

On the Aorist ἀπέστειλεν in Jno. xviii. 24.

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WE accept the reading ἀπέστειλεν οὖν, although the authorities for the substitution of δέ or the entire omission of οὖν are considerable.¹

The common view of the passage is that this aorist should be understood in a pluperfect sense, and it is so rendered in the A. V., "Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas, the high priest"; but some writers contend that it ought to be taken in the ordinary sense of the aorist, as in the Revision, "Annas therefore sent him bound." The question is one of considerable interest in its bearing upon the events immediately preceding the crucifixion of our Lord. If the translation of the revision be followed, there would appear to have been two examinations before the Jewish authorities: one before Annas, which, in that case, is all that St. John records; the other before Caiaphas, which is all that is given by the Synoptists, or at least all that St. Matthew records, since they make no mention of Annas at all, and St. Matthew expressly connects Caiaphas with his account. On the other hand, if the pluperfect rendering be adopted, the clause becomes a simple incidental explanation by St. John while giving the account, like the Synoptists, of Christ's examination before Caiaphas.

The question must ultimately be decided on more general considerations, but it must first be determined whether the Greek is fairly open, grammatically considered, to either interpretation. The commentators are somewhat divided upon the question, and the fact that so large a number of very learned expositors have advisedly adopted the pluperfect sense creates a certain presumption that this is admissible. We are therefore surprised at the very strong statement of Dr. Riddle in his notes to his recent edition of Robinson's Harmony,

¹ The authorities are: for οὖν BC*LXΔΠ² 1, 33, and a few others, a b f ff² Arm. Whitgift's Syriac, Cyril. For δέ 8 13, 69, 124, 247, and several others, Sah. Schaff's Syriac, g. Vulg. Syr.-Jer. Æth. Cop. For omission of any particle, A C³ D^{sup} ΥΓΑΠ* with seven other uncials and many cursives.

p. 258, § 143, "The verb here *cannot* be taken as equivalent to the pluperfect" (see § 145); and again, p. 260, § 145, "The Greek aorist in a dependent clause has its usual force; but the relation to the previous clause makes it necessary to express the tense by the English pluperfect. Such a usage is not a proof that the Greeks used the aorist in a leading clause instead of the pluperfect. The apparent cases are only such as express a single past fact without any relation to some other fact, previously mentioned, that may have followed it. Here, where *οὐν* is the connective, the aorist *cannot* be properly rendered by the English pluperfect, since *οὐν* denotes sequence." (The italics in both cases are Dr. Riddle's.)

This question is a purely grammatical one, independent of any harmonistic arrangement. If we consult the grammarians, there is an evident disposition to restrict as much as possible the use of the aorist in a pluperfect sense in independent clauses, and yet a general recognition that this sometimes occurs. Winer, *N. T. Gram.* (Thayer's trans. p. 275), § 40, 5, *a. β.*, while treating of the aorist "in narration for the pluperfect," after speaking of relative clauses, adds, "The aor. is thus used in independent clauses, when they contain supplementary remarks. Matt. xiv. 3f. Whether this also applies to Jno. xviii. 24 cannot be decided on grammatical grounds." Buttmann, *Gram. of N. T.* § 137, 6 (Thayer's trans. p. 200), after recognizing the use of the aorist for the pluperfect in subordinate clauses, adds, "In leading clauses the case is different. . . . Hence in interpreting the N. T. . . . we shall proceed more safely if we assert such a use of the aorist at the most only where the temporal reference is obvious from the immediate context. Yet here, too, it must hold as a rule . . . that the author, when he reports in the aorist facts that have previously occurred (see especially Matt. xiv. 3 sq.), has at once transferred himself as a narrator to the time then being, leaving his hearer to supply the temporal relation for himself; as is manifest, for example, in the passage adduced, from the fact that the writer alternates between the aorist and the imperfect. See besides Jno. xviii. 24 (and Lücke *in loc.*) [Lücke agrees with those who adopt the pluperfect sense], vi. 22 sq." It will be observed that Buttmann is still more disposed than Winer to restrict and explain this use of the aorist, but more positive in recognizing an example of it in the passage under consideration. This is no new view of the grammarians. The same position was taken, relying upon the same examples and making the same reference to our passage, by Trollope (*Gr. Gr. of N. Test.* p. 135, § 50, obs. 7) nearly fifty years ago and must necessarily have

been taken by all those older writers who adopted the arrangement found in Robinson's own Harmony, Robinson himself being no mean judge in such matters.

To the examples cited must be added Mark vi. 17 sq., parallel to Matt. xiv. 3 sq. It is evident that in both these places, as well as in Jno. vi. 22 sq., the aorist indicates a time past relatively to the past time of the main narration, and this I suppose to be the function of the pluperfect tense in these passages unquestionably fulfilled by the aorist; it is also evident that this comes about in all these cases because the writer has mentally transferred himself to the time of his main narration, and from that standpoint has used the aorist in its usual signification. In the passages referred to this use of the aorist is somewhat disguised from the length of the episodes. In Matt. xiv. 3-12 there are ten verses in which the aorist is used continuously of a relatively past time; in Mark vi. 14-29 there are fifteen verses; in Jno. vi. 22-25 four verses; here there is only one short verse. The grammatical principle, however, is the same in all of them.

But especial stress is laid upon the particle οὖν in connection with the aorist. It is said that "here, where οὖν is the connective, the aorist *cannot* be properly rendered by the English pluperfect, since οὖν denotes sequence." That οὖν is a particle of sequence none will deny; but it may also have other uses. Winer says of it (§ 53, 8, *a*. Thayer's trans. p. 444), "like the German *also* (*therefore, thus*), or *now* (now) it is used especially after a digression to resume the train of thought," instancing, besides several examples from classical writers, "1 Cor. viii. 4, xi. 20, or when a writer proceeds to explain (even by examples)," instancing the *var. lect.* ἐὰν οὖν in Rom. xii. 20. Setting aside other examples, the following may be found in this very Gospel. In ii. 19 our Lord said to the Jews asking a sign of his authority, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews objected to this; the Evangelist explains its true meaning, and then in vs. 22 he adds, "when therefore — ὅτε οὖν — he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered," etc. Here the "sequence" of οὖν is clearly with vs. 19 and not with the intervening matter. In xi. 1 mention is made of the sickness of Lazarus, who is described as "of Bethany," and this town is further identified as "the town of Mary and her sister Martha." Then Mary is described as "that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and washed his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick." After this digression the Evangelist returns to his narrative with the very words in the passage before us, ἀπέστειλεν οὖν, "Therefore his sisters sent unto him,"

etc. In vs. 5 he makes another digression to say, "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus," and then returns again to the story with another *οὖν* with an aorist, *ὡς οὖν ἤκουσεν*, "When he had heard therefore that he was sick," etc., a pluperfect of the A. V. which the revisers have also changed, as it seems to the writer, unnecessarily. The last part of this chapter is occupied with an account of the hostility of the Jews aroused by the raising of Lazarus, and of our Lord's walking "no more openly among the Jews." Then follows a statement that "the Jews' passover was near at hand," of many going up to Jerusalem to purify themselves, of their seeking for Jesus, and of the command of the chief priests "that if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him." Having thus described the situation, St. John resumes his direct narration with *οὖν . . . ἦλθεν*, "Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was." This is in vs. 1; in vs. 2 he speaks of the feast made for him there, and then he goes on for seven following verses to describe what occurred at the feast, the indignation of Judas at the waste of the ointment, and the reply of our Lord. In vs. 9 he resumes the direct narrative with another aorist and *οὖν*. *Ἔγνω οὖν*, "Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there." Once more, in xvi. 1-20 our Lord tells the disciples of his own approaching departure and of their consequent sorrow, which should afterwards be turned into joy. In vs. 21 he illustrates this by the sorrow of a woman in travail issuing in joy at the birth of her son. In vs. 22 he returns to the thread of his discourse with an *οὖν*, "and ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again."

Certainly Winer's doctrine of the function of *οὖν* is abundantly borne out by the usage of St. John, and some of these passages are quite closely parallel to the one before us.

The question, therefore, in regard to the *ἀπέστειλέν οὖν* of Jno. xviii. 24 is simply whether we are compelled to suppose that he used the expression as a part of his continuous narrative, or whether, throwing his thoughts back to the time of that narrative, he here mentions a previous incident necessary to the explanation of what he was narrating. Winer's remark is eminently true, that this cannot be determined on grammatical grounds. The exegetical question may therefore be considered independently, without embarrassment from any grammatical constraint.

From the difference of opinion among commentators it is evident that much may be said on either side of the question. Even an incomplete list of writers is sufficient to bring out this fact. For the

supposition that St. John records an examination before Annas preceding vs. 24, of which the Synoptists make no mention, are recorded Chrysostom, Augustine (*De Con. Evang.* lib. iii. c. vi. 21, 24), who supposes a return to the house of Annas, Alford, Olshausen, Wieseler, Ellicott, Luthardt, Meyer, Godet, Watkins in "Ellicott's Com. for English Readers," Lange and his translator Schaff, "Schaff's Popular Com.," Wescott in the "Speaker's Com.," and Plummer in "Cambridge Bible for Schools." For the opposite view, that St. John, in vs. 24, mentions incidentally a fact which actually occurred before, Cyril, Erasmus, Grotius, Luther, Bengel, Calvin, Castalio, Vatablus, Cornelius a Lapide, Jansen, Lücke, Tholuck, Krabbe, De Wette, Maier, Baumlein, Rosenmüller, Beza, Doddridge, Whitby, Webster and Wilkinson, Griesbach, Knapp, Stroud, Robinson, Geikie, and, with especial clearness of argument, Andrews in his "Life of our Lord."

The *prima facie* impression from the four narratives put together is that St. John and the Synoptists describe the same examination. All alike mention the entrance of Peter into the palace of the high priest, and all (except Matt.) the fire there at which he warmed himself. The Synoptists all place the first denial of Peter during the examination before "the high priest" whom St. Matthew expressly calls Caiaphas (xxvi. 57); St. John places it in the examination preceding vs. 24. If therefore it was only at that point that he was taken to Caiaphas, there is an absolute discrepancy in the accounts. There are commentators who feel no objection to this; others adopt one of two alternatives: either (1) St. Matthew here follows his habit of grouping like things together without strict regard to chronological sequence, and the others who merely mention "the high priest" without giving his name, may have referred to Annas; or (2) that the whole transaction was mixed and confused, Caiaphas being present at the examination before Annas, and Annas going with the prisoner when he sent him to Caiaphas. But in regard to (1) it is not a case of grouping like things together, St. Matthew expressly saying that this examination was before Caiaphas, and for the others the presumption is very strong, as will appear presently, that by "high priest" they must have intended Caiaphas. In regard to (2) it can only be said that it is extremely improbable in itself; it requires that the title "high priest" should be applied indifferently to both Annas and Caiaphas, and it would be a very strange interpretation of the expression "Annas sent him to Caiaphas." Still further, the impression is very strong that the several denials of Peter took place in the same house, and that our Lord was sent directly from this house to Pilate.

On the whole, it may reasonably be assumed that the first impression of the narrative is that our Lord was taken first to Annas, and without any record of what occurred there, if anything did occur, he was sent on to Caiaphas, the whole four Evangelists narrating what happened at the latter place. Still, this is only a first impression. It may be changed by closer examination. What reasons are alleged for a different view?

(1) The first point urged is the use of the aorist ἀπέστειλεν. But this is the very point in question, and it has already appeared that the grammarians find no difficulty here. There really is no other important argument; nevertheless, it is urged that, —

(2) “It fails to account for the order in John’s Gospel.” This is merely a repetition of the same argument in other language. There is no variation from the order of St. John’s Gospel except in the verse in question, and none here if we suppose that this is meant to refer to a previous incident. All turns again upon this aorist. In saying “there is no variation” it should be remembered that vs. 18 (in reference to the fire at which Peter warmed himself) professedly narrates what occurred before vs. 17.

(3) “It confuses two distinct statements in Matthew and Mark; those which tell of a night examination (Matt. xxvi. 57–68, Mark xiv. 53–65), and also of a morning assembly of the Sanhedrim (Matt. xxvii. 1, Mark xv. 7).” It is a little difficult to understand this argument or to see how either interpretation of St. John’s ἀπέστειλεν should affect the matter one way or the other. All the accounts agree that there was an examination during the night, for they all place it before and during the denials of Peter, and these occurred before the cock-crowing. During this examination the Sanhedrim was more or less fully assembled. It was not lawful for them to pronounce sentence of death during the night, and accordingly the Sanhedrim was not formally and officially assembled until dawn. But, according to all the Synoptists, whatever of examination or trial there was took place before this time; they formally assembled only to pronounce sentence. There is no record anywhere of any further trial. What bearing, then, this very brief official gathering has upon the question, “at what time Annas sent his prisoner to Caiaphas,” is not apparent. The accounts seem sufficiently clear if we assume that Annas on receiving him sent him on immediately to Caiaphas; but if there exist any confusion, it certainly would not be removed by supposing that he only did so after Peter’s first denial, since St. Matthew mentions this as before Caiaphas, while, according to this theory, St. John makes it before Annas. To

the mind of the writer, the assumed confusion is altogether on the other side.

Another point is added, that the arrangement of Robinson, Andrews, Geikie, and others fails "to account for the position these Evangelists (the Synoptists) assign to Peter's denials." To this is added as a final argument, "it dislocates without necessity the course of Luke's narrative." I do not know which of these two arguments may be considered the more important, but a choice must be made between them, since they are contradictory to each other. The place assigned to the denials of Peter in the course of the examination by St. Matthew and St. Mark is not the same as that assigned by St. Luke. The "course of the narrative" in either one case or the other must be dislocated. No writer, so far as I know, has ever attempted the impossible task of presenting the order of all three. There is a very general if not universal agreement in preserving in this respect "the course of Luke's narrative." But however this may be, what has this question to do with the time at which Annas sent our Lord bound to Caiaphas? The points between the Synoptists remain the same in either case, for none of them mention Annas at all. The only dislocation that can occur is between the Synoptists and St. John, and here, if we must suppose that the sending occurred only when he mentions it, after the first denial of Peter, the discrepancy is a serious one.

There is still one further argument, advanced by Luthardt, which is of so little force that it only needs to be mentioned for the sake of completeness. It is, that as Peter and John followed their Master and went with him into the palace of the high priest, and as he was taken first to Annas, it must have been his palace which they entered. It is a sufficient answer to this that St. Matthew, who says that Peter entered into the high priest's palace, expressly calls that high priest Caiaphas. The other Synoptists give no name. St. John again says that Caiaphas was the high priest, and it remains to be shown that he can mean any one but him when he speaks simply of "the high priest."

All arguments on this side, therefore, of any weight depend on the simple grammatical question of the use of the aorist ἀπέστειλεν. The others, when examined, recoil. In the opinion of the best grammarians, the grammatical argument does not hold, and therefore the whole argument is reduced to the simple fact that St. John mentions the sending at a certain point in his narrative, and the question is, whether this actually occurred at that point, or having occurred before, is here mentioned incidentally. Nevertheless, the revision has changed the "had sent" of the A. V. to simple "sent." Is this change re-

quired? To the writer's mind the evidence in favor of the correctness of the authorized version is preponderating. The reasons have already been suggested in connection with the *prima facie* impression from the narrative.

The first point in its favor is the use of the title "high priest." It is evident that all the Evangelists alike represent the whole examination and all the denials of Peter as having taken place in the presence of the high priest. Is it possible that they could have meant — each and all of them — to indicate two different persons by this title in one continuous narrative, and that without any mark of the transition? St. Luke does, indeed, in two instances elsewhere (Luke iii. 2; Acts iv. 6) speak of Annas as "high priest," but in both cases, singularly enough, he couples his name with that of Caiaphas. However these passages are to be explained, they afford no parallel to the present one. Here no name is given at all by either St. Luke or St. Mark, while they both designate the presiding officer throughout in a continuous narrative by the title "the high priest," and in the latter part of this narrative the person intended was confessedly Caiaphas. Is it reasonable to suppose that another person was intended in the earlier part of the narrative without any indication of the change? But this by no means represents the whole state of the case. Not only do all the Synoptists say that our Lord was brought to the high priest, and continue their narrative without intimation of any change until he was sent to Pilate, but St. Matthew (xxvi. 57) expressly mentions that this high priest was Caiaphas. Again, St. John, who alone mentions Annas, twice distinguishes him in so marked a way from the high priest that it is difficult to suppose he could, without explanation, have applied that title to him throughout the intervening narrative. In vs. 13 he says of Annas, "he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year"; and in vs. 24, the only other place in which he mentions Annas, he says that he "sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest." Is it conceivable that in the five times in which he mentions "the high priest" between these two verses he could have intended to designate Annas and not Caiaphas?

It is said that Annas, having been once high priest, might still be regarded by the Jews as such *de jure*; that he might have been the deputy of Caiaphas, and thus have received the title; that he might have been president of the Sanhedrim and thus have been called high priest by courtesy. All these are conjectures; our enquiry is for facts. Now we know from Josephus (*Antiq.* xviii. 2, 1 f., xx. 1, 9) that Annas [or Ananus] was made high priest in A.D. 7, and put out

of office in A.D. 14, therefore some fifteen years before the time in question. Meantime he had been succeeded by Ismael, then by his son Eleazar, then by Camithus, — all for short terms, — and finally by his son-in-law Caiaphas about A.D. 25, who retained the office for about twelve years. Under these circumstances there could be no possible question as to the person meant by the title “high priest” in or about A.D. 29 but for the fact that St. Luke twice calls Annas by that title. He never calls him so, however, except when he couples his name with that of Caiaphas, and apparently it was only in connection with him and in relation to him that he could so use the title. (The high priest Ananias of Acts xxiii. 2 and xxiv. i. is of course a different person.) In the eleven other places in which he speaks of “the high priest,” without mentioning any name, the presumption is strong that he means the official who actually held the office, and this presumption is not lessened in the present case.

After vs. 24 St. John records nothing except the denials of Peter. Is it likely that he, an eyewitness, should have passed over in entire silence the whole examination before the only high priest recognized by the law, and whose action alone was of any official significance? St. Matthew and St. Mark put the whole, and St. Luke nearly the whole, of the examination before the high priest earlier than the denials of Peter. It is very natural that they should have narrated events somewhat out of exact chronological order for the purpose of giving the successive denials of Peter together, by themselves; but unless they have all entirely changed the course of events, substantially the whole examination must have taken place before any of Peter’s denials, and therefore if that first denial was before Annas, there was almost no trial at all recorded before Caiaphas.

But St. Matthew distinctly says (xxvi. 57), “They that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and elders were assembled.” He goes directly on with the account of the trial. This is at least very strange, if the main trial was before Annas and scarcely anything before Caiaphas. From the position and character of Annas, it was not remarkable that our Lord should have been taken first to him, and that he, having no official authority in the premises, should have sent him immediately on to Caiaphas; and this, being a mere momentary incident, is naturally passed over by the Synoptists. It is mentioned only by St. John, whose intelligence, quickened by his peculiarly earnest love, saw how this incident united the moral to the legal action of the Jewish hierarchy in the condemnation of our Lord. Except for this there

was little occasion to mention Annas, and the silence of the Synop-
tists is accounted for ; but their accounts, especially that of St. Mat-
thew, are inexplicable if the main trial was before Annas.

A further reason for the view incorporated into the A. V. is found
in the circumstances connected with Peter's admission to the high
priest's palace. All the Evangelists mention his being there, and all
parties agree that his last two denials took place in the presence of
Caiaphas. St. John tells us that he was admitted because he (St.
John), being known to the high priest, spoke to the portress. Now
who was the person to whom St. John was known, and into whose
palace did he procure Peter's admission? Can it be supposed that
he was a different person from the high priest before whom our Lord
was standing when denied by Peter the second and third time? Of
course this argument would be weakened if it could be shown that
Annas and Caiaphas occupied the same palace, and that the term
"high priest" was indifferently applied to either of them ; but these
things yet remain to be proved, or even to be shown at all probable.

The most decisive evidence of all, however, is in the different
accounts of Peter's denials. If these all occurred during the exam-
ination before Caiaphas, although with some interval between them,
— St. Mark (xiv. 70) says that the third was "a little after," and St.
Luke (xxii. 70) "about the space of one hour after" the second,—it
was perfectly natural that they should have narrated them together ;
but it is very difficult to suppose this if the first denial took place
while our Lord was being examined by Annas, and after this he was
again bound and sent to Caiaphas and then further examined by him
before the second and third denials took place. Yet this is required
by the narrative of St. John, if we suppose our Lord to have been
sent to Caiaphas only at the time when he mentions the fact in vs. 24.
Again : it is perfectly clear in all the four accounts, that Peter's
denials all took place in the same "palace" and with the same per-
sons around him. The actual accusations were made indeed by dif-
ferent persons, but from the same prompting. In the first case it was
a certain maidservant (Matt., Mark, Luke), the portress (Jno.) who
preferred the charge ; in the second, another woman (Matt.), the
same woman (Mark) who both repeated it to the bystanders, among
whom another man (Luke) charged it upon Peter, while the number
of different persons furthering the accusation is summed up in St.
John's plural "they said" ; in the third, this same multiplicity of
accusers is marked in the first two Evangelists by the plural, while St.
Luke particularizes "another man," and St. John "a kinsman of"

Malchus as especially prominent in bringing home the charge. But in all alike, all this occurs evidently in the same palace and in the same general crowd. Of course, if Annas and Caiaphas together were regarded as practically one high priest, and if they lived in the same palace, all this is possible ; but I submit, as before, that this is eminently improbable.

To sum up the whole narrative : The ordinary view, incorporated into the A. V., is that our Lord immediately upon his arrest was taken before Annas, a former high priest, the father-in-law of the present high priest, and a man whose influence and counsel were of great weight among the Jews. Here there was either no delay and no examination, or so little that none of the Evangelists have thought it worth while to make any record of it. Annas, who had no legal authority in the premises, sent him on to Caiaphas. There the "scribes and elders" were already to some extent assembled ; there the whole examination took place, and all the denials of Peter. The law forbidding a capital sentence during the night, it was necessary to wait until dawn, when the formal notice was given to the Sanhedrim, the formal condemnation pronounced, and the prisoner immediately led away to Pilate. Against this simple and consistent narrative, which shows all the Evangelists in complete accord and requires no doubtful conjectures, is opposed the alleged necessary force of the aorist ἀπέστειλεν, which is not admitted by the best grammarians.

On the other hand, if the objection be admitted, there arises a necessity for several improbable conjectures ; that Annas and Caiaphas could be indifferently spoken of in the narratives as "the high priest" ; that the title could be passed on from one to the other without break ; that both occupied the same house ; that Annas went with his prisoner when he "sent him" ; that sending him bound was merely transferring him from one room or from one side of the hall to the other. And when all these things have been done, there will still remain the discrepancies, that St. Matthew says they took him to "Caiaphas the high priest" and then examined him, while St. John says they took him first to Annas, the father-in-law of the high priest, and there examined him ; and especially that St. John will be made to say that the denials of Peter took place during the examination of our Lord before different persons, while all the Synoptists evidently relate them as in the presence of the same "high priest."

It seems to the writer that this is too heavy a load for a grammatical nicety, rejected by the professed grammarians, to bear, and that here, as in other instances, the Revisers have missed the real meaning through an over-punctilious regard to alleged grammatical exactness.