Some Notes on Johannine Usage

G. D. Kilpatrick

In the course of a revision of the Greek text of John the following characteristics of the language of the Gospel were noticed. Most of them are related to textual variants and provide another illustration of the way in which text and language are connected.

I. Adjectives

(a) *The possessives ἐμός, σός, ὑμετερός*

In examination of the personal possessives in the New Testament it was found that in Mark and Luke these possessive forms were used only predicatively and pronominally. Investigation in John has revealed a different treatment of the possessives, but has brought other examples of attributive and predicative adjectives to light.

(i) With the article the commonest order seems to be article, noun, article, possessive (e.g. *ὁ λόγος ὁ ἐμός*, 8:37): *ἐμός*: 3:29, 5:30 (2); 6:38; 7:6, 8 (v.l.)[1]; 8:16, 31, 37, 43 (2), 51 (v.l.), 56; 10:26, 27; 12:26; 14:15, 27; 15:9, 11, 12; 17:13, 24; 18:36 (4); *σός*: 17:17; 18:35; *ὑμέτερος*: 7:6; 8:17.

(ii) Without article the possessive precedes the noun (e.g. *ἐμὸν βρῶμα*, 4:34): *ἐμός*: 4:34; 13:35; 15:8.

(iii) Predicative without article:
ἐμός: 14:24; 16:14, 15; 17:10;
σός: 17:6, 9, 10.

(iv) Pronominal with article (e.g. *τά ἐμά*, 17:10):
ἐμός: 10:14 (2); 16:14, 15; 17:10;
σός: 17:10;
ὑμέτερος: 15:20.

(v) Article, possessive, noun:
5:47: *τοῖς ἐμοῖς ῥήμασιν*. Here *ἐμοῖς* is emphatic.
7:16: *ἡ ἐμὴ διδαχή*. *ἐμὴ* is emphatic in contrast to *τοῦ πέμψαντός με*.
4:42: *τὴν σὴν λαλίαν*. Here *σῆν* is in contrast to *αὐτοί*.

If this analysis is right, (i) is the normal arrangement for attributive possessives with the article and (v) is emphatic. (ii) is the only arrangement for attributive possessives without the article. (iii) and (iv) are quite regular. It appears on examination that John's use of possessives is much more regular than would appear at first sight. It is different from the use in Mark and Luke and more complex.

(b) *ἀγαθός and καλός*

With these words the distinction between attributive on one hand and predicative and pronominal on the other appears in John. *ἀγαθός* is predicative at John 1:46, 7:12 and pronominal at 5:29. *καλός* occurs at 2:10 (2); 10:11 (2), 14, 32, 33, and is always attributive. This distinction in the use of the two adjectives would

[1] v.l. = *varia lectio* (variant reading).

agree with Bernard's suggestion that they did not differ in meaning (*St. John*, II.356). *καλῶς* is the only adverb. *εὖ* had gone largely out of use and *ἀγαθῶς* was never common. *καλός* follows its noun at 10:11 (2), 14 and according to one reading at 10:32. It precedes at 2:10 (2) where the good wine is contrasted with the inferior wine and at 10:33 where *καλόν* may be emphatic.

(c) *ἀληθῆς and ἀληθινός*

Recent commentators do not seem to have departed far from Bernard's discussion of these words (*St. John*, I.11, cf. Bultmann, 32, Barrett, 133f, Dodd, *Interpretation*, 139f, 170, Boismard, *Prologue*, 48). He says: "*ἀληθινός* is distinguished from *ἀληθής* as the *genuine* from the *true*." Later he adds: "There are indeed a few passages where *ἀληθινός* cannot be sharply distinguished from *ἀληθής*."

If we look up the two words in the concordance we notice that usually *ἀληθής* is predicative, 3:33; 5:31, 32; 7:18; 8:13, 14, 17, 26; 10:41; 21:24. With these we may take 4:18 where *ἀληθές* is the main predicate, "This which you have said is true". On the other hand *ἀληθινός* is attributive, 1:9; 4:23, 37; 6:32; 15:1; 17:3.

There remain passages where the text is uncertain. At 6:55, if *ἀληθής* is read twice, it is attributive to *βρῶσις* and *πόσις*, but there is an alternative reading *ἀληθῶς* ℵ* D *Γ Δ Λ*, which removes the exception. At 7:28 *ἀληθινός* is predicative, but *ἀληθής* is read by *P66* ℵ 544, and at 8:16 we should read *ἀληθής* with *P66* ℵ *pl* against B D W. Likewise at 19:35 we should read *ἀληθής* with ℵ 124 Chrys for *ἀληθινή*. At 4:37 there are three readings *ἀληθής*, *ἀληθινός* and *ὁ ἀληθινός*. *ἀληθινός* does not agree with John's practice elsewhere but both *ἀληθής* and *ὁ ἀληθινός* do conform to it. *ἀληθής* is the easier reading and occurs only in a few cursives. What are we to make of *ὁ ἀληθινός*? The construe is "the true word is in this that" etc. Perhaps this may be rendered "the true saying consists in this."

How did these variations come about? It is conceivable that the scribes were not always aware of the evangelist's usage and perhaps altered the text sometimes from *ἀληθής* to *ἀληθινός* and sometimes the other way about in order to conform to the distinction frequently observed between the two words and mentioned by Bernard above. At 6:55 the change to *ἀληθῆς* would get rid of *ἀληθῶς*, which was not popular with the scribes, and would produce an expression grammatically more simple.

If from the point of view of meaning *ἀληθής* - *ἀληθινός* can be treated as one adjective, we have still to discover what that meaning is. It appears to range from "true" to "genuine" and "real", covering the various significances ascribed by the commentators to each adjective. This meaning will be allied to that of *ἀλήθεια*.

The oldest Latin rendering for both words seems to have been *uerus*, showing that the translators did not distinguish between them. Later *uerax* was introduced for *ἀληθής* at 3:33; 7:18, 28 (*a b*); 8:26.

Further we may notice that *ἀληθινός* normally follows its noun, 1:9; 4:37; 6:32; 15:1. At 4:23 and 17:3, where it precedes, it is emphatic.

In confirmation of our distinction of *ἀληθινός* as attributive and *ἀληθής* as predicative is the fact that, as we would expect, the adverb is *ἀληθῶς* derived from the predicative adjective and not from the attributive. *ἀληθινῶς* does not occur in John.

II. The Position of *ὅτε* and *ὅταν* Clauses in John

In Mark *ὅτε* clauses precede their main clauses. They precede in John (2:22; 4:45; 6:24; 12:16; 13:12, 31; 17:12; 19:6, 8, 23, 30; 21:15, 18) except when *ὅτε* refers to an antecedent word of time (*ὥρα*, 4:21, 23; 5:25; 16:25; *νύξ*, 9:4; *σάββατον*, 9:14). There are three exceptions in the printed texts: 1:19; 12:17; 20:24. At 12:17 there is a variant reading, *ὅτι* for *ὅτε* and this may well be right.

20:24 is quite clear in the ordinary text. ℵ however and apparently *P5* read ... *μετ' αὐτῶν. ὅτε οὖν ἦλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔλεγον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταί.* On this reading and punctuation the aorist must be translated "had come" and the pronoun *αὐτῷ* refers back not to Jesus but to Thomas and the construe would be "When Jesus had come <and gone> the disciples told Thomas." This conforms to John's normal practice in placing *ὅτε* clauses and may well be right. Its very awkwardness is in its favour. Scribes are not likely to have changed the ordinary text to it, but might well make the change in the other direction to avoid an obscure and clumsy phrasing.

At 1:19 there is more evidence for variation. The *ὅτ* clause is easily detachable from the main clause of verse 19. This is implied by Origen's reading in this verse: *τότε ἀπέστειλαν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεῖς καὶ Λευίτας ἵνα ἐρωτήσωσιν αὐτόν Σὺ τίς εἶ; καὶ ὡμολόγησε καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσατο, καὶ ὡμολόγησεν ὅτι Ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμὶ ὁ Χριστός, In Joannem,* VI.9 (6).[1] Cyril of Alexandria follows this construction in his paraphrase: *ὅτε γὰρ, φησὶν, οἱ τῶν Ἰουδαικῶν ταγμάτων κατά νόμον καθηγηταὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀπεστάλκασιν ἱερεῖς καὶ Λευίτας, ἀναπυθέσθαι προστάξαντες, τί ἂν λέγοι περὶ ἑαυτοῦ, τότε δὴ καὶ μάλα σαφῶς ὡμολόγησε, πᾶσαν ἀποπτύσας αἰδὼ, τὴν ἀλήθειαν. ἔφη γὰρ ὅτι ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμὶ ὁ Χριστός. In Joannem* I.10 ad loc.[2]

If we put a full stop before *ὅτε* in this verse we encounter one major difficulty: when does the main clause begin on which *ὅτε* depends? It is clear that it does so with one of the three verbs *καὶ ὡμολόγησε καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσατο καὶ ὡμολόγησεν.* There are parallels for this at Rev. 3:20; 6:12; 10:17; 14:10 and elsewhere, see Blass-Debrunner, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch,* § 442.7. Granted that we may feel justified on this evidence in beginning our main clause with *καὶ*, with which *καὶ* do we begin it? Origen preferred to punctuate before the first *καὶ ὡμολόγησεν.* The third *καὶ* in verse 20 is omitted by C^2L W 0141

[1] 'Then the Jews sent priests and levites from Jerusalem to ask him: "Who are you?" and he confessed and denied not and confessed: "I am not the Messiah".'

[2] 'For when, he said, the lawful expounders of the Jewish ordinances sent to him priests and levites commanding them to enquire what he might say about himself, then he laid aside all shame and he confessed the truth very clearly, for he said: "I am not the Messiah".'

fl 33 *pc b f ff*^{2} *r*^{1}, and P^{66} punctuates after *ἠρνήσατο*. These two considerations are in favour of making the principle clause begin with the second *καὶ ὡμολόγησεν*. Between these two possibilities decision is difficult. Origen's punctuation has the merit of simplicity but the other punctuation makes *καὶ ὡμολόγησεν καὶ ἠρνήσατο* seem less otiose.

III. *ἀποστέλλειν* and *πέμπειν*

As C. C. Tarelli's demonstration that these two verbs complement each other in John (*Journal of Theological Studies,* xlvii.175) is sometimes overlooked, it seems desirable to repeat it here. The details are as follow:

πέμπειν	*πέμπω*	20:21.
	πέμψω	13:20; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7.
	ὁ πέμψας	1:22, 33; 4:34; 5:23, 24, 30, 37;
(always with the article)		6:38, 39, 44; 7:16, 18, 28, 33; 8:16, 18, 26, 29; 9:4; 12:44, 45, 49; 13:16, 20; 14:24; 15:21; 16:5.
ἀποστέλλειν		
	ἀπέστειλα	1:19; 3:17, 34; 4:38 (v.l.); 5:38;
	(indicative)	6:29, 57 (v.l.); 7:29 (v.l.), 32; 8:42; 10:36; 11:3, 42; 17:3, 8, 18 (2), 21, 23, 25; 18:24.
	ἀπέσταλκα	4:38 (v.l.); 5:33, 36; 6:57 (v.l.); 7:29 (v.l.); 20:21.
	ἀπεσταλμένος	1:6, 24; 3:28; 9:7.

This gives the pattern: *πέμπω, πέμψω, ἀπέστειλα* (but *ὁ πέμψας*), *ἀπέσταλκα, ἀπεσταλμένος.*

Both words seem to be used in the same sense, and it is probably vain to try to distinguish between them except formally. On the other hand they are apparently narrower in meaning than the English word 'send'. It can be used (like *ἀπολύειν* in Greek) to mean 'dismiss' in such sentences as 'send him away', and 'send him home', but we cannot use *πέμπειν* or *ἀποστέλλειν* in this way. They have a suggestion of commissioning or sending with a purpose.

IV. *πρός* with Verbs of Saying

With verbs of saying *πρός* and the accusative occur as follows:

λέγειν	2:3 (sing.); 3:4 (s); 4:15 (s), 33*, 49 (s); 6:5 (s); 7:50 (plur.); 8:31 (p).
εἰπεῖν	4:48 (s); 6:28 (v.l.) (s), 34 (s); 7:3 (s), 35*; 8:57 (v.l.) (s); 11:21 (s); 12:19*; 16:17*; 19:24*.
κατηγορεῖν	5:45 (s).
[*ἀποκρίνεσθαι*	8:33 (v.l.)]

Except for Jn. 5:45 there is no example of *πρός* and the accusative with *κατηγορεῖν* in the New Testament, but *πρός* with the accusative seems normal in the LXX, *πρός τὸν βασιλέα* Dn. 6:4; 1 Macc. 7:6, 25, so that we may regard the construction with *πρός* as not exceptional. *πρός* may here have the sense of "before, in the presence of", cf. Rev. 12:10 *κατηγορεῖν ἐνώπιον.*

At the asterisked references above we have the reflexives *πρὸς ἑαυτούς, ἀλλήλους*. I can find no example of the reflexive dative with a verb of saying in John. Thus *πρός* with the accusative or reflexives after verbs of saying seems to be the rule. It is paralleled in Mark.

It is noteworthy that *πρός* in any case is confined to *λέγειν* and *εἰπεῖν*. With *ἀποκρίνεσθαι* and *λαλεῖν* for example the dative is invariable. Even with *λέγειν* and *εἰπεῖν* it is the commoner construction.

John's usage may be compared with that of the other evangelists. With the exceptions noted above Matthew and Mark have the dative with verbs of saying. Luke-Acts uses both constructions freely. Elsewhere in the New Testament *πρός* with the accusative is very rare.

The two constructions appear side by side in the LXX. Huber, *Untersuchungen über den Sprachcharakter des griechischen Leviticus*, 56, tries to establish the distinction for Leviticus that when God speaks to men, *πρός* with the accusative is used, but when men speak among themselves the verb takes the dative. No such distinction can be discerned in John. It is however noteworthy that where an indirect object is expressed by *πρός* and the accusative with *λέγειν* or *εἰπεῖν* it is as a rule a singular (s) and only at 7:50 and 8:31 do we have a plural (p). When the indirect object is in the dative both singular and plural are found.

Finally we may notice 10:35, *πρὸς οὓς ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγένετο*. This may be an imitation of LXX idiom, e.g. Mic. 1:1, *ἐγένετο λόγος κυρίου πρὸς Μιχαίαν*.

Solution Wanted!

We have received by round about means the following extract from a circular letter by Miss Isa Arthur, a missionary in Guinea, W. Africa. Ed.

Bible translation has its problems. There is no simple word for "brother" in Bijago. One must say "older brother" or "younger brother", or alternatively "son of my mother" or "son of my father". (Very often not the same thing in Bijago life, unfortunately.) We were translating Luke 12:13 : —"Speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me". "Was it his big brother or his younger brother?" It might have been his older brother, but we didn't really know. Do you? "Well, was it his mother's son or his father's son?" We decided that they probably had the same father at least, so we called him the "son of my father". A more thorny problem is the word for "kingdom". Abstract terms for kingdom, authority, etc., are conspicuous by their absence, and the word that we used for "kingdom" for a while, turned out on further investigation to mean the habitation of the king, usually a place of riches and splendour. This meant that we were exhorting the Christians to seek first the riches and splendour of God, according to Matthew 6:33, which you'll agree is hardly the meaning of the verse! But what *are* they to seek? The people under God, the land owned by God, or what? Please solve our problem, somebody!