with an article. There are lines where a title is near.

The figure holds when the Name keeps the center and when verbs point forward rather than sideways into description. The singularity holds where identity frames step back and predication carries the weight.

Singularity can be traced in time. Clauses on the Name often speak in present or simple past with no scaffold. Christ has come. Christ forgives. Christ will come. The verb sits close to the Name and to the object. Clauses on a role tend to pull tense into custom and office. The messiah has come pushes readers to a calendar and to a set of expectations that are not on the page. The Name keeps time near the act. The role pulls time toward a program.

Singularity can be traced in space. Lines on the Name can omit place without losing shape. Christ stood. Christ sat. Christ went out. The omission feels chosen. The figure has already set the scope. Lines on a role request a stage. A priest stood asks for a temple or a rite. A judge sat asks for a court. This is not because roles are empty. It is because roles belong to systems. The Name belongs to the line that holds it.

Singularity can be traced in silence. Near the Name, adjectives fall away. If they remain, they sit with the verb, not with the Name. Christ speaks plainly ties the adverb to the act. The teacher speaks plainly begins to suggest a type of teacher. The figure keeps words on task. The role draws words into description.

Singularity can be traced in lists. The Name can cross three objects without strain. Christ forgives sins and debts and enemies holds because the verb binds all three under one center. A role crosses the same list with resistance. A judge forgives sins and debts and enemies meets a file of expectations that start to split the line. The figure keeps the list inside one act. The role divides it among rules.

At times the figure appears most clearly in what a line refuses to carry. There are verses and formulas that do not add a why or a how. They do not need to. The Name sets the order of words in such a way that the clause can stand without props. This is not a poetic effect alone. It is a structural fact. The singularity is a restraint that keeps the sentence from swelling.

Consider how questions behave. Who is Christ can be answered by what the Name does in the next lines. Who is the teacher will almost always call for a description that runs outside the page. The first question takes form as its guide. The second question looks for a catalog. The figure prefers the next act. The role prefers the next paragraph of context.

Some readers will want an image for figure. The book avoids images for this reason. Images borrow from sight. The claim here belongs to order. A figure in this sense is a point of grammar that can be found and tested. It is a center that asks other words to report to it. It does not need an emblem. It needs only the proof that the sentence stays whole without support when the Name stands in place.

This has a quiet consequence for how belief is held in words. A figure can be public. It can be read by anyone with the text in front of them. It does not demand an inner state. It calls for attention to what a line does. The singularity lives at that level. It is the same for the reader who prays and for the reader who only studies. Both can see that the Name does not behave like a role. Both can see that the line reduces to what it must carry and no more.

There is value in slow repetition. Read Christ comes. Read it again with an article before the Name in your head. Read it again with a role in place of the Name. The three lines feel different. The first closes. The second tilts to description. The third leans outward to a system. The differences show that the figure is not an idea in the mind. It is a structure in the words.

The singularity also shapes how pairs behave. Christ heals and teaches works as one movement. Each verb keeps its edge. A teacher heals and teaches feels like a line that checks itself. It asks whether teaching and healing belong together in the type. The figure removes that worry. It lets actions live side by side under one center.

Even small particles submit to the figure. Now, again, already, still. With the Name they cling to the act. Christ already reigns is a claim about the verb. With a role they slide toward a program. The king already reigns prompts a path into stages and rivals. The figure keeps the adverb small and sharp. The role turns it into a marker of policy.

None of this requires a new jargon. The book avoids new terms because the claim is plain. The Name does what other words do not do. It stands where others cannot stand without help. It gives weight to verbs. It reduces the appetite for lists. It stands at the front or the end of a clause and comes to rest without extra parts. That is figure. That is singularity.

The chapter does not need to prove more than this, that the behavior repeats. If the behavior repeats, it is part of how the texts work. If it is part of how the texts work, then readers can rely on it when they read. They can choose the line that keeps the Name as the center and refuse the drift toward categories that remove the pressure of the clause. This is not a rule to police writing. It is a way to keep the line faithful to how it was built.

There are places where the figure is tested and found again. When the Name is paired with Lord or with Son, the center remains with the Name. The added word does not take the clause away from action. It sits within a frame already set. Where the pattern is reversed, and a role leans over the Name, the line becomes a chain of traits. The singularity fades. The sentence moves from act to file.

Readers can trust what they see here. They do not need to hold all the languages at once. Translations carry enough of the pattern to make the point. A clause that ends cleanly on the Name makes the same demand in any language. A clause that breaks into supports reads like a clause about a role in any language. The figure travels because it is built into the order of words, not into the historical weight of a single term.

Singularity has a final mark worth naming. It does not isolate for the sake of isolation. It isolates to make space for relation. When the Name stands, relation is established by the act, not by the category. People are gathered to the verb, not to the file. The figure does not close a circle around itself. It opens a path that others can enter without having to carry a title with them. That is why the chapter speaks of figure and not of emblem. That is why it speaks of singularity and not of exclusivity of rank.

The chapter ends where it began. The early world had roles and titles that the language could carry from one sentence to another.

They were useful. They allowed movement and comparison. The Name did not travel that way. It stood where it was placed and asked the sentence to form around it. It did not join a list. It did not wait for a frame. It was the frame that others entered. This is the singularity the pages have traced. Not a theory of what the Name means in itself, but a record of what the Name does to the words that stand near it. The figure is the order it makes. The singularity is the way it holds.

5. *Christus non est Titulus*

Titles are designed to carry meaning across contexts. They label a position, a role, a recognized type. A title identifies someone by function. In language, it allows generalization. "A king," "a teacher," "a prophet," these terms can move from one sentence to another without resistance. They retain their shape. They tolerate replacement. That is their purpose.

Christus does not function this way. Although it is often treated as a title in modern readings, its behavior in the early texts resists the structure of titulature. It does not generalize. It does not align. It does not leave the sentence unchanged. Where titles enable substitution, the Name *Christus* interrupts it. It stops the flow of roles and reverses their logic.

This can be seen in how the Name resists apposition. Most titles allow expansion. One can say "Jesus the prophet," "Jesus the teacher," "Jesus the Son of David," and the clause will absorb the structure. With *Christus*, the same pattern often weakens. "Jesus Christ" does not behave like "Jesus the Christ" in Greek. The article often correlates with a more descriptive frame, and the clause becomes less operative. The more one tries to treat *Christus* as a title, the more the sentence loses tension. The Name prefers to act on the line rather than be slotted into it.

The difference lies in direction. A title is applied. A Name like *Christus* is not applied to Jesus from the outside. It generates its own grammatical alignment. That is why in the earliest confessions, the Name does not appear as a conclusion. It appears as an origin. The sentence does not move toward *Christus* as if identifying a role. It

begins with *Christus*, and then the rest follows. The initiative is grammatical. The Name sets where verbs go, how modifiers attach, and what the clause can carry without support.

If *Christus* were a title, it could be weighed among others. It could be delayed, postponed, qualified. Titles wait in a list and can be selected as needed. The Name does not wait. It comes first, not as hierarchy, but as structure. The rest of the sentence does not explain it. It is shaped by it. Even when paired with affirmations like Lord or Son, the Name remains the anchor. It is not one more layer. It holds the layers together and sets their order.

When later texts recast *Christus* in familiar terms, they try to define Him by analogy or typology. The gesture is clear, yet the clause rarely stays intact. It either multiplies predicates or fragments into dependent statements. What began as a Name becomes a chain of descriptions. The Name resists that chain. It was not made to sit within a sequence. It presses toward a simpler line that it can hold without props.

That resistance is not rhetorical. It is not an effect of reverence. It is grammatical. The Name does not enter the order of titles. It does not say, "among these, Christ." It sidesteps the list. It does not function as an addition to identity. It becomes a limit beyond which identity does not extend. The sentence reaches the Name and stops adding. From there it orders.

This is why the title frame weakens. Not because *Christus* is "too important," but because the language does not carry it as a title. It does not operate as a label for recognition. It establishes structure through position. It does not rely on an external meaning. It configures meaning from within, allowing predicates to align and descriptions to reduce rather than expand.

To say *Christus non est titulus* is not to deny the Name's weight. It is to locate its function. It does not name a category. It does not designate a role. It does not supplement a figure. It acts as a principle of ordering. That principle is marked by how the sentence behaves when the Name appears. The effect is not borrowed. It is built. The Name stands where others depend, and it keeps the clause whole by giving it its form.

Christ reigns. Christ forgives. Christ comes. Each line holds by its verb. The king reigns. The judge forgives. The messenger comes. The second set opens paths into systems. The king invites rivals and ranks. The judge invites a court and a code. The messenger invites a sender and a destination. The Name did not ask for those supports. It closed the line and moved forward.

Christ is king sets a class beside the Name and invites comparison. Christ reigns keeps the verb at center and refuses the list. Christ is truth invites an abstract field and a rule of likeness. Christ speaks returns the weight to act and sequence. When the Name is kept as Name, predication displaces identity. The clause completes itself by what is done, not by what is equated.

Apposition gives a simple field for observation. Jesus the prophet balances because proper name and role can sit side by side. Jesus Christ is not the same balance. The line tightens because the second word does not act like a helper at the side. It acts like a center. If we insert the article and write Jesus the Christ, the clause tends to describe, and it begins to justify. Without the article, Jesus Christ turns the line on a hinge, and the next words take instruction from the hinge rather than from a file of traits.

Imperatives show the ordering power of the Name. Follow Christ. The command completes itself. Follow the teacher asks for identification and grounds. Which teacher. Which right to lead. Commands to the Name are compact. Commands to a role are procedural. The Name orders by presence. The role orders by permission and context.

Negation does not break the pattern. Christ does not yield carries a clear stop. A prophet does not yield calls for exceptions and cases. The title frame invites policies. The Name frame places a line beyond which the sentence will not go. The difference is visible in the next clause. After the Name, the text moves to a new act. After the role, the text tends to move to an explanation.

Coordination shows how the Name unifies action. Christ comes and heals. Two verbs sit well under one center. A healer comes and heals strains because the first verb repeats the class rather than adding motion. Under the Name, acts can be added without redundancy.

Under a role, acts must be negotiated with the description that the role already carries.

Possessives are simple and instructive. Christ's people reads as a complete relation without a second anchor. The teacher's people raises questions of school and method. The Name generates relation by creating a domain in language. The role borrows relation from an institution outside the line. The first is self contained. The second leans outward.

Prepositions mark a similar boundary. In Christ can work as a small center that groups words. In the teacher wants a room and a rule. The Name turns a short phrase into a domain by position. The role turns a short phrase into an address that asks for furniture.

There is a temporal trace as well. Clauses on the Name live in a near present or a clean past without scaffolding. Christ has come. Christ will come. Christ stands. Clauses on roles tend to bend toward programs. The messiah has come asks for calendars and stages. The priest stands asks for rites and places. The Name keeps time close to the act. The role pulls time toward an office.

Titles also attract catalog. Where a title stands, a list forms quickly. Prophet, priest, king hang together and invite more. Where the Name stands, lists thin. The line prefers a verb and an object. This is not a rule to deny lists. It is a habit that shows that the Name reduces what must be carried to keep the clause true to its center.

Some will press the analogy further and look for synonyms that travel with less weight. The result holds. Christ heals the sick and the blind and the lame keeps a set of objects under one act with no friction. A healer heals the sick and the blind and the lame begins to measure what belongs to the role and what does not, and the list pulls the clause apart. The Name keeps the objects under a verb. The role tests the boundaries of a file.

We have seen Christ ends cleanly, because the verb has done its work and the Name settles the line. We have seen a prophet seems unfinished. It invites a that clause and a reason. The Name ends a clause. The title invites a clause to continue.

Even short vocatives mark the difference. O Christ closes a line with address alone. O king, O prophet, O teacher often prefer a

second unit to fix context. The Name is closed by presence. The title is open and asks for scene.

The rule behind these examples is not a new theory. It is the simplest description of what lines do when the Name stands at the center. The Name sets a normative syntax. It provides a formal unity of analysis for the clause that carries it. The verb gains priority, scope narrows to what must be said, modifiers drop to the work they must do, and identity frames recede unless they are pulled inside predication.

A longer way to fail the title frame is to over explain. When a writer tries to hold the Name and a rack of titles at once, the line loses pressure. The sentence breaks into equal parts that do not submit to a center. Then enumeration replaces motion. This is the problem with trying to keep the Name inside a list of roles. The Name does not add to a list. It makes the list redundant by giving order that the list would try to simulate.

At this point the reader may think the claim is only to remove titles. It is not. The claim is to place titles in the only position where they do not distort the line. They may appear near the Name when the Name already holds the center and when the title sits as a descriptor that does not reroute the verb. Christ the Lord can work this way, because the Name absorbs the role instead of the role absorbing the Name. The title becomes a companion, not a switch.

This section is not an abstract preference. It is a way to keep reading honest to what can be seen. When the Name carries the clause, a translation that tries to force a title into the same place will tend to add words. It will add a which or a that or a where to keep the line up, because titles do not sit alone with verbs as the Name does. The result is a sentence that wanders. The cure is to return the Name to the place from which it orders the sentence.

Christ commands, not the general commands. Christ forgives, not the judge forgives. Christ calls, not the teacher calls. Christ has appeared, not the messenger has appeared. In the second set, the role pulls the line into a frame. In the first set, the Name makes the frame unnecessary. The pair is not about rank or honor. It is about how

little a line needs when the Name is present and how much it needs when a role stands in its place.

Titles are made to travel. They withstand replacement because they carry a file with them. The Name does not travel as a file. It is a center that makes travel unnecessary. Apposition weakens with the Name because the Name does not sit at the side. Identity frames thin because predication is strong. Coordination is smooth because several acts can sit under one center. Negation and command are sharp because they do not have to negotiate with a class. Prepositions and possessives settle quickly because the Name creates a domain. Lists lose weight because the Name holds objects by the verb. The title frame weakens because the clause has already found its order.

Christus non est titulus. The Name does not join the order of titles. It does not serve recognition by a label. It gives shape to the sentence from within. It can sit with words like Lord or Son without ceding the center. It can stand alone with a verb and still feel complete. It does not ask for an article to make it credible. It does not wait for a scene to give it place. The Name stands, and the sentence finds its form.

If an objection remains, it usually concerns usage that appears to title the Name. The answer is to read the line as it stands. Does the clause close on the Name or does it require supports. Does the verb carry weight or does the file carry weight. If the Name holds the close and the verb keeps the center, then the usage has not reduced the Name to a title. It has allowed the Name to do what titles cannot do. It has allowed the Name to order speech without borrowing power from a role.

Titles continue to be useful for many things. They allow recognition across contexts and conversations. They can be applied and removed. They can be stacked or traded. The Name cannot be traded and cannot be stacked. It cannot be applied from the outside without the sentence losing pressure. It can only be placed where it belongs, at the point from which the clause finds order. That is the position this chapter has described. It is not a doctrine. It is a structure. It is the way the sentence behaves when *Christus* appears.

A title travels. It borrows strength from a file of roles and customs. A Name does not borrow. It gives shape where it stands. This difference is easiest to see when we read slowly and watch how a line holds or loosens as we change one word.

Begin with short pairs that stay close to the page.

Christ commands. The sentence ends cleanly.

The general commands. The sentence opens a corridor toward ranks, troops and rules.

Christ forgives. Full stop.

The judge forgives. The line looks around for a court and a law.

Christ calls. The next sentence can answer.

The teacher calls. We now ask who the teacher is and what class he leads.

In each pair the act is the same. What changes is the weight of what stands at the center. With the Name the act is enough. With a title the act leans on a frame. The line either moves forward or it looks sideways.

Now read apposition at length. Jesus the prophet reads smoothly because a role fits beside a proper name. The role helps by giving a known shape. Jesus the teacher works in the same way. The clause is wide. It can carry an added phrase without breaking. Jesus Christ is not the same pattern. The line narrows. The second word does not assist from the side. It takes the center and pulls other words into order. If we insert the article and write Jesus the Christ, the clause tends to describe. It wants traits, proofs and links. Without the article, Jesus Christ moves the sentence to the next verb. The Name works like a hinge. The article works like a handle that needs to be held while one explains.

This is why lists behave differently near the Name. Titles attract company. Prophet, priest, king do not stand alone for long. The list has its own rhythm. It gives comfort by counting known types. The Name does not invite that rhythm. It keeps the line short and pointed. Christ heals and teaches is a two-verb motion without strain. A healer heals and teaches is a line that checks itself. It asks whether both actions match the type. The Name frees action. The title checks action against a catalog.

Narrative lines show the same preference. Christ went out. Christ stood by the water. Christ sat at the table. The place words are simple. They do not need a ritual setting to make sense. A priest went out reaches for a temple. A king sat reaches for a court. A role drags a scene with it. The Name does not drag. It arrives and the scene forms around it.

Prayer lines give a sharp test. O Christ is a full address. Nothing else is required to make the line whole. O king or O prophet often reaches for a second phrase to anchor the address, a people, a land, a duty. The role asks for context. The Name provides it by presence. This is why brief litany lines built on the Name can repeat without thinning. The repetition is not filler. It is the pressure of a center that does not tire.

Consider lines that end on the Name. We have seen Christ. The verb has done its work and the Name closes the span. We have seen a prophet sounds unfinished. It seems to wait for a clause to say which one and what marks him as such. End position matters. Where a title ends a clause, the clause tends to lean forward for help. Where the Name ends a clause, the clause tends to come to rest.

Questions show the split in another way. Who is Christ can be answered by what the Name does in the next lines. Who is the teacher calls for a list of traits that are not on the page. One question is settled by acts. The other is settled by files. The book stays with acts because they keep us near the line.

Negation and prohibition sharpen the contrast. Christ does not yield is a clear boundary. A prophet does not yield asks for exceptions. Christ cannot be bought needs no footnote. A ruler cannot be bought begs for policy notes. Titles invite subclauses that begin with unless or except. The Name closes the line without that second gesture.

Look at time words. Christ now forgives ties the adverb to the act. A judge now forgives slides now toward a policy window. Christ already reigns is a claim about what is happening in the line. The king already reigns invites talk about stages and rivals. The Name keeps small time words small and sharp. Titles turn them into signs of a program.

Prepositions show how the Name creates a domain with little text. In Christ can hold a set of nouns and verbs together without furniture. In the teacher looks for a school, a room, a rule book. With Christ can name company without needing ranks. With the king asks which guard and which court. These are small pieces of grammar, but they reveal what carries weight near the center.

Possessives are plain. Christ's people is a relation complete at once. The teacher's people raises questions about what defines that group and how long the link holds. The Name creates relation in language. A title borrows relation from an institution.

If titles cause trouble, why not stack the Name with a title and let both stand. The result is mixed. Christ the Lord can sit without strain when the Name holds the center and the second word does not direct the verb. The same words can falter if the title begins to name the scene. The line then lists traits and the Name is pulled into a file. The safest path is simple. Keep the Name as the point from which verbs take shape. Let any added word live under that order.

The habit of over explanation is the main way a sentence loses pressure near the Name. A line that tries to fix the Name to a rack of titles does not gain strength. It loses it. The verbs wait while the file grows. The reader leaves the page to fetch frames and types. When this happens the cure is to return to the Name and the act, and to let the line be short where it can be short. Brevity here is not an ornament. It is a sign that the center is doing its work.

Everyone can rehearse these observations with three small exercises.

First, the swap test. Take any clause that places the Name near a verb. Replace the Name with a role and keep the rest. If the clause now seeks extra words to stand, the difference you feel is the reason this chapter says the Name is not a title.

Second, the article test. Insert an article before the Name in your head. Say the line again. If the clause tilts toward description or proof, the effect of the article is clear. It pulled the line into a frame that titles use to travel.

Third, the end-stop test. Place the Name at the end of a clause and read aloud. Then place a title at the end and read aloud. If the line

with the title sounds open and the line with the Name sounds complete, you are hearing the center close the span.

These exercises are not tricks. They are ways to keep the eye on what the sentence itself can show. They do not require special terms. They do not require a second language. They require that we trust the visible behavior of words.

Two longer readings can set the theme in motion. Take a scene of speaking. Christ speaks and the crowd listens. The verbs are near. The movement is clear. Change the center. The teacher speaks and the crowd listens. The second line is fine but it invites a file of questions. Which school. Which status. Which authorization. The first line did not ask. It did not need to. The Name allowed the verbs to sit close without furniture.

Christ comes and calls a man by name. The line walks. Loosen the center. A messenger comes and calls a man by name. We now look for who sent him and what news he bears. Again the line looks sideways. The Name kept it moving forward.

None of this says that titles must be banished from every page. It says that titles have a natural place and the Name has another. When a title stands at the center, the clause will usually reach for supports. When the Name stands at the center, supports become optional. When a writer knows this, the writer can choose what the line should do. If the goal is motion, place the Name and a verb. If the goal is description, place a title and prepare to hold up the frame.

A quiet outcome follows for confession and memory. Short lines on the Name are easier to remember because they carry no extra pieces. They travel without a frame. This is why sayings that place the Name with a verb can be recalled by anyone who heard them once. The sentence holds itself together. The order comes from inside.

Titles are made to travel. They survive change of place by carrying categories with them. They work by generalization and by exchange. The Name does not generalize and does not exchange. It does not enter a list in order to be recognized. It is recognized by what it does to a line. When the Name stands, verbs take their places, modifiers shrink, lists thin and the clause finds rest without help. This is why *Christus non est titulus*. Not because the Name should be lifted above

speech by reverence, but because language itself does not carry it as a title. The Name orders from within. The sentence obeys.

6. Grammatical Solitude

The solitude of *Christus* in language does not refer to isolation. It does not mean exclusion or abandonment. It refers to a form that has no equivalent, no peer in its grammatical field. The Name stands alone because nothing else performs its function in the same way. Its singularity is not symbolic. It is structural.

In most naming systems, the introduction of a noun allows for coordination. Terms are linked by likeness, by category, or by shared predicates. Coordination builds around similarity. Syntax permits this. One can say "Moses and Elijah," "the king and the priest," "the teacher and the prophet." The sentence expands, each element holding equal weight. Balance is preserved. Meaning accumulates.

With *Christus*, this mechanism fails. Coordination does not stabilize. When *Christus* is placed in a coordinate structure, the other elements weaken. The clause shifts from symmetry to asymmetry. The sentence leans toward the Name and loses internal parity. The balance breaks not because *Christus* is more important, but because the grammar does not distribute force evenly when the Name is present.

Examples from early sources confirm this. When *Christus* is joined to other figures, the sentence often collapses into a predicative frame. What appears to be a list becomes an action. Instead of "Christ and the prophets," the structure turns into "Christ fulfills the prophets." Instead of "Christ and the kings of Israel," the clause becomes "Christ reigns beyond them." Coordination is grammatically overwritten by a new orientation. The Name does not share the space. It reorders it.

This effect is not semantic. It does not depend on belief. It can be observed in how syntax reconfigures around *Christus*. Clauses shorten. Modifiers are absorbed. Verbs move closer to the Name. Auxiliary elements fall away. The sentence becomes more vertical, less relational. The presence of the Name removes the need for framing.

In Greek, this tendency is visible in the disappearance of connective particles. When *Christos* appears in conjunction with another noun, the connective is often weakened or omitted. The result is not a compound but a transformation. The second term becomes subordinate, absorbed into the logic of the first. This is not simply a matter of style. It is a structural shift. One term ceases to be parallel. It becomes defined by the one that remains.

In Latin, the same tendency takes a different form. Clauses that begin with *Christus* tend to resolve quickly. Other terms, introduced after the Name, appear not as partners but as results. The sentence moves from subject to consequence, from the Name to its effects. Roles like *rex*, *pontifex*, or *doctor* cannot maintain syntactic independence when paired directly. They become either metaphor or function. The clause no longer identifies. It declares.

This grammatical solitude has consequences. It means that *Christus* cannot be framed by addition. It cannot be defined by accumulation. The more roles are added beside it, the more the sentence fragments. It does not matter whether the added terms are reverent or accurate. The structure cannot hold them in balance. The Name tilts the grammar toward its own axis.

One might say that the Name absorbs predicates. But that too is insufficient. It does not absorb them like a dominant term. It restructures them. Verbs that would normally apply to the subject are reoriented. They act through the Name, not on it. The difference is subtle but consistent. It shifts the position of agency. *Christus* is not one agent among others. It becomes the site through which agency is reorganized.

This becomes especially clear in passive constructions. When *Christus* appears as subject of a passive verb, the form takes on fixity. There is no ambiguity. The sentence does not require clarification. Other nouns, when placed in the same position, need additional context. They must be introduced, justified, or defined. *Christus* does not. The clause completes itself.

This fixity creates a different kind of presence. Not one of closure, but of sufficiency. The Name does not rely on elaboration. It does not await qualification. It does not prepare for a predicate. It arrives

complete. This completeness is not theological. It is grammatical. The sentence treats the Name as self-containing. It grants it no space for substitution.

Attempts to reverse this pattern by dispersing the Name across clauses also fail. When *Christus* is divided, whether by pronoun, epithet, or role, the force diminishes. The grammar begins to blur. Continuity weakens. The clauses lose their center. The referential chain becomes unstable. The sentence no longer holds direction. The Name does not fragment well.

That is why early texts often return to the Name without variation. Repetition is not redundancy. It is reinforcement. The sentence needs the same term to keep its form. Once spoken, *Christus* cannot be replaced by a title, an image, or a category. The clause must either return to the Name or collapse into description. The alternative is drift. The structure loosens.

The solitude of *Christus* is not absence. It is not distance from others. It is a property of placement. The Name functions in a position that other nouns cannot share. When that position is challenged (by coordination, apposition, or substitution) the grammar of the clause responds by centering the Name again. This is not emphasis. It is structural necessity.

The idea of solitude in language requires precision. It is not a metaphor for singularity or holiness. It is a structural condition. A word stands alone when it cannot be exchanged, joined, or absorbed into other categories without altering the grammar around it. *Christus* meets these conditions not by claim but by function. Its presence in the sentence transforms how relations are constructed.

This is evident in comparative structures. Where typical nouns accept comparison—"greater than," "lesser than," "equal to"—*Christus* resists. The clause, when built to compare *Christus* with any other figure, often loses balance or becomes forced. Either the comparison fails to complete grammatically or it is rephrased into an assertion of uniqueness. In Greek, superlative forms do not often appear directly with *Christos*. When they do, they are usually paraphrased into clauses of action rather than statements of degree. The syntax redirects.

In Latin, attempts to declare *Christus maior* or *Christus summus* often require syntactic support. The Name does not rest naturally in a hierarchy. The clause must bring additional predicates, modifiers, or referents to sustain the construction. Otherwise, the sentence flattens. The structure falters because the Name does not invite gradient comparison. It is not evaluated. It defines.

The refusal of substitution reinforces this. Role nouns behave interchangeably. They can be replaced by others of the same type without damaging the sentence. "The prophet speaks," "the teacher answers," "the ruler commands." Each clause functions even when the noun is exchanged. *Christus* resists this kind of substitution. When the Name is replaced, the clause does not simply lose clarity. It loses coherence.

This can be tested in confessional or liturgical sequences. Replace *Christus* with a doctrinal term or a narrative title, and the structure shifts. Meaning may survive, but form weakens. The sentence becomes referential. It must describe what it cannot carry directly. The loss is not in theology but in grammar. The Name held the clause together. Its removal exposes the dependency of the rest.

This behavior does not imply that *Christus* is a grammatical anomaly. On the contrary, it shows that grammar can register unique force without exception. The Name does not violate rules. It demonstrates how rules behave when they reach their limit. Clauses formed around *Christus* still observe verbal agreement, subject placement, and aspectual order. But they shift internally. Coordination becomes asymmetry. Apposition becomes dependence. Predicate control becomes attraction rather than selection.

Some early texts show this in their silence. The Name appears, followed by minimal predication. The clause ends quickly. Nothing is added. No modifiers, no expansion, no trailing implications. The grammar seems to hold its breath. The Name stands, and the sentence stops. This is not stylistic minimalism. It is a formal boundary. The sentence cannot continue without disrupting the central term.

At times, early Christian writers attempt to resolve this by adding clauses. They separate the Name from the rest by grammatical distance. *Christus*, then a pause, then a second sentence. This technique preserves the solitude of the Name by isolating its structural force. It does not dilute it with modifiers. It protects the order by letting the Name act alone.

This structure persists in creedal formulations. "Christ died," "Christ rose," "Christ will come again." Each clause is brief. The Name opens the sentence. The verb follows. Nothing comes between. Articles, titles, qualifications are left aside. The Name is not described. It is acted. The grammar reduces not because of poverty, but because of necessity. The sentence can carry only one weight at a time. The Name supplies that weight.

Even in compound structures, the pattern holds. When *Christus* is mentioned with others, the balance tips toward it. "Peter and Christ," "the apostles and Christ," "the saints and Christ", in each case, the order of influence is clear. The Name reorders scope and direction. It does not share space equally. The grammar tilts toward the stronger center. It is not about honorific emphasis. It is about distribution of syntactic gravity.

This distribution affects verb choice. Clauses that begin with *Christus* tend to select direct, finite predicates. Ambiguity is low. The action is clear. Clauses beginning with role nouns often require auxiliary verbs, clarifying phrases, or embedded clauses. Their force must be built. *Christus* does not need construction. The clause builds around it.

The solitude of the Name extends even to negation. Most nouns, when negated, require a surrounding frame. "Not a prophet," "not a ruler," "not a teacher." Negation must define the excluded category. With *Christus*, the negative does not redirect. It resolves. "Not Christ" is not a qualification. It is a termination. The sentence cannot substitute. It must either affirm or dissolve. There is no partial inversion. The Name does not bend.

This rigidity might appear limiting. In fact, it defines freedom within the sentence. The clause is not bound by referential frames. It does not rely on background. It does not call for explanation. The

Name gives the sentence its edge and its form. Everything else adjusts. The grammar does not elaborate. It obeys.

This obedience is not linguistic passivity. It is reconfiguration. *Christus* stands where others depend. It does not wait for attribution. It imposes relation. The sentence follows not by intent but by form. The Name has already determined how the rest must appear. That is solitude in grammar. Not distance, not singularity, but irreducibility.

We call this a kind of sovereignty. Not over meaning, but over order. The Name does not take power from what it refers to. It generates structure from within the sentence. The clause does not serve to carry it. It exists because the Name set it in motion. That is why *Christus* alone carries this function. It does not seek position. It installs it.

This is not an exaltation. It is a grammatical claim. The Name does not ascend in the sentence. It stands in place. Others move. That stillness, that inability to exchange, to coordinate, to subordinate, defines its grammatical solitude. It cannot be placed beside. It cannot be softened by relation. It cannot be mirrored.

The clause that holds *Christus* becomes singular. Not because of tone, but because of force. Other terms must yield. They align or disappear. Coordination becomes derivation. Predicate becomes consequence. Identity becomes structure. And the sentence does not recover its former pattern. Once the Name enters, language changes.

7. The Name as Form

The Name *Christus* does not belong to a descriptive register. It is not an adjective, not a metaphor, and not a role that waits to be assigned. It operates inside language as a formal principle. This does not mean that the Name loses meaning. It means that its first effect is to structure the sentence. It defines what comes near it. It limits what can follow. It acts as form.

Ordinary names refer. They point to an object, a person, or an identity. Even when they are titles or honorifics, they behave referentially. They ask the sentence to supply content. A prophet is someone who speaks on behalf of God. A king is someone who holds rule. A teacher is someone who transmits knowledge. These roles are

definable. They come with boundaries. The grammar that holds them together expects additional information.

Christus does not follow this pattern. It does not enter the sentence as a label that calls for expansion. It enters as a form that reshapes what is already there. It sets the pattern by which roles are recognized or excluded. In this sense, the Name does not wait for content. It provides structure.

We can observe this in early clauses that use *Christus* without modifiers. The sentence does not stall. It does not hesitate. It proceeds as if everything required has already been given. This does not happen with other names. "Moses" usually needs a qualifier: Moses the lawgiver, Moses the leader. "David" tends to require placement: David of Bethlehem, David the king. Even divine titles like "Lord" or "Son" often seek contextual anchors. But when *Christus* appears, the sentence proceeds without pause. There is no gap to fill. The form carries itself.

This is not a stylistic choice. It is a grammatical behavior. In Greek, the presence of *Christos* without the article is frequent. It functions without external qualification. In Latin, *Christus* appears at the head of independent clauses with no syntactic support. It behaves like a complete unit. The sentence accepts it as structurally sufficient.

The effect is not that the Name is fixed. It is that the sentence recognizes its function. It acts as an anchor. It determines what counts as a subject, what qualifies as a verb, and how the parts of the clause must align. This anchoring is not thematic. It is formal. The Name creates a rule of arrangement.

We can call this a type of syntactic sovereignty. The Name does not adapt to the grammar that surrounds it. The grammar adapts to the Name. It is not forced. It is restructured. Verbs reselect. Articles disappear. Modifiers lose salience. The usual order of sentence construction (first define, then describe, then declare) does not hold. With *Christus*, the declaration precedes the frame.

This inversion has effects on how the sentence interprets itself. Usually, a noun appears first, then the structure builds around it. The grammar waits to determine how the parts relate. With *Christus*, the presence of the Name establishes relations from the start. The

sentence does not negotiate its meaning. It receives it from the ordering role of the Name.

This does not mean that interpretation stops. But the kind of interpretation changes. Instead of asking what the Name refers to, the sentence begins to trace what it does to other elements. The verb aligns. The objects shift. The tone of the clause changes. These changes are observable. They can be tracked in word order, predicate structure, and clause length.

For instance, when *Christus* is placed at the beginning of the clause, the verb is more likely to be active, finite, and immediate. The sentence resolves quickly. It does not defer. When the Name is placed in the middle, surrounded by predicates or epithets, the clause becomes unstable. It either breaks into two shorter sentences or collapses into description. The presence of the Name tends to demand resolution. It does not tolerate prolonged deferral.

This demand for resolution creates what we might call a grammatical economy. The sentence reduces. It limits excessive conjunction. It cuts unnecessary apposition. It avoids nested clauses. This is not because the writers are simplifying. It is because the structure cannot expand in the usual way. The Name closes the opening for elaboration.

This is particularly noticeable in early liturgical and hymnic fragments. The clauses that hold *Christus* are compact. They begin with the Name and end with an action. There is no ornament. No circumlocution. The grammar carries weight. Every part of the sentence points back to the Name. It holds syntactic gravity.

We can compare this to how other sacred names function. For example, the tetragrammaton in Hebrew requires circumlocution. It cannot be spoken directly. The grammar must find ways to defer or surround it. That generates a field of avoidance. In contrast, *Christus* does not withdraw. It centralizes. The Name enters fully into syntax and commands the space around it. It does not require silence. It structures speech.

This structural function can be seen in how pronouns behave. Normally, pronouns serve to replace a noun and avoid repetition. They help the sentence flow. But in early texts, after *Christus* is

mentioned, the return to a pronoun often causes structural ambiguity. The clause weakens. Referential clarity declines. The grammar does not know how to maintain alignment. That is why many early writers return to the Name rather than use substitution. The grammar demands precision. The form must be reasserted.

This also explains why repetition of *Christus* does not appear redundant. In referential terms, repetition is usually a fault. It signals poor style or lack of variation. But in these texts, repetition of the Name restores structure. Each time it is spoken, the sentence regains alignment. It is not a matter of emphasis. It is a requirement of form.

To understand this fully, we must look at how *Christus* interacts with verb tense and aspect. In Greek, the aorist tense is often used with actions connected to the Name. This choice is not arbitrary. The aorist conveys completion, singularity, and eventhood without focus on duration. The sentence does not drift into commentary. It declares a complete act. That aligns with the behavior of the Name. It invites resolution.

In Latin, the tendency is similar. Verbs following *Christus* often appear in the perfect or present indicative. The clause does not speculate. It affirms. The Name does not permit grammatical hesitation. The sentence must decide. It must act. This is not about dogma. It is about how language treats form. When *Christus* enters, the grammar settles.

We can say that the Name *Christus* introduces a normative syntax. That is, it installs rules of behavior for the sentence. These rules are not universal. They do not apply to all nouns. They apply to this one. The specificity of the Name is what gives it structural power. It is not that all sacred terms behave this way. It is that this Name alters the patterns around it.

This power does not lie in semantics. It is not derived from meaning. It is derived from behavior. The clause changes because the form of the Name demands change. That is what makes it a structural attractor. It pulls the elements of the sentence toward a certain order. This order is not imposed from outside. It is activated from within the clause.

When a writer uses *Christus*, they are not simply referring to a figure. They are activating a syntactic pattern. That pattern carries constraints. It limits coordination. It reduces substitution. It transforms predicate behavior. These constraints are not thematic. They are formal. They can be tracked across texts and languages. They are testable.

The recognition of the Name as form does not remove faith. It does not replace theology. It clarifies what grammar can show. Language does not merely express belief. It structures it. The Name *Christus* is not just a container of meaning. It is a force of arrangement. It gives shape to what the sentence becomes.

The Name as form can also be observed in how it alters the range of syntactic options available to the sentence. Normally, grammar permits a wide set of arrangements for expressing similar content. Subject-verb-object sequences may be reordered. Modifiers can be placed early or delayed. Tense and mood can be shifted to reflect emphasis or tone. But when *Christus* occupies the subject position, many of these options begin to narrow.

This narrowing is not a restriction. It is a consolidation. The sentence does not lose flexibility. It gains structure. Certain placements become favored. Others become unstable. For example, when *Christus* appears late in the clause, as if dependent on previous elements, the result is often awkward. The sentence struggles to carry weight backward. It reads as inverted. The Name resists subordination.

This is consistent with a deeper structural principle. The Name functions as a selector. It prefers verbal constructions that affirm, not speculate. Subjunctive moods are rare in direct clauses with *Christus*. The sentence becomes direct. It closes ambiguity. Even when the clause addresses future events, the grammar tends toward certainty. Future indicative, not conditional. Declarative, not hypothetical.

This pattern holds across early Greek, Latin, and even Coptic fragments. Despite differences in grammar, the positioning of *Christus* tends to compress the clause into a stable, assertive form. The surrounding grammar becomes less permissive of digression. It favors resolution. The Name generates a kind of gravity.

That gravity also limits metaphorical expansion. In ordinary discourse, names can be extended metaphorically. A teacher might be called a shepherd. A ruler might be called a light. The grammar permits these shifts by allowing predicate extensions. "He is like," "he resembles," "he is as." With *Christus*, these constructions become strained. The clause resists metaphorical comparison. If it is used, it often fractures into two sentences. The structure cannot bear both the Name and the metaphor in the same syntactic plane.

This may be why early writers often avoided such devices. They used parables and figures for many things, but rarely for *Christus*. When similes do appear, they tend to refer to actions rather than to the Name. "The kingdom is like a mustard seed," not "Christ is like." The Name does not enter analogy easily. It remains fixed.

That fixity creates a second-order effect. It alters how readers relate to the clause. The sentence no longer invites subjective response. It sets the order and expects alignment. The reader is not called to interpret. The reader is called to recognize. The sentence becomes formal, not discursive. That does not mean it excludes reflection. It means that the space for reflection has already been bounded by the form.

In modern terms, this could be called procedural language. The sentence behaves less like a narration and more like a structure of execution. It carries out a form. The Name acts as the operator. It does not receive meaning. It applies it.

This can be tested through clause stacking. In many early sermons or letters, the repetition of *Christus* leads not to elaboration but to iteration. One clause after another begins with the Name, then moves directly to the verb. No conjunctions, no expansion, no shift of register. The grammar becomes procedural. Each clause stands alone, but all follow the same rule. That rule is the Name.

The phenomenon is observable in Latin homiletics. Consider sequences like *Christus venit*, *Christus passus est*, *Christus resurrexit*. The pattern is linear. It does not open alternatives. It executes events through fixed structure. The grammar affirms, not speculates. It acts.

The same pattern is visible in early Greek confessionals. *Christos apethanen*, *Christos anestē*, *Christos erchetai*. No metaphor, no

commentary. The structure is tight. The Name governs the verb. The verb finalizes the clause. The sentence does not hold tension. It delivers outcome.

In both cases, the form of the clause becomes more important than the lexical content. It is not about what verb is chosen. It is about how the Name constrains the range of verbs. The grammar must follow. That is how the Name becomes form.

This leads to an important conclusion. *Christus* is not simply a subject of theology. It is a generator of syntax. It alters the structure of expression in a way that can be described, tracked, and tested. This behavior is not reducible to reverence. It is structural. It persists even when the texts are stripped of theological context.

To verify this, we can test secular usage. When *Christus* appears in hostile or skeptical sources, the grammar still shows constraint. The Name is often placed at the front. The clause becomes compact. Predicate selection narrows. Even in rejection, the structure obeys. That suggests the form is not imposed by belief. It is activated by the Name itself.

This may explain why so few titles survive in the same structural space. "Jesus the Christ" is a transitional form. It tries to place the Name within a referential frame. But over time, it dissolves. Either the Name stands alone, or it is replaced by referential descriptions. But rarely both. The language does not accommodate both roles at once. The grammar chooses. And where *Christus* is retained, it dominates.

The Name does not describe. It defines. It does not fill a space in the sentence. It creates the space. That is what it means to be form. The grammar does not carry the Name. The Name carries the grammar. And once that shift has occurred, the sentence cannot return to its previous arrangement.

This does not negate theology. It clarifies how theology is shaped by grammar. Belief may be expressed in words, but the structure of the sentence determines what can be said, what must be said, and what cannot. When *Christus* appears, those options change. The sentence enters a different order.

That order is not optional. It does not depend on interpretation. It arises from how the Name interacts with clause structure, predicate force, and scope control. These are formal elements. They can be mapped. They can be analyzed. And they show the same pattern across languages and traditions.

The Name becomes the rule by which the sentence proceeds. That is its function. It is not one term among many. It is not a member of a category. It is the principle that determines how categories behave. It stands outside classification, not by abstraction, but by function. It cannot be replaced, because no other form triggers the same syntactic pattern.

This is the solitude of the Name at the level of form. Not separation. Not metaphorical height. But structural specificity. The sentence that holds *Christus* changes. It does not drift. It does not generalize. It does not exchange. It obeys.

8. The Altered Sentence

When *Christus* enters a sentence, the sentence does not remain the same. The structure alters. This is not a metaphor. It is a change in grammatical function. What was once a descriptive clause becomes declarative. What was once flexible becomes fixed. The sentence reorganizes itself around a new principle.

This change can be described without appeal to doctrine. It is not a matter of belief. It is a matter of language. The shift is visible in syntax. It is confirmed in multiple languages. It is not specific to any one author or school. It can be traced through clause alignment, predicate choice, modifier suppression, and scope resolution.

In Greek, this alteration often begins with article behavior. *Christos* appears without the article more frequently than other role nouns in similar syntactic positions. This absence is not a gap. It is a signal. The sentence treats the Name as complete. It does not require qualification. The result is a clause that tightens. Predicate selection becomes more assertive. The grammar closes options.

In Latin, the pattern repeats. *Christus* often precedes the main verb directly. It does not wait for introduction. When it is placed later in the clause, the structure becomes strained. The sentence struggles to

maintain clarity. That struggle does not appear when ordinary nouns are used. Only the Name demands such resolution.

This pressure to resolve produces a change in how clauses are formed. Appositional structures begin to break. Instead of stacking identities—Christ the King, the Lord, the Son—the sentence defaults to a single axis: *Christus dicit*, *Christus venit*, *Christus regnat*. One Name, one verb, no expansion. The structure becomes flat, but decisive.

This flattening is not simplification. It is structural condensation. The sentence does not lose meaning. It restricts the path by which meaning is conveyed. Instead of multiple descriptive terms orbiting a subject, the clause stabilizes around the Name. It becomes a unit. Grammar follows a narrow channel.

That channel resists subordination. Long clauses with dependent modifiers are rare once *Christus* is introduced. The Name does not invite commentary. It initiates statement. When the clause continues, it does so in direct sequence. The sentence becomes linear. The structure executes, not explores.

This behavior alters the nature of interpretation. Readers do not encounter an open frame. They encounter a completed form. The sentence does not ask what *Christus* might mean. It shows what the Name has already done. Verbs appear in the perfect. Actions are declared. There is no space for projection. The Name does not remain open. It defines the clause.

This closure explains why repetition of the Name is common in early texts. Each clause begins again from the same point. The sentence does not progress by elaboration. It progresses by activation. Each new instance of *Christus* restores alignment. That is why variation declines. Synonym use drops. Substitution weakens. The Name becomes non-exchangeable.

This non-exchangeability affects the logic of the text. Normal discourse permits equivalence. A teacher may be called a guide. A prophet may be called a servant. Language tolerates replacement. But once *Christus* is named, that logic does not hold. The clause cannot sustain substitution. When tried, it alters structure. Either the scope collapses, or the predicate changes. The sentence breaks form.

Such breakdown is visible even in polemical texts. Roman sources that reject the claims of Christianity often refer to *Christus* directly. They do not use analogies. They avoid title substitution. The grammar seems to mirror the same constraint. Even in denial, the structure resists variation. The Name forces alignment.

This alignment creates a syntactic field with low entropy. The range of possible constructions narrows. Clauses become short. Sequence becomes predictable. Modification becomes rare. But this is not a sign of decay. It is a sign of consolidation. The sentence operates by rule.

That rule can be called the altered sentence. It is not the sentence in its ordinary form. It is the sentence after the Name has entered. It is not more solemn. It is more constrained. It carries formal pressure. It obeys the principle set by the Name.

That principle is not derived from content. It is not derived from theology. It is derived from behavior. When *Christus* stands at the center, the sentence no longer negotiates. It affirms. It does not compare. It selects. It does not permit expansion. It resolves.

We can see this most clearly when the sentence attempts to return to normal discourse. The re-entry is not smooth. Once *Christus* is named, the clause that follows often loses rhythm. The verbs slow. The modifiers return. The sentence tries to regain its prior shape, but the trace remains. The grammar has been marked. The prior equilibrium does not return fully.

This is what it means for the sentence to be altered. The effect is not limited to the clause that contains the Name. It extends beyond. The whole structure shifts. What follows must either conform to the new alignment or break off into a new sentence. The grammar resets.

This is not a literary effect. It is a formal change. It can be described through word order, through scope of predicates, through article and aspect behavior. The shift is not imagined. It is encoded.

The presence of this encoding explains the consistency across authors and centuries. Writers with no direct link repeat the pattern. They are not imitating. They are conforming to a structure activated by the Name. The sentence teaches itself. The rule emerges.

That rule is visible, testable, and consistent. And it begins with one form: *Christus*.

To describe the altered sentence more precisely, we must account for how linguistic categories collapse or reorganize in its presence. The typical sentence structure offers three axes of variation: descriptive expansion, predicate modulation, and clause chaining. All three experience compression when *Christus* appears.

Descriptive expansion weakens first. In ordinary clauses, a subject may be described through relative clauses or adjectival series: "the man who teaches," "the one sent by God," "the prophet, wise and just." These expansions either follow the subject or embed within the clause. With *Christus*, the embedding becomes strained. The sentence cannot sustain long descriptive loads. Often, these constructions are either dropped or externalized into new clauses. The Name resists integration into a description. Its grammar asserts terminal weight.

Second, predicate modulation becomes minimal. Most subjects support gradation: they may act gently, strongly, more or less decisively. Adverbs and modal auxiliaries provide nuance. *Christus* tends to reduce this spectrum. When the Name appears, the verb often emerges in perfective or aorist forms, conveying finality. Latin shows a strong preference for indicative over subjunctive. Greek often avoids future optative forms when *Christos* governs the clause. The result is not lack of meaning. It is restriction of modal variability. The clause selects conclusion.

Third, clause chaining becomes procedural. In many genres, ideas unfold through layered subordination. Conditions are nested. Consequences extend. With *Christus*, chaining simplifies. Clauses become short, often paratactic. When subordination does occur, it does not destabilize the main clause. Instead, it follows the structural lead set by the Name. The Name, once introduced, sets the grammatical rhythm. Everything else aligns.

This structural dominance is rare among nominal forms. It is not triggered by reverence. It is triggered by syntactic behavior. When tested against equivalents—"prophet," "king," "teacher"—these do not produce the same pattern. They allow broader modulation, easier chaining, richer description. They invite options. *Christus* does not.

The altered sentence is not marked by theological tone. It is marked by constraint and reduction.

Even in Greek texts outside the New Testament, the phenomenon is detectable. Phrases like *ho Christos* lose the article under pressure of syntactic compaction. The noun functions more like an operator than a referent. When used with motion verbs (*erchetai*, *apelthen*), the sentence resolves around action, not status. *Christos* does not receive action. It triggers it.

This triggering function produces a syntactic sequence distinct from other sentence types. In many cases, *Christus* does not merely appear as subject. It appears as the clause origin. Sentences are built to follow its presence. They do not lead into the Name. They emerge from it. That is why *Christus* is rarely placed at the end of a clause. Grammatically, it initiates. It does not conclude.

This is consistent with its behavior in liturgical repetition. In early forms of creed or homily, the Name appears in fixed position. Not for rhetorical emphasis. For structural anchoring. *Christus resurrexit*, *Christus regnat*, *Christus venturus est*. The sentence does not elaborate. It declares. Each clause restores the altered order. The structure becomes rule.

That rule affects not only the clause but the sequence of discourse. Once a sentence adopts this altered form, surrounding sentences adjust. The reader or listener begins to expect clarity, finality, and minimal dependency. When a new sentence reverts to exploratory structure, it often feels disjointed. This is not about tone. It is about grammatical cohesion.

Writers seem aware of this. Even when their content is speculative or complex, they return to the Name to reset structure. The sentence returns to its axis. Meaning is routed through form. This keeps the discourse anchored. It prevents drift. It ensures that the formal pressure of the Name remains operative.

This structural anchoring produces one final effect: resistance to thematic substitution. In secular writing, a name can be replaced without collapse. Characters can trade titles. Concepts can evolve. With *Christus*, the attempt to replace the Name with an idea, a value,

or a symbolic frame breaks the sentence. The syntax loses alignment. Predicates misfire. The rhythm fails.

Writers who attempt to metaphorize the Name often retreat. They switch terms. They restructure. They avoid identity frames. The language does not sustain symbolic equivalence. *Christus* is not like. It is not as. It does not join comparison. It stands apart. That is the syntactic mark of form.

To speak of *Christus* is to alter the grammar. Not by decision. By necessity. The Name acts. It alters the sentence. That is why the Name stands alone, not as doctrine, but as structure.

In that sense, *Christus solus* is not a slogan. It is a linguistic fact. One Name. One axis. One altered sentence.

9. Christos in the Pauline Corpus

Paul is the earliest witness this book can use and the densest. The letters attributed to him contain the Name roughly two hundred and seventy times in the undisputed corpus alone, and near four hundred if the combined forms with Iesous are counted. No other body of text in the first two centuries uses the Name at anything approaching this rate, and none uses it with so little explanation. Paul never pauses to tell his readers what the word means. That silence is the starting point of this chapter.

The distributional fact has been recognized for over a century and has generated a long argument about whether Paul uses *Christos* as a title or as a name. The titular reading holds that the messianic sense is retained and active. The onomastic reading holds that by the time Paul writes, the word has become a second name for Jesus, drained of its adjectival force. A third position, now the most careful one available, treats the word as an honorific, neither a bare name nor a title but a designation with a lexical meaning that has been fixed to one bearer⁷.

⁷ Werner Kramer, *Christ, Lord, Son of God*, trans. Brian Hardy (London: SCM Press, 1966); Martin Hengel, "Christos in Paul," in *Between Jesus and Paul*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1983), 65-77; N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1991), 41-55; Matthew V. Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs: Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

This book does not need to settle that argument, and it is worth saying plainly why. The question of whether *Christos* means anointed one in Paul is a question about the lexicon. The question this book asks is what the word does to the clause that carries it. A word can retain full lexical content and still behave syntactically as an operator, and a word can be lexically emptied and still require scaffolding. The two questions are independent, and conflating them is how the secondary literature has repeatedly talked past itself.

The strongest single piece of evidence in Paul is a formula he says he did not compose. In the fifteenth chapter of the first letter to Corinth he transmits what he received, and the transmitted text begins *Christos* apethanen hyper ton hamartion hemon kata tas graphas⁸. The Name stands first. It is anarthrous. It carries no modifier, no apposition, no relative clause. The finite verb follows immediately in the aorist. Everything after the verb is directional rather than specifying: a prepositional phrase of benefit and a phrase of conformity to scripture.

Apply the substitution test. Replace the anarthrous Name with an anarthrous role noun of the same case and number and the Greek does not survive. *Basileus* apethanen hyper ton hamartion hemon reads as a fragment awaiting identification, and a Greek writer would supply the article, or a genitive of nation, or a demonstrative. The English rendering shows the same pressure: a king died for our sins immediately raises which king, and the clause has to answer before it can proceed. The formula as transmitted answers nothing and proceeds.

The continuation is instructive for a different reason. After the aorist of death and the aorist of burial, the formula shifts to the perfect: *egegetai*. The aspect changes but the subject does not, and no new subject is introduced. One anarthrous Name governs a sequence of finite verbs across a change of aspect without a single resumptive pronoun and without repetition of a determiner. This is precisely the behavior described in the earlier chapters as the

⁸ 1 Corinthians 15:3-5. On the pre-Pauline character of the formula see Hans Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, trans. James W. Leitch, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 251-254.

stabilization of coordination, and here it is observable in a text Paul dates to within a few years of the events it reports.

A second locus in the same letter shows the pattern in the accusative. Paul writes *hemeis de keryssomen Christon estauromenon*. The Name is the object of a verb of proclamation, it is anarthrous, and it is qualified by a participle that is itself anarthrous. This second absence is the significant one. Greek ordinarily marks an attributive participle with the article, and *ton estauromenon* would be the expected form. Its absence leaves the participle in a position that Greek grammars describe with some discomfort, and the discomfort is the datum⁹.

Substitution here is more revealing than in the credal formula, because the verb of proclamation is what carries the sentence. We preach a teacher crucified turns proclamation into report. The clause now requires a reason for preaching this particular crucified teacher, and Greek would mark that requirement with an article and probably with a relative clause. Paul supplies neither, and the following verses show he knew the clause was hard: he calls it a stumbling block and folly, which is a description of its reception, not a repair of its grammar.

The pattern recurs in Romans with the same anarthrous form and the same aorist. Twice within three verses Paul writes *Christos* with *apethanen* and a hyper phrase, first for the weak and then for us while we were still sinners¹⁰. In both clauses the only material outside the subject and verb is a prepositional phrase of benefit. There is no determiner, no epithet, no relative clause, no locative, and no temporal anchoring beyond an adverbial clause in the second instance. The clause carries what it must and nothing else.

A further Romans clause extends the observation to a participial construction. *Christos egertheis ek nekron ouketi apothneskei*: the Name anarthrous, a circumstantial participle, a prepositional phrase, and a negated present indicative. The participle here does specify, but it specifies an event rather than a class, and this distinction runs

⁹ 1 Corinthians 1:23. On the anarthrous attributive participle see Blass-Debrunner-Funk, sections 270 and 412.

¹⁰ Romans 5:6 and 5:8.

through the whole Pauline corpus. Scaffolding that names what happened is admitted freely. Scaffolding that names what kind is not.

One clause in Galatians complicates the account and must be reported as such. Paul writes *ze de en emoi Christos*¹¹, and the Name stands in final position, after the verb and after the prepositional phrase. The earlier chapters of this book claimed that the Name initiates rather than concludes, and this clause does not fit that claim without qualification. What the clause does confirm is the end-stop test: it comes to rest on the Name and requires nothing after it. The claim about initiation must therefore be weakened to a tendency, and it is weakened accordingly in the conclusion.

A clause in Philippians is a harder case, and it is the most honest counterexample in the Pauline corpus. *Emoi gar to zen Christos*¹² is an identity clause with the Name as anarthrous predicate nominative. The book has argued that the Name resists equation. Here it is equated, and by Paul. The response cannot be to explain the clause away, so it must be to narrow the claim. What is equated with the Name is not a class noun but a substantivized infinitive, an act of living rather than a category of person. No comparison set is opened, because to *zen* has no plural members to compare.

The narrowing that follows is a real concession and it changes the shape of the argument. The Name does not resist identity clauses as such. It resists standing as the subject of an identity clause whose predicate is a class noun. *Christos basileus estin* is the structure that fails, and it fails because the predicate opens a set. When the Name is itself the predicate, and when the subject is not a class, the clause holds. Every claim in the analytic chapters about the failure of equation must be read under this restriction.

The articular instances are where the correlation proposed in the earlier chapters can be tested rather than asserted. In the ninth chapter of Romans, Paul writes *ho Christos kata sarka*¹³, and the article appears in a clause whose whole work is to specify a lineage and a mode of descent. The frame is descriptive, the prepositional phrase

¹¹ Galatians 2:20.

¹² Philippians 1:21.

¹³ Romans 9:5. The punctuation of the verse and the referent of the clause that follows are long contested; nothing in the present argument depends on the disputed portion.

is a phrase of specification rather than of benefit, and the article is doing what articles do. The correlation predicted by this book is that the article and the descriptive frame appear together. Here they do.

A second articular case in Ephesians points the same way. Ho *Christos* kephale tes ekklesias¹⁴ places the Name with the article as subject of an identity clause whose predicate is a role noun with a dependent genitive. The clause is the exact structure this book has claimed to be unstable, and it is stabilized by three additions: the article, the genitive of specification, and the surrounding analogy of household order. That the structure requires that much support is the finding. The clause is possible, and it is expensive.

The most valuable locus in Paul for this book is not a statement but a question. In the opening of the first Corinthian letter, Paul reports a set of party slogans: I am of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas, I of Christ. The fourth member is placed in a coordinate series with three human names, and Paul's immediate response is *memeristai ho Christos*¹⁵. Has Christ been divided. The rhetorical question treats the coordination itself as the offense, and it does so before any doctrinal objection is raised.

Two features of that response deserve attention. The first is that the objection is structural: the problem is not that the Corinthians chose the wrong faction but that the Name cannot occupy a slot in a list of factional heads. The second is the article. Ho *Christos* appears precisely at the point where the Name has been forced into a coordinate series, which is the environment where this book has predicted that the article will be recruited. Paul's grammar registers the strain his argument is complaining about.

The prepositional formula deserves separate treatment because it is the most frequent construction in the corpus. En Christo and its variants occur upward of eighty times in the Pauline letters, and the Name is anarthrous in nearly all of them. The phrase has been described for over a century as a formula of a distinctive kind,

¹⁴ Ephesians 5:23.

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 1:12-13.

resistant to paraphrase either as instrument or as location¹⁶. What the syntax shows is narrower than the theological debate: a short prepositional phrase with an anarthrous Name is treated as sufficient to define a domain, without a supporting noun and without an article.

The extreme case is in the second Corinthian letter: *ei tis en Christo, kaine ktisis*¹⁷. There is no finite verb in either half. A conditional protasis consisting of a pronoun and a prepositional phrase governs an apodosis consisting of an adjective and a noun. The clause is grammatical Greek and it is intelligible, and both facts depend on the prepositional phrase being able to carry a domain unaided. Substitute a role noun and the sentence collapses at once: if anyone in the teacher, new creation is not a sentence in any language.

A clause in Colossians shows the same construction in final position. *Alla panta kai en pasin Christos*¹⁸ closes with the anarthrous Name after two indefinite plurals and a prepositional phrase, and again without a finite verb. The Name is doing the work that a copula and a predicate would otherwise have to do. Whatever theological weight the clause carries, its syntax is minimal in exactly the way this book has described, and the minimalism is not a stylistic preference of one author, since the same shape recurs across letters of contested authorship.

Coordination in Paul more broadly repays a careful look, because the claim of the earlier chapters was too strong. The connective does survive. Paul writes of being heirs together with Christ, and of all things belonging to the Corinthians while they belong to Christ and Christ to God¹⁹. These are coordinate and subordinate structures with the Name inside them, and they are not ungrammatical. What fails is parity. In each case the second term is derived from the first, or the series terminates on the Name and cannot continue past it.

A methodological caution must be entered against the argument just made, and it is a serious one. The Greek article is recruited for

¹⁶ Adolf Deissmann, *Die neutestamentliche Formel "in Christo Jesu"* (Marburg: Elwert, 1892); Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 67-199.

¹⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:17.

¹⁸ Colossians 3:11.

¹⁹ Romans 8:17; 1 Corinthians 3:22-23.

many reasons that have nothing to do with description. It disambiguates case in oblique forms. It is often suppressed after prepositions as a matter of idiom rather than of meaning. Its behavior in genitive constructions is governed by tendencies formulated long before any theological question arose²⁰. Any account that reads the presence of the article as evidence of a descriptive frame must first subtract these causes, and this book does not pretend to have subtracted them completely.

With that caution registered, three findings from the Pauline corpus survive. First, the Name appears anarthrous in the transmitted formulae, in the accusative of proclamation, and in the prepositional formula, at rates and in positions where role nouns in the same author take the article. Second, the Name governs sequences of finite verbs across changes of aspect without resumptive pronouns. Third, the article and the descriptive frame appear together, and the clearest articular instances are also the clearest descriptive ones.

Two claims do not survive contact with Paul and are withdrawn here rather than defended. The Name does initiate more often than it concludes, but it can conclude, and Galatians shows it. The Name does resist standing as subject of an identity clause with a class predicate, but it does not resist identity clauses as such, and Philippians shows it. Both withdrawals narrow the thesis. Neither touches its core, which concerns scaffolding and closure rather than position and equation.

What Paul does not provide is a control. Everything read in this chapter comes from an author with a stake in the Name, writing in a register shaped by proclamation. The pattern might belong to that register. The following chapters therefore move outward: first to the Greek writers of the generation after Paul, who inherit the formulae without inheriting his rhetorical situation, and then to Latin, to liturgy, and finally to writers who used the Name in order to attack what it stood for.

²⁰ The tendency known as Apollonius' canon, that a governing noun and its dependent genitive normally either both take the article or both omit it, is discussed in Blass-Debrunner-Funk, section 259, and in Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 239-240.

10. The Anarthrous Name in the Greek Fathers

The generation after Paul offers something Paul cannot. These writers inherit the formulae without inheriting the situation that produced them. They are not founding congregations, not defending an apostolate, and in one case not writing to persuade at all. If the compression documented in the Pauline letters belongs to Paul's rhetorical position rather than to the Name, it should weaken here. This chapter reports where it weakens and where it does not, and the report is mixed in ways that require the thesis to be refined rather than repeated.

Ignatius of Antioch is the best available test. He writes seven letters while under guard on the way to Rome, at the beginning of the second century, in circumstances that leave no room for revision²¹. The Greek is compressed to the point of obscurity in places, and the compression is not the polish of a stylist but the pressure of dictation. Whatever appears repeatedly in Ignatius appears because it came to him without deliberation, and habits of that kind are better evidence of what a language does than any composed period.

The dominant form in Ignatius is the compound. *Iesous Christos* appears in nearly every paragraph, most often anarthrous, and the prepositional phrase *en Iesou Christo* functions as it does in Paul, as a self-sufficient domain marker requiring no supporting noun. What is notable is not the frequency but the absence of any point at which Ignatius explains the compound. He is writing to congregations he has never visited, in a Greek that is sometimes hard to construe, and he never treats the Name as a term that could be misunderstood²².

The clearest structural evidence in Ignatius is the anti-docetic sequence in the letter to the Trallians. Against those who deny the reality of the passion, he sets a chain of aorist passives, each preceded by the adverb truly: truly born, truly persecuted, truly crucified, truly

²¹ Ignatius, Letters, in *The Apostolic Fathers*, ed. Ehrman, vol. 1. On the text, the date, and the problem of the recensions see William R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 3-7.

²² On the early and uniform diffusion of the usage see Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 98-108.

raised²³. The subject is stated once and governs the whole chain. No pronoun resumes it, no article is introduced, and no participial phrase intervenes. The sequence is paratactic and terminal. It is the procedural chaining described in the analytic chapters, in a text written to establish a fact under dispute.

Substitution destroys the sequence, and it destroys it in a specific way. Supply a role noun as subject and the adverb becomes the wrong instrument, because truly born now answers a question about the class rather than about the individual: a prophet was truly born invites the reply that prophets are ordinarily born, and the emphatic adverb has nothing to attach to. The chain works because the subject is not a member of a set for which the predicates would be expected. Only a Name can carry a sequence of adverbs of reality.

An articular instance in the same corpus must be reported. In the letter to the Ephesians, Ignatius writes of Iesous ho *Christos* being carried in the womb by Mary²⁴, and here the Name appears with the article in a construction of narrative specification. This is exactly the environment the previous chapter predicted for the article: the clause is establishing a lineage and a mode of coming, and it is doing so against opponents who deny it. The article is recruited where identification is at stake. The correlation holds in the case that might have broken it.

A harder passage in the same letter appears at first to refute the compression claim outright. Ignatius writes a hymnic series describing one physician, fleshly and spiritual, begotten and unbegotten²⁵, in a sequence of paired opposites piled without a verb. This is predicate stacking of the kind this book has said the Name resists. The passage cannot be set aside, and reading it closely produces a better result than defending the original claim would have done.

The decisive feature is where the Name stands. The series does not begin with the Name. It begins with a role noun, one physician, and proceeds through the antitheses, and the Name arrives only at

²³ Ignatius, Trallians 9.1-2.

²⁴ Ignatius, Ephesians 18.2.

²⁵ Ignatius, Ephesians 7.2.

the end, in apposition with the title our Lord. The stack is carried by the role noun. The Name closes it. This is the end-stop behavior described in the analytic chapters, and it means the passage confirms rather than refutes the pattern, though it confirms a narrower pattern than the one originally stated.

That observation generalizes, and it is the most useful finding in this chapter. In the Greek corpus, predicate stacking and the Name are not incompatible. What is incompatible is predicate stacking with the Name in the subject slot. Where a writer wants to pile attributes, the subject position is occupied by something else: a role noun, a demonstrative pronoun, a relative, or a participle. The Name is either withheld to the end of the series or displaced into apposition. The stack requires the subject slot, and the Name does not yield it.

One further Ignatian construction weighs against the thesis and is recorded without softening. In the letter to the Smyrnaeans he writes in the accusative of a verb of praise, with the Name followed by an articular apposition naming deity ²⁶. The Name here takes an appositional title with the article, in the position where this book has claimed apposition weakens. The clause is not strained and requires no repair. Ignatius could apposition freely when he chose, and the analytic chapters overstated the resistance.

The letter attributed to Clement of Rome supplies the strongest counterevidence in the Greek corpus, and it must be given its full weight. This is a long deliberative letter in a Hellenistic rhetorical register, with periods of a length Ignatius never attempts. In its thirty-sixth chapter the Name receives an articular apposition with a dependent genitive, naming a cultic office and the offerings that belong to it²⁷. The construction is precisely the structure the analytic chapters described as expensive, and here it is executed without visible cost.

That result matters more than one passage would ordinarily matter, because the letter does this repeatedly. Titles are appositioned, genitives of specification are stacked, and relative clauses extend the description across several lines. If this book had

²⁶ Ignatius, Smyrnaeans 1.1.

²⁷ 1 Clement 36.1.

read only the letter of Clement, it would not have arrived at its thesis. Any honest statement of the evidence has to begin from that fact rather than from the passages that favor the argument.

Something else happens in the same letter, however, and it is the point at which the genre control begins to yield a result. When Clement stops arguing and begins to quote, the compression returns. His long citation of the fourth servant passage of Isaiah²⁸, applied to Christ, is set out with almost no connective apparatus of his own, and the clauses that frame the citation are as short as anything in Ignatius. The same author, in the same letter, writes in two registers, and the Name behaves differently in each.

This is a partial concession to the genre objection stated in the chapter on method, and it should be recorded as one. The compression is not a property of the Name in all environments. It is strongest in proclamation, in transmitted formulae, and in assertion under dispute. It is weakest in deliberative and epistolary argument. A claim that the Name always compresses the clause is false, and this book does not make it after this chapter.

The concession is nonetheless limited, and the limit is where the argument now sits. Within a single author writing in two registers, the Name shifts its behavior. Role nouns do not. *Rex* and *archiereus* and *didaskalos* take determiners, appositions, and genitives of specification in the compressed register and in the expansive one alike, because they require them in order to refer at all. The Name takes them in one register and does without them in the other. That asymmetry is the finding, and it survives every concession made in this chapter.

The *Didache* contributes by omission, and the omission is worth more than several positive instances. This is the earliest surviving church order, and its eucharistic prayers are the earliest liturgical texts in the corpus. They do not use the Name. They address the Father and speak of Jesus as the servant or child, with the article, in a

²⁸ 1 Clement 16.3-14, citing Isaiah 53:1-12.

construction of pure apposition²⁹. Where the Didache wants a role, it uses a role, and it does not reach for the Name to fill the slot.

Two readings of that absence are possible and only one of them can be sustained. The first is that the Name was unavailable or unfamiliar to the community behind the text, which is difficult to maintain for any Greek-speaking congregation of the period. The second is that the register of the prayers, which is petitionary and thanksgiving rather than proclamatory, is a register in which the Name does not sit easily. The prayers ask, and the Name does not appear in clauses that ask. That is a structural observation, not a devotional one.

Polycarp occupies an intermediate position and can be treated briefly. His letter to the Philippians quotes Paul heavily³⁰, and where it quotes, the anarthrous forms come with the quotation. Where Polycarp writes on his own account, the constructions lengthen and the titles multiply. The pattern is the same one seen in Clement: inherited material is compressed, composed material is expansive, and the difference is not a difference in doctrine.

Justin Martyr is the decisive case for the correlation between the article and the descriptive frame, and he is decisive because his project requires the article. In the Dialogue with Trypho he is arguing that a particular man is the figure the scriptures announced. That argument cannot be conducted with an anarthrous Name, because the whole question is whether one candidate satisfies a description. Justin therefore writes *ho Christos* continually, and he writes it with comparison, with proof texts, and with the vocabulary of qualification.

The relevant passages are the sequence in which Justin takes up whether this one is the Christ and whether the scriptures permit the identification³¹. The article is not doing devotional work there. It is doing the work of definite description: it points to the one figure the prophetic texts specify, and the argument then asks whether Jesus

²⁹ Didache 9.2-3 and 10.2. See Kurt Niederwimmer, *The Didache: A Commentary*, trans. Linda M. Maloney, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 144-156.

³⁰ Polycarp, To the Philippians 1-12.

³¹ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 32, 48-49, and 89. See Oskar Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy: A Study in Justin Martyr's Proof-Text Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 1987).

can be placed in that slot. This is the strongest confirmation available that the article accompanies the identificatory frame, and it comes from a writer with no interest in the syntactic question.

Justin also settles a lexical question this book has otherwise left open. In the *Apology* he plays on the closeness of the Name to the ordinary Greek adjective meaning useful or good³², a pun that is impossible unless the lexical content of the word is still live for his readers. The onomastic reading, on which the word had become a bare second name by the end of the first century, does not survive that pun. The syntactic finding is unaffected: a word can be lexically transparent and still refuse to be substituted.

Melito of Sardis, writing on the Passover in the second half of the second century, produces the largest single body of counterevidence in the Greek material, and the shape of that counterevidence is instructive. His homily proceeds by long series of predicates, sometimes twenty or thirty in sequence³³. It is rhetorically the opposite of Ignatius. And in almost every one of those series, the subject slot is occupied by a demonstrative pronoun, this one, with the Name supplied at the end or left to be inferred.

Melito thus provides in extreme form the pattern found in Ignatius. A writer who wants to accumulate predicates does not put the Name in the subject slot. He puts a demonstrative there and lets the Name close the sequence. The reason is available on the page rather than in theory: the series depends on holding the subject open across many clauses, and the Name closes what it occupies. A demonstrative can be held open. The Name cannot.

Three findings from the Greek fathers can be stated with the qualifications this chapter has earned. First, the compression of the clause around the Name is real, is strongest in proclamation, transmitted formulae, and assertion under dispute, and is weak or absent in deliberative argument. Second, the article accompanies the identificatory frame with high consistency, and the clearest instance

³² Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 4.1-5. The same play on the two words is registered by Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 3.5.

³³ Melito of Sardis, *On Pascha*, especially sections 66-105. Text and translation in Stuart George Hall, ed., *Melito of Sardis: On Pascha and Fragments* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

of this is the writer whose project is identification. Third, predicate stacking and the Name coexist only where the Name has vacated the subject slot.

Two claims from the analytic chapters are withdrawn. The Name does not resist apposition generally, since Ignatius and Clement apposition it freely with articular titles. And the Name does not compress every clause it enters, since Clement's periods are as long with the Name as without it. What remains is narrower and more defensible: the Name does not require scaffolding in order to refer, and where a clause is built to accumulate rather than to assert, the Name is displaced from the position that would carry the accumulation.

11. The Latin Witness

Latin provides the one test this book could not construct for itself. The correlation reported in the two preceding chapters, between the presence of the Greek article and the appearance of a descriptive frame, is open to a devastating objection: the correlation may be a fact about the article rather than a fact about the Name. Articles do the work of definite description in every language that has them. If that is all the evidence amounts to, the thesis of this book reduces to an observation about Greek determiners.

Latin has no definite article. It never had one, and the Romance articles develop from demonstratives long after the period examined here³⁴. This means that a Latin corpus removes the confounding variable entirely. The prediction is exact and it is falsifiable. If the compression documented in Greek is driven by the article, it should disappear when the Name enters a language with no article to suppress. If it is driven by the Name, it should survive and be executed by other means.

What Latin uses instead of an article is well described and easy to check. Definite reference for common nouns is fixed by demonstratives, by possessives, by genitives of specification, and by

³⁴ On the absence of the article in Latin and the later development of the Romance forms see J. B. Hofmann and Anton Szantyr, *Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik* (Munich: Beck, 1965), 191-195.

the surrounding discourse. A Latin writer who wants a particular king writes *ille rex*, or *rex noster*, or *rex Persarum*, or relies on a preceding mention. The determination is not absent from Latin. It is distributed across other devices, and those devices leave visible traces in the clause.

The classical control corpus can now do its work. Cicero writes *rex* with a modifier, a demonstrative, or a genitive of nation with such regularity that the unmodified nominative in an isolated clause is rare enough to be worth remarking when it occurs. Caesar's *dux* ordinarily arrives specified, most often by a genitive: the leader of our army, that leader whom. Neither writer treats these nouns as capable of anchoring a clause by themselves, and neither had any motive to avoid doing so. The requirement is grammatical, not stylistic.

Against that baseline, the Latin renderings of the Pauline formulae are striking. The Vulgate gives *nos autem praedicamus Christum crucifixum*³⁵, with the Name in the accusative and the participle immediately following, and no demonstrative, no possessive, and no genitive anywhere in the clause. The Greek original raised a question about a missing article. The Latin cannot raise that question, and yet the clause has exactly the same shape: bare noun, bare participle, verb of proclamation, full stop.

The credal formula behaves the same way. *Christus mortuus est pro peccatis nostris secundum scripturas*³⁶ reproduces the Greek clause by clause, with the Name unmodified in the nominative and the only additional material consisting of two prepositional phrases, one of benefit and one of conformity. A Latin reader encountering that sentence has no determiner to guide reference and needs none. Substitute *sacerdos* or *rex* or *iudex* and a Latin reader immediately does need one, and would supply *ille* or *noster* without being asked.

The verbless constructions provide the sharpest independent confirmation, because they occur in both languages without either language forcing them. Where Paul writes a conditional protasis and apodosis with no finite verb in either half, the Vulgate gives *si qua*

³⁵ 1 Corinthians 1:23, Vulgate.

³⁶ 1 Corinthians 15:3, Vulgate.

ergo in Christo nova creatura³⁷, and the Latin is likewise verbless. Two unrelated grammatical systems, one with an article and one without, tolerate the same extreme reduction around the same Name, and tolerate it in the same clause.

A second verbless case closes a clause on the Name in both languages. Sed omnia et in omnibus *Christus*³⁸ places the Name in final position after two indefinite ablatives, again without a copula. This is the end-stop behavior described in the analytic chapters, executed in a language whose word order is freer than Greek and which therefore had no structural obligation to place the Name last. The position is chosen, and it is chosen for the same effect in both languages.

One Latin rendering departs from its Greek original and the departure should be recorded. Where Paul's identity clause runs without a copula, the Vulgate supplies one: mihi enim vivere *Christus* est³⁹. The Latin adds est. This is a small difference and it points in an inconvenient direction for the thesis, since it suggests that Latin found the verbless equation less tolerable than Greek did. The concession is narrow but it is real, and it belongs in the record alongside the confirmations.

The prepositional formula transfers into Latin without loss and this is more significant than it appears. In Christo, with the Name in the ablative, does the same work that the Greek phrase did: it marks a domain, it requires no supporting noun, and it needs no determiner. In Latin there is no article to have been suppressed. Whatever makes the phrase self-sufficient therefore cannot be article suppression. It is the noun, and the noun is a Name.

Tertullian is the first Latin writer with enough surviving prose to test. He is writing at Carthage around the turn of the third century, in a Latin he is partly inventing as he goes, since much of the technical vocabulary of Western theology enters the language through him⁴⁰. He is also a trained rhetorician with a taste for antithesis and paradox,

³⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:17, Vulgate.

³⁸ Colossians 3:11, Vulgate.

³⁹ Philippians 1:21, Vulgate.

⁴⁰ Rene Braun, *Deus Christianorum: Recherches sur le vocabulaire doctrinal de Tertullien*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1977).

which makes him an unpromising witness for a thesis about compression. That is exactly why he is useful.

What Tertullian reproduces is the register split found in Clement. When he argues, his periods are long, his appositions multiply, and titles accumulate around the Name without visible strain. When he asserts, the clauses shorten abruptly and the Name stands unmodified before a perfect indicative. The same author, in the same treatise, moves between the two. This is the finding of the previous chapter reproduced in a language with no article, which means the split cannot be an artifact of article behavior.

His treatise on the flesh of Christ contains the most-quoted line in early Latin Christian writing and it is habitually misquoted. Tertullian does not write that he believes because it is absurd. He writes a graded sequence in which the death of the Son of God is credible because it is unfitting and certain because it is impossible⁴¹. The formula *credo quia absurdum* is a later paraphrase and has no manuscript basis. The point is worth making here because the actual sequence is a chain of short predicative clauses of exactly the kind this book has described, and the paraphrase destroys the structure it claims to summarize.

Tertullian also confirms the withdrawal made in the preceding chapter. He appositions the Name freely, stacking *dominus noster* and titles of office beside it, and the constructions are not strained. Any version of this book's argument that claimed the Name resists apposition is refuted by the Latin corpus as decisively as by the Greek. The claim that survives is about what the Name requires, not about what it tolerates.

Cyprian, writing a generation later at the same see⁴², has a more classical ear and longer periods than Tertullian, and his letters and treatises are correspondingly more expansive. He uses titles of office heavily, which is unsurprising in a bishop writing about episcopal order. But his exhortations compress, and where he cites a formula

⁴¹ Tertullian, *De carne Christi* 5.4. On the modern provenance of the paraphrase *credo quia absurdum* see Peter Harrison, "I Believe Because It Is Absurd: The Enlightenment Invention of Tertullian's Credo," *Church History* 86 (2017): 339-364.

⁴² Cyprian, *Epistulae* and *De unitate ecclesiae catholicae*, in *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 3-3C (Turnhout: Brepols, 1972-1999).

the formula arrives in its short form. The register split is now attested in three authors across two languages, and in each case it tracks the function of the clause rather than the theology of the writer.

That result is the principal finding of this chapter and it can be stated flatly. The behavior traced in this book is not a fact about the Greek article, because it occurs in full strength in a language that has no article. It is not a fact about a single author's rhetoric, because it occurs in authors whose rhetoric differs as widely as Ignatius differs from Tertullian. What is left is the noun itself and the position it occupies.

The asymmetry with role nouns is if anything sharper in Latin than in Greek. *Sacerdos*, *iudex*, *rex*, *magister*, and *dux* require a demonstrative, a possessive, or a genitive in order to refer, and they require it in both registers. A Latin writer cannot assert baldly that the priest stood without inviting the question which priest, and Latin has no article with which to answer it, so the writer must supply a word. *Christus* takes no such word, in either register, in any of the authors read here.

Word order deserves separate comment because Latin permits arrangements Greek does not. If the Name were an ordinary noun, the freedom of Latin word order should distribute it across positions in proportion to emphasis. What appears instead is a bimodal distribution: initial position in assertive clauses, final position in acclamation and in verbless predication. The middle of the clause, where a Latin writer would naturally place a noun requiring specification, is comparatively empty.

The acclamatory pattern reaches its most familiar form in a text far later than the period under study, and the dating must be given honestly. *Christus vincit*, *Christus regnat*, *Christus imperat* belongs to the Frankish royal laudes of the eighth century⁴³, not to the early Church. A text of that date cannot be used as evidence for early usage, and it is not used as such here. What it does show is the durability of the structure: three clauses, one Name repeated without

⁴³ On the acclamations and their date see Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae: A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Mediaeval Ruler Worship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1946).

variation, three present indicatives, no modifier of any kind, in a composition seven centuries after Paul.

A body of scholarship has argued that Christian Latin constitutes a special language, a *Sondersprache* with its own lexicon and syntactic habits formed within a closed community⁴⁴. If that thesis were correct, it would supply an alternative explanation for everything in this chapter: the behavior of the Name would be a dialect feature rather than a property of the Name. The thesis has been substantially qualified since it was proposed, and the qualification helps the present argument.

What the later work established is that the distinctively Christian features of the Latin are overwhelmingly lexical: new words, calques on Greek, and semantic shifts in existing vocabulary. The syntax of Christian Latin is the syntax of contemporary Latin. There is no separate Christian rule for determiners, for word order, or for predication. If the behavior of the Name were a dialect feature it would have to be a syntactic one, and the syntactic layer is precisely the layer that is not distinctive.

The relation between the older Latin versions and Jerome's revision provides one final piece of evidence, of a kind that is available for no other part of the corpus. The pre-Jerome Latin translations vary considerably in vocabulary and in word order⁴⁵, and Jerome revised them heavily. Where the Name appears, his revisions overwhelmingly leave the immediate syntax alone. He changes the verb, the preposition, the surrounding nouns. He does not add determiners around the Name, and he does not remove them, because there are none to remove.

That stability across a deliberate revision by a translator with strong views about Latin style is worth more than a dozen well-chosen quotations. Jerome was not defending a thesis about grammar. He was producing a usable Latin Bible, and he intervened

⁴⁴ The thesis was formulated by Josef Schrijnen and developed by the Nijmegen school; see Christine Mohrmann, *Etudes sur le latin des chretiens*, 4 vols. (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1958-1977).

⁴⁵ Hermann Roensch, *Itala und Vulgata: Das Sprachidiom der urchristlichen Itala und der katholischen Vulgata* (Marburg: Elwert, 1875); the critical materials are published by the Vetus Latina Institute, Beuron.

wherever the older versions read badly. The clauses in which the Name stands unmodified before a finite verb read well enough that he left them, and the ones he did rewrite he rewrote around the Name rather than through it.

Three findings from the Latin material can be stated. First, the compression and the closure documented in Greek recur in a language with no definite article, which removes article suppression as an explanation. Second, the register split between assertion and deliberation recurs across authors, languages, and centuries, which makes it a property of the function of the clause. Third, the asymmetry with role nouns is sharper in Latin, because Latin must supply a lexical determiner where Greek could supply a grammatical one, and the Name requires neither.

One concession is recorded against the thesis. Latin supplies a copula in at least one identity clause where Greek did without, which suggests that the verbless equation is less native to Latin than to Greek. This does not touch the findings above, but it is a reminder that the two languages are not interchangeable and that a pattern present in both may be present for partly different reasons. The next chapter takes up the material where the pattern is at its most extreme and where the genre objection is at its strongest: creed and liturgy.

12. Creed and Liturgy

This chapter examines the material in which the genre objection is strongest. Creeds are short by design. Liturgical formulae are shorter still, and acclamations are the shortest form of connected speech a language permits. If compression around the Name were simply what these forms do to everything they touch, this is where the illusion would be manufactured. The chapter therefore does two things: it reads the material, and it applies the control the method chapter promised, by examining clauses in the same forms whose subject is not the Name.

The earliest hymnic material in the corpus is embedded in the Pauline letters, and the most studied specimen is the passage in the second chapter of Philippians. It has been read as a pre-Pauline hymn

since the early twentieth century⁴⁶, and whatever its origin, its shape is unmistakable. It accumulates predicates across eleven verses: existing in the form of God, not grasping, emptying, taking, being found, humbling, becoming obedient. Seven participial and finite predications in sequence, and the passage builds to a climax.

The subject of that accumulation is a relative pronoun. The hymn does not begin with the Name. It begins with *who*, and the relative carries every predicate in the descent. The Name appears at the end, in the acclamation that closes the passage, where every knee bends and every tongue confesses. This is the pattern established in the chapter on the Greek fathers, appearing here in the earliest hymnic material available: predicate accumulation requires a subject slot the Name does not occupy, and the Name terminates the sequence it did not begin.

The same architecture appears in the hymn embedded in the first chapter of Colossians⁴⁷. Again the opening is a relative pronoun, again a long chain of predications follows, image, firstborn, head, beginning, and again the Name does not stand as the subject of the chain. The clause that introduces the whole passage names the Son by a title and a pronoun. Two independent hymnic fragments, in letters of different authorship status, follow the identical structural rule.

The most extreme case is the fragment quoted in the first letter to Timothy. Six clauses of exactly parallel construction, each consisting of a passive aorist and a prepositional phrase: manifested in flesh, vindicated in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among nations, believed in the world, taken up in glory⁴⁸. It is the most compressed connected passage in the New Testament. The subject is a relative pronoun, and the Name does not appear in the fragment at all.

That absence is worth more than a positive instance. Here is a text in which compression is maximal, in which every clause is stripped

⁴⁶ Philippians 2:6-11. The hymnic reading was established by Ernst Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus*: Eine Untersuchung zu Phil. 2,5-11 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1928); for the later debate see Ralph P. Martin, *A Hymn of Christ*: Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997).

⁴⁷ Colossians 1:15-20.

⁴⁸ 1 Timothy 3:16.

to a verb and a prepositional phrase, and in which the Name is not present. If compression were produced by the Name, the most compressed passage in the corpus should be saturated with it. It is not. The compression belongs to the form, and this chapter must concede that at the outset.

The textual history of that fragment supplies a second observation. The relative pronoun that governs the six clauses was altered in a substantial part of the manuscript tradition to a divine title, a change of two letters in the majuscule script that transforms a relative into a subject⁴⁹. Scribes found a relative pronoun standing as the subject of six unanchored clauses uncomfortable, and they repaired it. What they inserted was a title, not the Name. Even under the pressure of repair, the Name was not the word that came to hand.

The prologue of the fourth Gospel completes this group and completes the pattern. Eighteen verses of predication follow a subject that is a title, the Word, and the Name appears for the first time in the final verse⁵⁰. The prologue is not brief and is not creedal, so it cannot be dismissed as a product of formulaic compression. It is a sustained composition, and it observes the same rule: where predicates accumulate, the subject slot is filled by a title or a pronoun, and the Name enters at the end.

The developed creeds present the reverse case and must be treated carefully, because they appear at first to be counterevidence. The Latin baptismal creed of the Roman church, in the form that became the Apostles' Creed⁵¹, gives the Name and then stacks appositions on it: his only Son, our Lord. The creed adopted at Nicaea, and the enlarged form associated with Constantinople⁵², go much further, appending articular titles and participles at length.

A closer look at the Greek of the Nicene text is required and it repays the effort. The Name itself is anarthrous. What follows is a

⁴⁹ On the variant see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1994), 573-574.

⁵⁰ John 1:1-18; the Name appears at 1:17.

⁵¹ On the Old Roman Creed and its development see J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (London: Longman, 1972), 100-166.

⁵² For the Greek texts of 325 and 381 see Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 215-216 and 297-298; on the theological history see Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

series of appositional titles each carrying its own article, the Son of God, the only-begotten, and the participial chain of the incarnation and passion is governed by those articles rather than by the Name. Grammatically the accumulation hangs from the articular appositions. The Name sits between the numeral and the titles, unmodified, and the titles carry the weight.

This is a fine distinction and it should not be pressed further than it will bear. A reader may reasonably say that the appositional titles are part of the same phrase as the Name and that the distinction between what the Name governs and what the titles govern is an artifact of analysis. The reply is that the distinction is visible in the morphology: the articles are there, they agree with the titles, and they do not agree with a bare accusative Name. But the objection is fair and is recorded.

The control promised in the method chapter can now be run, and it produces a result that cuts both ways. The Latin baptismal creed has three articles. The first concerns the Father, the second the Son, the third the Spirit. If compression were a property of creedal form as such, all three should compress equally. If it were a property of the Name, only the second should show the distinctive behavior.

Neither prediction is confirmed. The first article gives the Father appositions and a genitive of specification: almighty, creator of heaven and earth. The third article gives a bare list with no predication at all. The second article gives the Name, its appositions, and then something neither of the others contains: a chain of relative clauses narrating events in sequence, conceived, born, suffered, crucified, died, buried, descended, rose, ascended, seated, will come.

The structural asymmetry is the finding, and it is not the finding the analytic chapters predicted. The distinctive feature of the Name's article in the creed is not compression, since the Father's article is compressed as well. It is chaining. The Father receives attributes. The Spirit receives a list. The Son receives a sequence of events held together across eleven predications by a single relative pronoun and one Name. No other article in the creed narrates.

That distinction is more useful than the one this book set out with. Attributes can be given to any noun that will take a determiner. A

narrative sequence requires a subject that remains identical across every event in the sequence, and it requires that identity to hold without renewal. The relative pronoun supplies the syntax for this, and the relative pronoun requires an antecedent that cannot be mistaken. In the creed that antecedent is the Name, and there is nothing else in the text that could serve.

The eucharistic material extends the finding into a different register. The anaphora of the treatise conventionally called the Apostolic Tradition, whose attribution and date are both contested⁵³ and neither of which the present argument depends on, narrates in the same way: he was sent, he was conceived, he was manifested, he stretched out his hands. Chained aorists under a single unrenewed subject. Where the text asks rather than narrates, it addresses the Father, and the Name appears in the closing formula of mediation rather than in the petition itself.

That distribution is confirmed by the earliest liturgical texts of all. The eucharistic prayers of the Didache, examined in an earlier chapter, ask and thank, and they do not use the Name. The Aramaic acclamation preserved both at the end of the first Corinthian letter and in the Didache⁵⁴ invokes the Lord and does not use the Name. The baptismal formula in the first Gospel names Father, Son, and Spirit⁵⁵, and does not use the Name.

Three liturgical texts of the first century, in three different functions, all avoid the Name, and the functions are the same three in each case: petition, invocation, and ritual naming. The Name appears where the text narrates or acclaims. This is a distributional claim about early liturgy that can be checked against the texts by any reader, and it is not a claim any theological position requires.

The acclamatory function deserves its own note because it is the one place where the analytic chapters were exactly right. An acclamation is a clause with no informational content: it does not tell the hearer anything not already held. Its whole work is to bring a

⁵³ Paul F. Bradshaw, Maxwell E. Johnson, and L. Edward Phillips, *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 13-17 and 37-48.

⁵⁴ 1 Corinthians 16:22; Didache 10.6.

⁵⁵ Matthew 28:19.

name and a predicate into contact and stop. The Philippian hymn ends in one, the Nicene text does not contain one, and the Latin acclamations of the later Western liturgy consist of nothing else. In this function the Name is not merely admissible but close to obligatory.

The reason is available from the structure of the form rather than from devotion. An acclamation cannot tolerate a subject that requires specification, because the specification would supply information and the form excludes information. A role noun in an acclamation must either be determined, which introduces content, or left undetermined, which leaves the acclamation about no one. The Name is the only kind of noun that satisfies an acclamation's two requirements at once: full determination and no content.

Three findings from the creedal and liturgical material can now be stated, and two of them require the thesis to change. First, compression is a property of these forms and not of the Name, and this book concedes the point without reservation. Second, in the hymnic fragments the Name does not occupy the subject slot under which predicates accumulate, and it enters at the close, without exception across four independent texts.

Third, and most importantly, the distinctive contribution of the Name in the developed creeds is not compression but chaining: the maintenance of subject identity across a sequence of narrated events without renewal of the subject. This is a testable claim about a specific structure rather than a general claim about brevity, and it explains why the Son's article is the only narrative article in the creed.

One further finding is negative and is stated as such. The earliest liturgical texts avoid the Name in petition, invocation, and ritual naming. If this book had claimed that the Name is at home in every religious register, that claim is false. The Name appears where a text narrates or acclaims, and it is absent where a text asks. Whatever explains that absence is not explained here, and it is flagged in the concluding chapter as the clearest open problem the argument leaves behind.

There is a name for the structure this chapter has described, and it belongs to a body of work on the execution of authority in language

rather than to the philology of the creeds. A compiled rule is a rule that has been resolved once and thereafter is executed without being re-derived: the reasoning that produced it is no longer traversed at the point of use, and the form is applied because it is the form, not because the user has re-established its grounds. Compiled rules are not defective reasoning. They are the normal condition of formulae that must be reproduced identically by speakers who do not share the competence that generated them.

The creeds and the acclamations are compiled in exactly this sense, and the Name is the element on which the compilation is most visible. A reciting community does not re-derive the reference of the Name at each performance, does not select it against competing designations, and cannot substitute an equivalent without producing a defective recitation. The chaining of subject identity across narrated events, which this chapter identified as the distinctive contribution of the Name in the developed creeds, is possible only because the subject is not renewed: renewal would require re-derivation, and the formula does not permit it. What earlier chapters described as the grammatical solitude of the Name is, in the liturgical register, the signature of a rule executed without reading.

The material examined so far shares one liability. Every text in it was written by people committed to the Name, in registers they had shaped for its use. The genre control has answered some of the objection, but not the deepest form of it, which is that a community will develop whatever grammar its central term requires and then the grammar will look like a property of the term. The only real answer is to read writers who used the Name while rejecting everything it stood for. That is the next chapter but one; before it, the manuscripts themselves have something to add.

13. Nomina Sacra: The Name on the Page

Everything argued so far has been argued at the level of the clause. This chapter changes level. It asks what the earliest copyists did with the Name as a physical object on a page, and the answer constitutes a line of evidence entirely independent of syntax. Independent

evidence is worth more than additional evidence of the same kind, because it can fail in ways the original argument cannot predict.

From the earliest Christian manuscripts that survive, a small group of words is not written out. They appear contracted, with the first letter or two and the last letter or two retained and the middle removed, and the contraction is marked by a horizontal stroke drawn above it. The practice has been known since the nineteenth century under the name given to it by its first systematic student⁵⁶, and it is one of the most distinctive features of Christian book production in antiquity.

The group is small and its core is smaller still. Four words are treated with near-complete consistency across the whole surviving corpus: the words for God and for Lord, the name Jesus, and the Name that is the subject of this book. A wider set of a dozen or so words receives the same treatment less consistently, among them spirit, cross, father, son, savior, and man. Beyond that set the practice does not extend⁵⁷.

The first question a papyrologist asks about any abbreviation is whether it saves labor or material, and the answer here is no. The contracted forms are too few to affect the length of a manuscript measurably. They appear in expensively produced codices where economy was plainly not a concern, and they are absent from documentary papyri where scribal shorthand was normal and extensive. Whatever this practice is, it is not shorthand, and this has been the consensus for a century⁵⁸.

The stroke above the contraction is worth a sentence of its own. It is not a letter and it is not part of the word. It is an instruction to the reader, telling him that what he is looking at is not to be read as the letters present but as a word he is expected to know. It converts a written form into a pointer. That is a graphic device with no

⁵⁶ Ludwig Traube, *Nomina Sacra: Versuch einer Geschichte der christlichen Kuerzung* (Munich: Beck, 1907).

⁵⁷ For the inventory and the statistics see A. H. R. E. Paap, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri of the First Five Centuries A.D.* (Leiden: Brill, 1959); Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 95-134.

⁵⁸ Colin H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1979), 26-48.

equivalent for ordinary vocabulary in Greek book hands of the period.

The morphology of the contraction is the most important datum in this chapter and it is easy to overlook. The contracted forms retain the inflectional ending. The nominative, the accusative, and the genitive of the Name are all distinguishable in their contracted state, because the final letter is the case-bearing letter and it is always preserved. What is deleted is the stem. What is protected is the inflection.

That distribution reverses what one would expect from an abbreviation. An abbreviation ordinarily preserves enough of the stem to identify the word and lets the ending go, which is exactly what documentary shorthand does. Here the identifying body of the word is discarded as dispensable and the grammatical relation is preserved as indispensable. The scribes protected the syntax and abandoned the lexicon.

Restated in the vocabulary of this book, the copyists treated the Name as an operator. They preserved the part of the word that tells a reader how it connects to the clause and deleted the part that tells him what it means, on the evident assumption that the meaning was not in question and the connection was. This is the claim of the analytic chapters, made at the level of the page, by people who had no thesis about grammar and who were simply copying at speed.

A caution belongs here and it belongs before the argument goes further. Scribal practice is not grammar. The habits of copyists are historically informative and they are not evidence about what a language permits. Nothing in this chapter can substitute for the clause-level analysis, and if the syntactic argument failed, this chapter would not rescue it. What this chapter can do is corroborate from an unrelated direction, and corroboration from an unrelated direction is what a structural claim most needs.

The strongest internal feature of the practice is its referential selectivity. The words in the wider set are contracted only when they refer to the divine. The word for man is contracted where it denotes the humanity of Christ and written out where it denotes a man in the street. The word for spirit is contracted where it denotes the Spirit

and written out where it denotes a wind or a disposition⁵⁹. The same graphic form is applied and withheld according to what the word points to in that sentence.

This rules out the possibility that the practice is mechanical. A scribe applying a rule about spelling does not need to know what the word refers to. A scribe applying this practice has to decide, word by word and clause by clause, what the reference is, and the decisions are largely consistent across manuscripts produced in places with no contact. Whatever else the practice is, it is a system of semantic judgment executed by hand at copying speed.

Given that, the exclusions matter as much as the inclusions. No role noun belongs to the core group. The words for king, teacher, prophet, judge, and high priest are never contracted, in any manuscript, at any date, in the whole surviving corpus, and this holds even where those words are applied to Christ within the same sentence as a contracted Name. A scribe copying a clause in which the Name receives a priestly title contracts the Name and writes out the title.

That is the asymmetry of the analytic chapters appearing in a completely different medium. At the level of the clause, this book has argued that role nouns require scaffolding and the Name does not. At the level of the page, the scribes marked a closed set as non-substitutable and excluded every role noun from it, including the role nouns that the texts they were copying applied to the same person.

The origin of the practice has been debated since it was first identified, and the leading hypothesis has always been that it derives from Jewish treatment of the divine name. That treatment is well documented and it is various. In Hebrew manuscripts from the Judaeen desert the four consonants of the name are sometimes written in an archaic script within a text otherwise in the square script. Sometimes they are replaced by four dots. Sometimes a space is left⁶⁰.

⁵⁹ Paap, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri*, 105-107; Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 122-126.

⁶⁰ On the treatment of the Tetragrammaton in the Judaeen desert manuscripts and in the Greek versions see Emanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 218-221; Martin Roesel, *Adonaj*: Warum Gott "Herr" genannt wird (Tuebingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

The Greek evidence is equally various and equally telling. Some copies of the Greek scriptures leave the Hebrew letters standing untranslated in the middle of a Greek text. Some substitute a title. Some transliterate. No solution became standard, and the absence of a standard is the point: the name could not be normalized into the running script, and every scribe had to do something unusual with it.

Whether the Christian system descends from the Jewish practice is not settled and this book does not need it settled. The two practices differ in method: the Jewish devices isolate the name by exception, the Christian device assimilates a group of words to a shared convention. What they share is the prior judgment, that certain names cannot be written as ordinary words are written. That judgment is the datum, and it is independent of any genealogy between the practices.

Two interpretations of the Christian system compete in the modern literature. One reads the core group as a kind of embryonic confession⁶¹, on the ground that the four words most consistently treated are the four that a creedal statement would need. The other reads it as a devotional practice, a visual expression of reverence analogous to gesture⁶². Both readings assume that the practice carries meaning.

A third position denies that assumption and it deserves a fair statement, since it is the most serious challenge to the use this chapter makes of the material. On this account the contractions are a scribal convention like any other, transmitted because they were transmitted, and the search for significance in them imports modern expectations into ancient copying rooms. Conventions do not require reasons. They require only precedent⁶³.

The reply is the referential selectivity described above. A convention transmitted by precedent does not require the copyist to determine, at each occurrence, whether the word before him denotes the Spirit or a wind. That determination is not conventional behavior;

⁶¹ Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 26-48.

⁶² Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 95-134.

⁶³ Christopher M. Tuckett, "Nomina Sacra: Yes and No?," in *The Biblical Canons*, ed. Jean-Marie Auwers and Henk Jan de Jonge (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 431-458.

it is interpretation, performed continuously and largely consistently. The skeptical position accounts for the transmission of the practice and does not account for its application.

That said, the skeptical position and the interpretive ones are not exclusive, and the honest conclusion is that the practice is both. It became conventional, and it was applied with judgment. This book's use of the material requires only the second, and it requires only the narrow form of it: the copyists distinguished a closed set of words from all others, and the set excluded role nouns.

One further graphic device belongs in this chapter because it shows the same logic extended beyond names. In some of the earliest manuscripts, two Greek letters are superimposed in a way that renders the word for cross and simultaneously produces a figure of a man on a cross. It is the earliest visual reference to the crucifixion in any medium, and it predates the earliest surviving pictorial representation by a considerable margin⁶⁴. Here again a word has been converted into a pointer, and the conversion happens at the level of the letter.

The contribution of this chapter to the argument can be stated in one paragraph. At the level of the page, in the earliest Christian manuscripts, a closed group of words was marked as not-to-be-written-out. The marking preserved grammatical inflection and discarded lexical stem. It was applied according to reference rather than mechanically. And it excluded, without exception, every noun of role and office, including those applied to the same person in the same sentence.

Two limits must be conceded. The first is that this evidence is Christian-internal and therefore cannot serve as a control for the objection that a community produces the grammar its central term requires. The scribes were members of that community. The second is that scribal practice bears on syntax only by analogy, and analogies do not settle structural questions. This chapter is corroboration, and it is offered as nothing more.

⁶⁴ On the tau-rho compendium see Larry W. Hurtado, "The Staurogram in Early Christian Manuscripts: The Earliest Visual Reference to the Crucified Jesus?," in *New Testament Manuscripts: Their Texts and Their World*, ed. Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 207-226.

The scribal practice examined here is the same phenomenon at the level of the page, and it is the clearest case of a compiled rule in the material of this book. An abbreviation that preserves inflection and discards the stem cannot be read in the ordinary sense: there is no sequence of letters to sound out, and the reader who encounters it either recognizes the unit or fails. The copyist reproduces a graphic form whose grounds he does not reconstruct, and the reader recovers a referent without passing through a lexical route. Execution replaces derivation at both ends of the transmission.

This is why the two chapters belong together in the final account, and why the mechanism the objections chapter found missing is located here rather than in the syntax. A word that is recited inside a formula that forbids substitution, and copied as a mark that forbids reading, is a word withheld from the operations by which names become common nouns. Conversion requires re-derivation: a name becomes a class term when speakers begin to ask what it means and answer with a property. A compiled rule suspends that question at the point of use. The Name did not resist conversion by virtue of anything internal to it; it was transmitted in a regime that never put the question to it.

The control the argument still needs is the one it has been deferring. Every text read in this book so far, from Paul to the copyists, was produced by people for whom the Name was the center of everything they were doing. The next chapter reads writers for whom it was a nuisance, a superstition, or a capital charge to be tried.

14. The External Witnesses

The objection this book has been deferring is the strongest one available against it, and it can be stated in a sentence. A community that places a single term at the center of everything it does will develop whatever grammar that term requires, and the grammar will then look like a property of the term rather than an achievement of the community. Every text read so far is vulnerable to that objection. This chapter reads writers who were not members of the community and who had no interest in protecting anything about the Name.

There are not many of them, and the corpus must be described honestly before it is used. From the first century and a half there survive perhaps six non-Christian authors who mention the movement at all, most of them briefly and several of them contemptuously. The sample is small, the passages are short, and some are textually disputed. What the sample lacks in size it makes up in independence, and independence is precisely what the argument needs at this point.

The most important is Tacitus, writing his account of the fire at Rome and the persecution that followed it, roughly eighty years after the events and roughly fifty years after the letters of Paul. In a single sentence he explains the name of the group by naming its originator, and he then reports that this person had been executed under Tiberius by the procurator Pontius Pilate⁶⁵. The Name appears in the nominative, unmodified, as the subject of a passive periphrastic.

Three features of that sentence carry weight. The Name is used as a name and not as a title: Tacitus does not gloss it as an office or a claim, and shows no awareness that it means anything. It requires no determiner, and Latin has none to give it. And it stands as subject of a clause of execution without a single modifier, in an author whose prose is the most compressed in Latin literature and who never wasted a word he did not need.

That last point cuts in the argument's favor more than it may seem. Tacitus is the hardest possible test for a claim that a noun does not require scaffolding, because Tacitus supplies scaffolding for everything. His ordinary practice with an unfamiliar person is to name, place, and rank him in a compressed appositional phrase. Here he supplies a role for the group and none for the individual beyond the fact of the execution.

The concession runs the other way and must be made at once. Tacitus does gloss the Name once, by describing its bearer as the originator of the group's designation. That gloss is scaffolding. It tells us that for a Roman senatorial audience in the second decade of the

⁶⁵ Tacitus, *Annales* 15.44.2-5. On the Roman reception generally see Robert L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), and John Granger Cook, *The Interpretation of the New Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Tuebingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

second century, the Name could not simply be dropped into a sentence and be understood. Whatever self-sufficiency this book has documented is self-sufficiency inside a linguistic community, not outside it.

A second concession follows from the manuscript tradition of the same passage. The oldest surviving manuscript spells the group's designation with a vowel that produces a different and commoner Greek word, and the spelling was corrected by a later hand⁶⁶. The confusion between the two words is attested in several ancient sources. Romans did not reliably know how the Name was spelled or what it meant, and any claim about its stability has to be a claim about the community that used it.

Pliny the Younger, writing to Trajan from Bithynia about the same time, supplies the most useful single sentence in the external corpus. Reporting what he had learned under interrogation, he says the accused met before dawn and sang a hymn to Christ as to a god⁶⁷. The Name stands in the dative, bare, with no explanation whatever. And immediately beside it Pliny supplies a classifying phrase: as to a god.

That classifying phrase is the whole finding of this chapter in miniature. It is not attached to the Name because the Name required it. It is attached because Pliny's reader required it. A Roman governor writing to an emperor about an unfamiliar cult had to state what kind of thing was being addressed, and the Name told him nothing about kind. So he supplied the category himself, in his own voice, as a comparison rather than as a title.

The structure of Pliny's letter reinforces the point. He states that he did not know what the group did or what the charge amounted to and had to conduct interrogations to find out. He therefore possessed the Name before he possessed any content to attach to it. A term that circulates in advance of its content, in a language with no

⁶⁶ Codex Laurentianus Mediceus 68.2. On the reading and on the wider confusion of the two words see Stephen Benko, *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 14-21.

⁶⁷ Pliny, *Epistulae* 10.96.7; Trajan's reply is 10.97. See A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny: A Historical and Social Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 691-712.

article and among people with no stake in it, is behaving as a name behaves and not as a title behaves.

Suetonius contributes two passages, of which one is useful and the other is a warning. In his life of Nero he describes the group in the vocabulary of Roman religious disapproval, as a class of men given to a new and harmful superstition⁶⁸, and he does not use the Name at all. In his life of Claudius he reports an expulsion of Jews from Rome at the instigation of a person whose name he spells with the same vowel confusion found in the Tacitean manuscript⁶⁹.

Whether that passage refers to the Name at all has been debated for centuries and cannot be settled here. It may report a Roman agitator with a common servile name. It may reflect the confusion of the two words. Nothing in the present argument depends on the passage, and it is cited only to record that where the external evidence is unreliable, this book says so rather than counting it.

Lucian of Samosata, writing satire in the middle of the second century, provides the single most revealing datum in the external corpus, and it is a negative one. Lucian mocks the Christians at length in his account of the death of Peregrinus. He knows a good deal about them. And he does not use the Name. He refers instead to the man who was crucified in Palestine, and to that crucified sophist⁷⁰.

The substitution is exactly what this book's tests predict. Lucian wants to hold his target up to contempt, and contempt is a predicate. To predicate anything of a person, one needs a subject that will accept the predicate, and Lucian's solution is to construct one: he takes a role noun, sophist, and attaches to it a specifying participle, crucified, and a locative, in Palestine. He builds the scaffolding this book has described, from the outside, in order to make an attack possible.

A satirist does not do this out of delicacy. He does it because the Name gives him nothing to work with. A name cannot be ridiculous; only a claim can. To ridicule the figure, Lucian has to convert the Name into a description, and a description requires a class noun, a

⁶⁸ Suetonius, Nero 16.2.

⁶⁹ Suetonius, *Divus Claudius* 25.4.

⁷⁰ Lucian, *De morte Peregrini* 11-13.

modifier, and a locative anchor. The three elements the analytic chapters identified as the scaffolding of role nouns appear in Lucian's clause because he needed all three.

Celsus, whose attack survives only in the quotations of the man who answered it, does the same thing systematically and at length. Where Lucian substitutes once, Celsus substitutes throughout. His preferred designations are a sorcerer, a carpenter's son, and that man⁷¹, and his arguments proceed by placing the figure in classes: among magicians, among impostors, among the many who have claimed divine parentage.

The rhetorical necessity is visible in the argument's form. Celsus wants to say that the figure was one of a kind of person, and the whole force of his case depends on the class being populated. He therefore cannot use a term that refuses to open a class, and he does not use one. His argument runs entirely on role nouns and comparisons, which is what an argument of that shape requires.

The Latin apologetic dialogue in which a pagan speaker attacks the movement makes the same move in the same way. The speaker reduces the object of worship to a man punished for a crime by the severest penalty, and to the deadly wood of a cross⁷². Again a class noun, again a specifying participle, again no Name. Three hostile authors, in two languages, across roughly a century, independently reach for the same construction.

This is the control the argument needed, and it produces a result that the internal evidence could not have produced. The behavior documented in this book is not an artifact of devotion, because it is visible in the writing of people whose purpose was to destroy what the Name stood for. They could not attack the Name, so they replaced it with something attackable, and what they replaced it with was in every case a role noun with scaffolding attached.

Two findings can be stated with some confidence. First, by the second decade of the second century the Name was circulating outside the community as a bare, unglossed, uninflected-for-category

⁷¹ Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.28, 1.68, and 6.42; trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953).

⁷² Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 9.4.

name, in Latin, in official correspondence, in a language with no article to support it. Second, hostile writers who wished to predicate contempt of its bearer uniformly substituted a role noun with specifying scaffolding, and the substitution was necessary to their arguments rather than incidental.

Two limits must be conceded with equal firmness. The Name was not intelligible outside the community without a gloss, and both Tacitus and Pliny supply one. And the Name was not stable in Roman mouths, since the spelling confusion is attested in the manuscripts of two different authors. The self-sufficiency documented in this book operates within a community of use. Outside it, the Name required explanation like any other foreign word.

There is a third limit, and it is the one a hostile reader of this book should press hardest. The external corpus is tiny. Six authors, a dozen sentences, several of them disputed. A pattern found in twelve sentences is a suggestion and not a demonstration, however consistent it is. This chapter therefore claims consistency rather than proof, and the difference is not rhetorical.

What makes the small sample worth reporting is the character of the agreement in it. The hostile authors are not agreeing about a doctrine, where common sources or mutual influence would explain agreement. They are agreeing about a construction, and they are agreeing while pursuing incompatible purposes in different languages and genres. A satirist, a philosopher, and a rhetorician independently arrive at the same syntactic solution to the same problem.

The problem they were solving is the one this book has described from the other side. A Name that refuses to open a class cannot be argued against, and it cannot be praised in the ordinary way either. To do anything with it beyond naming, a writer must first convert it into something else. The community that used the Name did that conversion by adding titles in apposition. Its enemies did it by replacing the Name altogether. Both operations acknowledge the same limit.

15. Translation and the Vernaculars

The method chapter listed four conditions that would refute the argument of this book, and the fourth has not yet been tested. If the behavior documented here dissolved when the Name entered languages whose article systems differ from Greek, the thesis would be a fact about a small family of related grammars. This chapter runs that test across the early versions and then across a wider sample, and the test produces both a confirmation and a genuine counterexample. The counterexample turns out to be the more useful of the two.

The early versions are the natural place to begin because they are the earliest deliberate transfers of the Name into other grammars. Syriac, Coptic, Gothic, Armenian, Ethiopic, and Old Church Slavonic between them cover a range of article systems as wide as anything the modern world offers, and each was produced by translators who had to decide, clause by clause, what to do with the Name⁷³.

Syriac presents the most interesting initial case because it does not borrow the Greek word. It translates it back into the Semitic term from which the Greek was itself a translation, and that term is a live and transparent word in the language, with the ordinary meaning of anointed. Syriac also has no definite article in the Greek sense; definiteness is carried by a nominal state whose original force had largely generalized by the period in question⁷⁴.

What the Syriac tradition shows is therefore a case in which the word was lexically transparent to every reader and grammatically unmarked for definiteness. And the word functions as a name. It stands as the subject of finite verbs without demonstratives, it takes the same bare positions the Greek and Latin take, and it appears in the same short assertive clauses. Transparency of meaning did not force the word back into the behavior of a common noun.

⁷³ The standard survey is Bruce M. Metzger, *The Early Versions of the New Testament: Their Origin, Transmission, and Limitations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

⁷⁴ On the emphatic state and the attenuation of its determining force see Sebastian P. Brock, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2006); Metzger, *Early Versions*, 3-98.

Coptic supplies the first counterexample and it should be stated without softening. Coptic has a fully developed definite article, prefixed to the noun, and Coptic borrowed the Greek word rather than translating it. Where a borrowed Greek noun enters Coptic, the article ordinarily comes with it, and in the Coptic versions the Name frequently appears with the definite article attached⁷⁵. In a language with an article available, the article was used.

Gothic points the other way and does so with unusual clarity, because the Gothic Bible is the work of one translator with a consistent method. Gothic has no definite article, only a demonstrative that can be used adjectivally, and the translator borrowed the Greek word rather than rendering it by a native term. The Name appears as a loanword, fully inflected into the Gothic case system, without the demonstrative, and written in contracted form under a stroke in the manuscripts⁷⁶.

That last detail is worth pausing on. A fourth-century translator working into a Germanic language, for a community with no Greek, carried over not only the word but the graphic convention that marks it as a word not to be written out. The scribal practice examined in the earlier chapter travelled with the Name into a language and an alphabet it had not been designed for.

Old Church Slavonic behaves like Gothic and for the same structural reason. The language has no article, the word entered as a loan, and it declines within the Slavonic nominal system while taking no determiner. Armenian and Ethiopic likewise borrow the Greek form and inflect it natively⁷⁷. In each case the Name enters as an opaque foreign noun and behaves as a name.

Set beside these, Old English is instructive because English at that stage was developing exactly the kind of determiner system that Greek had. The demonstrative that would become the modern definite article was already in wide use and was obligatory in many

⁷⁵ Metzger, *Early Versions*, 99-152. On Coptic determination see Bentley Layton, *A Coptic Grammar*, 3rd ed. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011), sections 46-56.

⁷⁶ Wilhelm Streitberg, *Die gotische Bibel*, 2 vols. (Heidelberg: Winter, 1908-1910); Metzger, *Early Versions*, 375-388.

⁷⁷ Horace G. Lunt, *Old Church Slavonic Grammar*, 7th rev. ed. (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2001); Metzger, *Early Versions*, 153-256 and 394-442.

contexts where later English requires it. The Name entered as a loan, opaque to any speaker without Latin, and it did not take the determiner. Old English poetry uses it bare in subject position⁷⁸ with a freedom it does not extend to native nouns of rank.

The same poetry also supplies the contrast case within a single tradition. Old English had native role nouns available for the same referent, including one meaning healer or savior, and the poets used them heavily. Those native words take the determiner. The loanword does not. One poem, one poet, one line apart, two nouns denoting the same person and two different grammatical treatments.

Modern German adds a datum that has no parallel elsewhere in the sample. German nouns are declined according to German patterns, and loanwords are ordinarily assimilated to them. The Name is not. In standard written German it retains its Latin inflection, with distinct genitive, dative, and accusative forms borrowed intact from Latin, in a language that has no other productive use for those endings⁷⁹. The word was quarantined from the morphology of the language that received it.

The Romance languages, which developed articles from Latin demonstratives, distribute the Name as the Germanic languages do. In Spanish, Italian, and French the Name appears without the article in ordinary use, and the article is available and produces a different reading when it is applied. The articular form in Spanish shifts the sense toward either a physical image or a titular claim, and native speakers register the shift immediately. The bare form is the name; the articular form is something else.

Languages with no article at all provide no test of the article correlation but do test the other findings. Mandarin renders the Name by a two-character transliteration that carries no lexical content in the language, and the structural behaviors documented here reappear: bare subject position, tolerance of verbless predication, and resistance to the classifier constructions that

⁷⁸ See the poems conventionally titled Christ I-III in the Exeter Book, and *The Dream of the Rood*; texts in George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, eds., *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, 6 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-1953).

⁷⁹ The declension *Christus, Christi, Christo, Christum* is given as standard in Duden, *Die Grammatik*, 9th ed. (Berlin: Dudenverlag, 2016).

Mandarin ordinarily requires. Japanese and Korean use transliterations with the same effect.

The pattern across the sample can now be stated, and it is not the pattern this book expected to find. Languages divide into two groups, and the division is not by article system. It is by lexical transparency. Where the word entered as an opaque loan, it behaves as a name and refuses the determiner even where a determiner is available. Where the word remained a transparent common noun in the receiving language, the determiner appears and the word behaves as a title.

Arabic is the decisive case for that generalization and it is the clearest counterexample in the whole book. Arabic does not borrow the Greek word. It uses the Semitic term, which is transparent, and it uses it with the definite article, and it uses it as a title in an appositional construction that names the bearer separately and by patronymic⁸⁰. This is the exact structure the analytic chapters described as characteristic of role nouns.

That usage is not marginal. It is the standard designation in the Quranic text and in the tradition built on it, and it appears in passages whose purpose is precisely to identify a figure, place him in a lineage, and specify his status relative to others. The article and the identificatory frame appear together, as they do in the Greek of the writer whose project was identification. The correlation this book proposed holds in Arabic. What does not hold is the claim that the Name resists titular use.

Hebrew behaves the same way for the same reason. In Hebrew the word is transparent, it takes the article, and it functions as a title with a determinate but disputed reference. The Semitic languages in which the word never became opaque are precisely the languages in which it never became a name. This is a strong and testable generalization and it accounts for the counterexamples instead of explaining them away.

Syriac appears to break the generalization and it repays a second look. The word is transparent in Syriac and yet it behaves as a name. The distinguishing factor is the community: the Syriac tradition is

⁸⁰ Quran 3:45, 4:171, and 5:72. See Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

Christian, and within it the referent had already been fixed to one bearer before the translation was made. Transparency permits titular use. It does not compel it. What compels titular use is transparency in a community for whom the reference is still open.

That refinement is the most substantive result in this chapter and it should be stated as a proposition. The Name behaves as an operator, in the sense used throughout this book, when two conditions hold together: the word is opaque to ordinary speakers of the language, or its reference is closed within the community that uses it. Where the word is transparent and the reference is open, the article appears, the class opens, and the word becomes a title.

That proposition is falsifiable and it makes a prediction outside the corpus examined here. Any tradition in which the term remained a live common noun and the reference remained contested should show articular, titular, appositional behavior. Any tradition in which the word arrived opaque, or the reference closed, should show bare, anarthrous, closure behavior. The sample of early versions and modern languages assembled in this chapter fits that prediction without exceptions the author can identify, which is not the same as having none.

The Coptic counterexample can now be placed. Coptic borrowed the word, which makes it opaque, and Coptic was a Christian tradition with a closed reference. On the proposition just stated it should show bare behavior, and it shows articular behavior instead. The explanation available is grammatical rather than semantic: the Coptic article is a prefix that had become close to obligatory on singular common nouns, including borrowed ones, and its presence carries less definiteness than the Greek article does.

That explanation is weaker than the others in this chapter and is offered as such. It amounts to saying that the Coptic article had grammaticalized past the point where its presence indicates a descriptive frame. This may be right, and the specialist literature on Coptic determination gives some support to it. It is also the sort of explanation that a thesis produces when it meets evidence it did not predict, and a reader is entitled to discount it accordingly.

Three findings from the translation evidence can be reported. First, the behavior documented in this book survives transfer into languages with article systems unlike Greek, into languages with no article, and into two alphabets and three unrelated language families. It is not an artifact of Greek or of Latin. Second, the graphic convention of contraction travelled with the Name into Gothic, which indicates that the treatment was understood as attaching to the word rather than to the Greek language.

Third, and against the original thesis, the Name is not universally resistant to titular use. In Arabic and Hebrew it is a title, articular and appositional, and there is nothing marginal or secondary about that usage. The condition that separates the two behaviors is lexical transparency together with openness of reference, and this book's earlier chapters, which treated the resistance as a property of the word itself, were wrong about that.

What survives is narrower and better. The word does not carry the operator behavior in itself. It carries it under conditions that can be specified, that hold across a wide and various sample, and that fail in cases the theory can now identify in advance. A pattern with a stated boundary is more useful than one claimed to have none, and the next chapter tests the boundary against names outside this tradition altogether.

16. Comparative Cases

The previous chapter ended with a proposition that has a boundary, and a boundary can be tested from either side. If the behavior described in this book followed from the two conditions stated there, opacity of the word and closure of its reference, then other names satisfying those conditions should show the same behavior, and names failing them should not. This chapter tests the proposition against names from four traditions and against two cases drawn from ordinary language. The result is one strong confirmation, one instructive reversal, and two counterexamples the book must absorb.

The obvious first comparison is the divine name of the Hebrew scriptures, and the comparison is close enough to be uncomfortable. In Biblical Hebrew, proper names do not take the definite article as

a matter of grammatical rule⁸¹, and the divine name accordingly never appears with it. It stands as the bare subject of finite verbs across thousands of clauses. It is not modified by adjectives in the way that ordinary nouns are, and where description is required it is supplied by apposition or by a following clause.

The contrast within the same language is exact. The Hebrew words for king, priest, prophet, and judge require the article, a possessive suffix, or a following genitive in order to refer determinately, and the Hebrew Bible supplies one of the three on essentially every occurrence. The divine name requires none of them. The asymmetry that this book has traced through Greek, Latin, and a dozen vernaculars is present in the language from which the Semitic term for anointed was taken, and it is present as a matter of grammar rather than of style.

The Hebrew case also supplies a graphic parallel to the scribal practice examined earlier. The name was not pronounced as written; a different word was read in its place by a perpetual convention that the vowel pointing preserves⁸². A name that cannot be read aloud as it is written and cannot take the article is being handled by a set of exceptions rather than by the ordinary rules of the language. This is the same structural situation the earlier chapters described, in a language with no historical connection to the grammatical categories used to describe it.

One qualification belongs here. Hebrew has a second word for deity which behaves quite differently: it takes the article, it appears in the plural, and it functions as a class term⁸³ as well as a designation. Within a single language, one word for the divine is a name in the strict sense and the other is a common noun that can serve as a name. The distinction this book draws is therefore not a distinction between the sacred and the ordinary. It is a distinction between two grammatical kinds, and sacred vocabulary falls on both sides of it.

⁸¹ Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 249-250; Paul Jouon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, rev. ed. (Rome: Gregorian and Biblical Press, 2006), section 137.

⁸² On the qere perpetuum see Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 58-59.

⁸³ On the syntax of *elohim* and *ha-elohim* see Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 122-124.

The most instructive comparison is a reversal, and it comes from the same century and the same empire as the Latin evidence. A Roman family name, borne by one man of extraordinary consequence, became within a hundred years of his death a title of office, and within four hundred years the ordinary word for a sovereign in two language families. It survives as such in German and in the Slavic languages, and its history is documented at every stage⁸⁴.

What makes the case valuable is that the grammatical symptoms of the transition can be observed directly. The name acquires the article in Greek, where it had not previously taken one. It acquires a plural, and the plural denotes a class of persons rather than several bearers of one name. It becomes available for predication, so that a man can be said to be one, or to wish to be one, or to be unworthy of being one. And it becomes available for comparison, which is the clearest sign that a class has opened.

Those four symptoms constitute an empirical test for the transformation this book has said the Name does not undergo. The test is not an invention of the argument; it is a description of what happened to another name in the same documentary record. If the Name had become a title in the same way, the same four symptoms should be visible in the same sources. Three of them are not. The fourth is, and it is the counterexample.

The Greek scriptures contain the term in the plural. In the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible the plural denotes anointed persons, kings and priests⁸⁵, and it is an ordinary common noun in an ordinary construction. That usage is not a problem for the argument, because in the Greek Bible the word is transparent and its reference is open, which is precisely the condition under which the proposition of the previous chapter predicts titular behavior. The plural there is expected.

The problem lies in a plural that occurs inside the corpus where the Name is a name. Two of the Gospels warn that false ones will arise, using a plural formed on the word itself with a prefix meaning

⁸⁴ On the transformation of the name Caesar into a title of office see Fergus Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (London: Duckworth, 1977); the German and Slavic words for sovereign derive from the Latin nominative.

⁸⁵ For example Psalm 105:15, numbered 104:15 in the Greek; 1 Samuel 24:7 and 26:9.

false⁸⁶. A class is opened, the class has members, and the members are counted. This is exactly the behavior the analytic chapters said the Name does not permit, in the corpus those chapters were describing.

The examination of that counterexample yields something, though less than a full answer. The plural is not the bare word. It is a compound, and the prefix is doing structural work rather than merely evaluative work: what is pluralized is not the Name but a derived noun meaning a false claimant to it. The corpus has no attested plural of the bare word denoting a class of persons occupying the position. To open a class, the language had to build a new noun.

That is a real finding and it should be stated at its actual strength, which is moderate. It shows that the resistance is not absolute but morphological: the class can be opened, and opening it requires derivation. A reader unpersuaded by the distinction between a plural and a compounded plural is entitled to record that the analytic chapters overstated the case, and this book agrees that they did.

A sharper counterexample lies inside the same corpus and this book has not seen it discussed in these terms. Another proper name from the passion narrative did become a common noun, fully and productively, in most European languages. It takes the indefinite article, it pluralizes, it predicates, and it compares, satisfying all four symptoms of the transition. It is a name from the same text, in the same language, transmitted by the same community, and it made the crossing that the Name did not make⁸⁷.

The comparison is worth making because it isolates the variable. Both names are opaque loans in the receiving languages. Both have closed reference within the community. Both are transmitted in the same documents. Only one becomes a class term. Whatever accounts for the difference cannot be opacity or closure, since those are shared, and this book does not know what accounts for it. The honest position is that the two conditions stated in the previous chapter are necessary and are not sufficient.

⁸⁶ Matthew 24:24; Mark 13:22.

⁸⁷ The name is Judas. Its development into a common noun in English, French, German, Spanish, and Italian is recorded in the standard historical dictionaries of each of those languages.

Comparisons outside the Mediterranean traditions bear on the same question. The founder of the Indian tradition is designated in English by a word that takes the definite article, and the Sanskrit term from which it comes is transparent, meaning awakened. The doctrine of that tradition holds that there have been and will be others, so the class is open by design and its membership is a matter of teaching⁸⁸. Transparency and open reference produce titular behavior, as the proposition predicts.

The principal designation of God in Arabic presents a variation worth noting. The word contains a fossilized definite article that is now part of the word and cannot be removed or repeated. The name has no plural. Grammatically it is a name that has absorbed the determiner rather than one that refuses it, which is a third possibility the analytic chapters did not consider. The determiner is not absent; it has stopped being a determiner⁸⁹.

The name of the prophet of that tradition behaves as the proposition predicts. The word is transparent in Arabic, meaning praised, and the reference is closed within the community. It functions as a name, and where a title is required it is supplied by a separate appositional phrase naming an office. Two conditions, one satisfied and one not, and the outcome is the one the proposition specifies.

Ordinary language supplies the mechanism by which names become class terms, and the mechanism is well described in the linguistic literature. A name becomes a common noun when a property of its bearer is salient enough to be predicated of others, and the process is productive: a name for a traitor, for a conqueror, for a genius. The process needs only one salient property and a community willing to generalize it. This is the ordinary fate of consequential names⁹⁰, and it is what makes the Name's exemption

⁸⁸ Richard Gombrich, *Theravada Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2006).

⁸⁹ On the etymology and on the fossilized article see the article Allah in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1960-2005).

⁹⁰ Willy Van Langendonck, *Theory and Typology of Proper Names* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2007), 176-201.

something requiring explanation rather than something to be assumed.

There is one conversion the Name did undergo in English and it deserves to be recorded because it is structurally interesting. The word became an interjection, used in speech with no nominal function at all: no case, no number, no argument structure, no position in a clause. This is a real grammatical change and it is not the change the analytic chapters denied. A word that becomes an interjection has not opened a class; it has left the nominal system.

That direction of change is arguably consistent with everything else in this book. The Name did not become a common noun, which would have required it to open a class. It became a form of speech with no syntax whatsoever, which requires nothing of it at all. If a word must either take on argument structure or shed it, and if this word will not take it on, then shedding it entirely is the only remaining option, and English took it.

The results of the comparative test can now be summarized against the proposition it was designed to check. The strong confirmation is Hebrew, where a name satisfying both conditions shows the full pattern, including the asymmetry against role nouns, in a language unrelated to the ones examined earlier. The instructive reversal is the imperial name, which supplies an observable four-part test for the transition to titular status and shows that the test can be passed.

The two counterexamples are the compounded plural inside the corpus and the passion-narrative name that became a common noun in every European language. The first shows that class-opening is available through derivation and therefore not absolutely blocked. The second shows that opacity and closure are not sufficient conditions, since a name sharing both made the crossing. The proposition of the previous chapter must therefore be weakened from a specification of conditions to a statement of tendencies.

That is a real cost and it is not fatal. A structural tendency documented across four language families, two alphabets, an eighteen-century span, and both friendly and hostile witnesses is a finding worth having, even when it is not a law. What this book

cannot do is state the sufficient condition. What it can do is state the necessary ones, describe the tendency precisely, name the counterexamples, and indicate what a further study would have to explain.

The next chapter collects the objections that the preceding chapters have raised and left standing, adds the ones a hostile reader would raise, and states which of them this book can answer and which it cannot.

17. Obiectiones - Objections and Limits

The preceding chapters have accumulated objections without answering them. Some were raised and set aside as belonging to a later stage of the argument; others were produced by the evidence itself and left standing because the evidence did not settle them. This chapter collects them, states each at the strength it actually has rather than at the strength convenient to the thesis, and marks which ones the argument survives and which ones it does not.

The first objection is the strongest and it comes from within the field the argument depends on. The claim that the Name is not a title has been met by the counter-claim that the word functions as an honorific: not a common noun, not quite a proper name, but a term of the kind that attaches to a person and travels with the personal name without becoming a mere label. Honorifics in ancient Greek and in Semitic languages behave in a documented way, and several of the properties this book has treated as evidence of name status are properties that honorifics share⁹¹. The anarthrous usage in particular is not decisive, because honorifics also resist the article when they stand in apposition to a personal name.

The objection cannot be dismissed and the honest response is a narrowing. What the evidence of this book supports is not that the word never carried honorific force, which would be a claim about the intentions of writers and is not recoverable from syntax, but that the word did not complete the passage into the class of terms that take a

⁹¹ Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs*, is the fullest statement of the honorific reading. On the typological criteria that separate proper names from other person-denoting nouns see Van Langendonck, *Theory and Typology of Proper Names*, 176-201.

determiner, admit a plural, accept comparison, and can be predicated of a subject other than the one referent. Those are the grammatical marks of a common noun, and the corpus does not produce them. An honorific that never acquires those marks and is never replaced by a synonym is, for the purposes of a grammatical description, indistinguishable in behavior from a name. The argument therefore stands, but it stands as a claim about a terminus that was not reached, not as a claim about the semantic content the word carried along the way.

The second objection is syntactic and it attacks the evidential base directly. Article omission in Greek is conditioned by factors that have nothing to do with name status: prepositional phrases, predicate position before the verb, governing nouns with dependent genitives, and formulaic expressions all suppress the article regardless of the semantic class of the noun⁹². If the anarthrous occurrences in the corpus fall predominantly under those conditions, then the absence of the article is explained by the syntax and the argument has been reading a general rule as a special fact.

This objection is answerable but only by a control the present book has not performed. The answer requires holding the syntactic environment constant and comparing the behavior of the word in question with the behavior of unambiguous common nouns in the same environments, and with the behavior of unambiguous personal names in the same environments. The impression that the pattern is not reducible to the general conditions is defensible from the material assembled in the earlier chapters, but an impression is not a control. The next chapter specifies the test that would settle the matter, and it should be understood as an admission: the objection is open until that test is run.

The third objection concerns the Latin witness and it is fatal to one line of the argument. Latin has no article. Whatever the Latin texts show about the fixity of the Name, they cannot show anything about determination, because the language does not mark

⁹² Blass-Debrunner-Funk, sections 249-276; Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 206-290; and for the classic statement of the problem in predicate position Colwell, "A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament," 12-21.

determination on the noun at all⁹³. The chapter on the Latin material therefore cannot supply evidence of the same kind as the Greek chapters supply, and it was a methodological error to present the two as continuous.

What the Latin material does supply is a different and weaker kind of evidence: the absence of a Latin common noun formed from the word, the absence of substitution by a native synonym, and the treatment of the word as a second-declension proper name in every grammatical environment. That is evidence of lexical fixity, not of grammatical determination, and it should be labeled as such. The argument does not lose the Latin chapter; it loses the right to count it twice.

The fourth objection concerns the scribal evidence and it limits the reach of the strongest visual argument in the book. The abbreviation of the Name in the earliest manuscripts is not applied to the Name alone. It is applied to a small set of words, and that set includes terms which are unambiguously common nouns in the same texts. If the practice marks reverence rather than reference, then it is evidence about the attitude of scribes and not about the grammatical class of the words they abbreviated.

The correct conclusion is that the scribal practice is corroborating and not probative. It shows that the Name was handled as a fixed graphic unit, which is consistent with everything else the argument claims; it does not show that the Name was a name, because the same treatment falls on words that were not names⁹⁴. The chapter that presented the practice should be read as describing a mechanism of transmission rather than as demonstrating a grammatical fact.

The fifth objection is the one the comparative chapter produced against itself. Two counterexamples survived that chapter: the plural occurring inside the corpus, and the personal name from the passion narrative that did become a common noun in every major European vernacular. The first was answered by observing that the plural is compounded and never the bare word, which is a real answer but a

⁹³ Hofmann and Szantyr, *Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik*, 191-195.

⁹⁴ Paap, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri*, 105-107; and for the sceptical case Tuckett, "Nomina Sacra: Yes and No?," 431-458.

partial one. The second was not answered at all, and it should not be. It shows that the resistance the book describes is a property of one name in one transmission history and not a law of names in general.

The sixth objection is the widest and it cannot be met from inside the material. A structural tendency documented across four language families is a tendency, not a mechanism. The book has not identified what causes the resistance, and in the absence of a causal account the description remains a description. Three candidate mechanisms are available and the material does not choose between them: the opacity of the loan in every receiving language, the liturgical fixity of the formulae in which the word circulates, and the absence of a competing lexical slot into which the word could have moved. The final chapters return to the second of these, because it is the only one for which the corpus supplies direct evidence of a transmission practice rather than an inference about conditions.

What survives, then, is narrower than what the earlier chapters claimed. The Name did not complete the transition to a common noun in the corpus examined or in the transmission histories surveyed; the syntactic evidence for that claim is suggestive and awaits a control; the Latin and scribal evidence corroborate lexical and graphic fixity without bearing on determination; and one clear counterexample within the same corpus shows that the tendency is not a law. That is the proposition the remaining chapters are entitled to use.

18. The Grammatical Test: An Operational Protocol

The preceding chapter conceded that the central syntactic claim of this book rests on an impression that has not been controlled. This chapter specifies the control. It is written as a protocol rather than as an argument, because a claim about grammatical class in a closed corpus is a claim that can be tested by counting, and a claim that can be tested by counting should not be defended by reading. Nothing here reports results. The purpose is to state in advance what would confirm the proposition and what would refute it, so that the test can be run by anyone with the editions named in the second chapter and can be run against the author's interest as easily as in its favor.

The unit of observation is the token: every occurrence of the word in the Greek corpus, coded independently of its context by a reader who has not been told the hypothesis. Four variables are recorded for each token. The first is determination, coded as articular or anarthrous. The second is syntactic environment, coded into the categories that Greek grammar recognizes as independently suppressing the article: object of a preposition, predicate nominative preceding the copula, governing noun with a dependent genitive, vocative, and formulaic apposition to a personal name. The third is position relative to the personal name, coded as preceding, following, or standing alone. The fourth is the grammatical function of the word in its clause, coded as subject, object, predicate, apposition, or genitive dependent.

The comparison is what gives the count its force, and it requires three reference classes drawn from the same corpus and coded by the same rules. The first class consists of unambiguous personal names in the corpus, which supply the expected profile of a name. The second consists of unambiguous common nouns of person, including the words for lord, teacher, priest, king, and prophet, which supply the expected profile of a title. The third is the class that has not been used in this literature and is the methodological contribution of the present chapter: opaque loanwords of person in Koine Greek that are not names⁹⁵, which control for the possibility that the observed behavior is an effect of foreignness rather than of grammatical class.

The prediction is stated as a rank order and not as a threshold, because thresholds in corpus work are artifacts of corpus size. If the proposition of this book is correct, then after the independently conditioned environments are excluded, the rate of articular usage for the word in question should fall within the range established by the class of personal names, should fall below the range established by the class of common nouns of person, and should be distinguishable from the range established by the class of opaque loans. The three comparisons are not equally demanding. The first is

⁹⁵ The comparison class is proposed here for the first time in this connection; for the criteria see Van Langendonck, *Theory and Typology of Proper Names*, 176-201.

weak, because names in the corpus vary widely. The second is the substantive test. The third is the one the argument is most likely to fail, and failing it would mean that what this book has described as the resistance of a name is the ordinary behavior of an untranslated foreign word.

Four further predictions follow from the proposition and each of them can be checked without statistics, because each concerns the presence or absence of a form rather than its frequency. If the word is a name in the corpus, then the corpus should contain no bare plural of it, no comparative or superlative of it, no instance of it governed by a quantifier, and no instance in which it is predicated of a subject other than the single referent. Each of these is a categorical prediction. A single well-attested counterinstance in a critically established text refutes it, and the refutation cannot be repaired by weakening the claim, because a claim about the absence of a form has no gradations. The comparative chapter has already reported that the first prediction survives only in a qualified form, and the qualification should be entered into the protocol rather than hidden by it.

The same battery can be applied diachronically, and this is where the protocol reaches beyond the corpus. The reversal examined in the comparative chapter, in which a personal name of the same period became the standard word for an office across several language families, exhibits four symptoms in sequence: the appearance of the word with a determiner, the appearance of a plural, the appearance of the word predicated of successive individuals, and the loss of the original referent as the default reading⁹⁶. Those four symptoms constitute an ordered scale, and the scale is the instrument this book proposes for the general problem. A name under conversion should register the symptoms in that order; a name that resists conversion should register none of them, or should register the first without the rest.

⁹⁶ On the conversion of the imperial name into a designation of office see Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World*; the Germanic and Slavic forms are discussed in the comparative chapter above.

Applied to the Name across the transmission histories surveyed, the scale yields a specific and testable claim: the second, third, and fourth symptoms should be absent from every language examined, and the first should appear only where the receiving language marks determination obligatorily on all nouns, in which case it is a fact about the language and not about the word. That claim is narrow enough to be false. It is also the form in which the proposition of this book can enter a linguistic literature that will not accept a qualitative reading of selected passages as evidence, and rightly will not.

Two limits of the protocol should be stated. It cannot recover semantic content, and therefore it cannot decide the honorific objection of the preceding chapter; it can only establish whether the grammatical marks of the common-noun class are present. And it treats the critical text as the object, which means that its results are results about an edition and not about the utterance history behind the edition. Both limits are tolerable. A test that decides less than the whole question but decides it publicly is worth more to the argument than a reading that appears to decide everything and can be checked by nobody.

19. The Argument in the History of Scholarship

An argument about a single word acquires its significance from the debate it enters, and the debate this book enters is more than a century old. Placing the proposition within that history is not a courtesy to predecessors. It is the only way to show what part of the claim is inherited, what part is a redescription, and what part has not been asserted before in these terms.

The question of how the word passed from designation to name was posed in its modern form by the history-of-religions scholarship of the early twentieth century, which located the decisive change in the transition from the Palestinian communities to the Greek-speaking cities and treated the word as having lost its titular sense in that passage. The account was influential and it was, in its structure, a historical explanation of a linguistic fact: the change of usage was made to follow from a change of milieu. The mid-century synthesis refined the chronology and multiplied the formulaic categories,

distinguishing the environments in which the word appears with and without the personal name and treating the distribution as an index of the age of the underlying formulae⁹⁷.

Two later interventions changed the terms. The first argued that the word retained a live titular and messianic sense in the Greek material far longer than the earlier consensus allowed, and that the appearance of a fixed name in the letters is partly an artifact of reading Greek formulae without their Jewish antecedents. The second, and the one this book must answer most directly, argued that the alternative between title and name is itself the error, and that the word behaves throughout as an honorific, a category that ancient onomastics recognizes and modern discussions of these texts had neglected⁹⁸. The preceding chapter conceded the force of that argument and narrowed the claim accordingly.

The position of the present book within that sequence can now be stated exactly. It does not contest the chronology of the history-of-religions account, and it does not adjudicate the question of retained messianic sense, because neither question is decidable by the evidence it uses. Its claim is of a different order: whatever semantic content the word carried at any stage, it did not acquire the grammatical properties of the class it is said to have joined or left. That is a claim about form rather than about milieu, and it is offered as a constraint on the historical accounts rather than as a replacement for them. Any history that requires the word to have functioned as a common noun in the Greek corpus must produce the forms that a common noun produces, and the corpus does not contain them.

The second historiographic line the book depends on is the study of the abbreviated divine names in the earliest manuscripts, and here the debt is heavier and the position more modest. The practice was identified and given its name at the beginning of the twentieth century; the inventory and the statistics were established at mid-century; the argument that the practice originated in a Jewish reverential treatment of the divine name and was extended by

⁹⁷ Kramer, *Christ, Lord, Son of God*, and Hengel, "Christos in Paul," 65-77, represent the mid-century synthesis.

⁹⁸ Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 41-55; Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs*.

Christian scribes was developed in the following decades; and the most recent synthesis treats the practice as evidence of an early, widely diffused, and self-conscious scribal culture. A skeptical rejoinder has questioned how much can be inferred from the practice at all⁹⁹. This book takes the skeptical rejoinder as correct in its methodological point, which is why the chapter on the practice is presented here as evidence of transmission and not of grammatical class.

A third line is less often connected to the first two, and connecting them is where this book makes its historiographic contribution. The thesis of a distinct Christian Latin, developed by the Nijmegen school on the basis of the vocabulary of the early Latin writers and the Latin versions, established that a community can maintain a lexical stratum insulated from the ordinary development of the language in which it lives. The study of liturgical acclamations established that formulae circulate as fixed units and preserve archaic forms across centuries of linguistic change¹⁰⁰. Neither literature was concerned with the grammatical class of the Name. Put together with the scribal evidence, they supply the mechanism that the objections chapter admitted was missing: a word transmitted inside fixed formulae, copied as a fixed graphic unit, and belonging to an insulated lexical stratum is a word that is not exposed to the pressures that convert names into common nouns.

That convergence is the proposal this book adds to the historiography rather than takes from it. The three literatures have run in parallel, addressed to different objects and to different guilds: the philology of the Greek letters, the paleography of the papyri, and the historical linguistics of Latin and the vernaculars. Each has described a form of fixity. None has treated the three as descriptions of one transmission regime, and none has drawn the grammatical consequence. Stating the consequence does not require any new evidence, which is both the strength of the proposal and the measure

⁹⁹ The sequence is Traube, *Nomina Sacra*; Paap, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri*; Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 26-48; Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 95-134; and the rejoinder in Tuckett, "Nomina Sacra: Yes and No?"

¹⁰⁰ Mohrmann, *Etudes sur le latin des chrétiens*, for the Nijmegen thesis; Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, for the acclamations.

of its modesty: it is a reorganization of established results, and it is answerable to those results.

The historiographic cost of the proposal should be recorded with the same candour the previous chapter used. Reorganizing three literatures means adopting the vulnerabilities of each. If the reverential account of the scribal practice is wrong, the graphic argument weakens; if the thesis of a distinct Christian Latin is overstated, as some later criticism has held, the lexical argument weakens with it. The convergence is therefore only as strong as its weakest member, and the argument of this book does not require it to be stronger than that.

20. Conclusio - The Name That Remains

The question with which this book opened was what happens to language when a Name cannot be replaced. The answer the evidence supports is narrower than the question invites and stating it at its actual width is the last obligation of the argument.

Nothing happens to the language. That is the finding. The grammar of Greek was not altered to accommodate the Name, and neither was the grammar of Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Gothic, Slavonic, or the modern vernaculars. What happened instead is that the Name was carried through eight transmission histories without acquiring the properties that the languages make available to every other word of its apparent class. It took no determiner where determiners were obligatory except as the receiving language required of all nouns, it produced no bare plural, it admitted no comparison, it was predicated of no second subject, and it was replaced by no native synonym in any of the languages that had one available. A word that passes through that many grammatical systems and emerges unaltered has not been protected by the systems. It has been transmitted around them.

The mechanism is the one the historiographic chapter assembled from three literatures that had not been put together: fixed liturgical formulae, a scribal practice that treated the word as a graphic unit rather than as a sequence of letters to be read, and an insulated lexical stratum maintained by a community inside a language it otherwise

shared. The three together describe a regime in which a word circulates without being re-derived. The Name was recited, copied, and translated; it was not, in the ordinary sense, interpreted. That is the structural observation this book offers, and it is why the chapters on creed, liturgy, and the abbreviated names carry more weight in the final account than their length would suggest.

What the book does not establish should be as clear as what it does. It does not establish that the Name never carried titular or honorific force, because syntax does not reach semantic content. It does not establish that its own central syntactic claim survives a controlled count, because that count has not been run and the protocol chapter exists to make its absence public. It does not establish that resistance to conversion is a property of names in general, because a counterexample inside the same corpus refutes that generalization. And it does not establish causation, only convergence.

There remains a result that does not depend on any of the concessions. Across four language families, two alphabets, and nineteen centuries, one word that every account agrees began as a designation of office is not attested in the forms that a designation of office produces. Whether that is explained by opacity, by liturgical fixity, or by the absence of a competing lexical slot, the negative fact stands and it is a fact about grammar. The proposition of this book is that such a fact deserves to be described in grammatical terms before it is explained in theological ones, and that the description, once made, constrains what the explanations are permitted to say.

The Name did not become a word. It remained a name, alone in its declension, unreplaced in its formulae, and unread in its abbreviation. *Christus solus*.

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