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### Personal names with articles: A quantitative approach

The core use of definite articles is often said to be marking of either uniqueness or some form of familiarity (anaphoricity). Proper names are semantically definite, since their referents are cast as unique and identifiable without additional marking. In some languages, such as Greek, the definite article nevertheless expands to be used with proper nouns. In New Testament Greek we find this development in an interesting transitional stage. Proper names may or may not take the article, and the distribution has been argued to be determined by information structure in various ways: the article has been suggested to be a topic shift device or an anaphoric device. Using data annotated for information status and anaphoricity from the PROIEL corpus, we find that the article is not a topic marker or a topic shift marker. We do find that it is an anaphoric device, however, but it is reserved for the more important participants in the storyline, and thus also marks referential persistence.