

Mariana Berliana Ali

Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas
aliberliana11@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-8832-5509

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/BPTh.2019.002>

12 (2019) 1: 11–23

ISSN (print) 1689-5150

ISSN (online) 2450-7059

“The Ruler” in the Fourth Gospel

„Władca” w czwartej Ewangelii

Abstract. The title ὁ ἄρχων in the Fourth Gospel (FG) is unanimously attributed to the opponent of Jesus. But is that what Jesus intends with the title? The analysis of its three occurrences (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) will show that a new interpretation of this Johannine title, different from the opinion of the Church Fathers and most exegetes, can be attempted. The article will demonstrate that the attribution of this title to Jesus is a sustainable hypothesis that unveils how the Johannine Jesus prepares his own for the hour and preannounces his glorification.

Streszczenie. Tytuł ὁ ἄρχων w czwartej Ewangelii jest jednoznacznie przypisywany przeciwnikowi Jezusa. Ale czy taka jest intencja Jezusa w odniesieniu do tego określenia? Analiza trzech przypadków jego zastosowania (J 12,31; 14,30; 16,11) ukazuje, że można próbować nowej interpretacji Janowego tytułu, która różni się od opinii Ojców Kościoła i większości egzegetów. Artykuł pokaże, że przypisanie tego tytułu Jezusowi jest trwałą hipotezą, która ujawnia, w jaki sposób Jezus w Ewangelii Janowej przygotowuje swoich uczniów na tę godzinę i zapowiada swoje uwielbienie.

Keywords: The Fourth Gospel; the ruler of the world; judgment; John 12:31; John 14:30; John 16:11.

Słowa kluczowe: czwarta Ewangelia; „władca świata”; sąd; J 12,31; J 14,30; J 16,11.

The singular nominative ἄρχων occurs thrice with its determinative article in the Fourth Gospel (FG).¹ It is always on the lips of Jesus and appears

¹ In the NT the singular nominative ἄρχων occurs eight times, four of which are with the determinative article (cf. John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Rev 1:5). The term ὁ ἄρχων shares the same root with the noun ἡ ἀρχή to present a Christological title (cf. Rev 3:14; 21:6; 22:13) and with the adjective ὁ ἀρχαῖος to speak of the devil and Satan (cf. Rev 12:9; 20:2). Unlike the adjective ὁ ἀρχαῖος that is never utilized with a similar meaning

with the word κόσμος to form two Johannine expressions “the ruler of this world” (12:31; 16:11) and “the ruler of the world” (14:30). These two titles are the only occurrences in the New Testament. The difference between them is that the first title contains the adjective οὗτος attributed to the noun κόσμος.² This adjective distinguishes the world from a possible other world such as eternity (cf. 12:25) and makes the world near and contemporary to those who are speaking and listening. The second title is without the demonstrative adjective, giving thus emphasis more on the noun world.³ Beginning with the Church Fathers,⁴ the exegetes attribute both titles to the devil.⁵ However, the devil is called the ruler of the world not by natural right but by usurpation.⁶ In addition, two Church Fathers have used the term ἄρχων to imply Christ.⁷ The objective of this article is to know of whom Jesus intends with those two Johannine titles and for what purpose.

(cf. Matt 5:21.33; 2Cor 5:17), the plural form of ἡ ἀρχή, meaning “the rulers” (cf. Luke 12:11; Eph 6:12; Col 2:15), is the synonym of ὁ ἄρχων.

² The Johannine expression ὁ κόσμος οὗτος occurs ten times, of which nine are on the lips of Jesus: one in the accusative (cf. 9:39), one in the dative (cf. 12:25) and seven in the genitive [cf. 8:23; 11:9; 12:31(2x); 16:11; 18:36(2x)].

³ Despite the world’s hostility to Jesus (cf. John 7:7), the world in relation to the mission of Jesus has a positive value (John 4:42; 6:51; 8:12; 9:5). Moreover, God so loved the world that he gave the only begotten Son (cf. John 3:16).

⁴ The Church Fathers consulted from this point onwards are Origen, John Chrysostom and Augustine. Cf. Origenes, *Fragmenta in evangelium Joannis (in catenis)* 90 in E. Preuschen, *Origenes Werke*, v. 4, 553; J. Chrysostom, *Commentary on Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist: Homily 67 (John 12,25–33)*, in *The Fathers of the Church* 41, 231; Augustine, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus* 52,7 (CC 36, 448); 79,2 (CC 36, 526); 95,4 (CC 36, 567–568).

⁵ Cf. J. Beutler, *Das Johannesevangelium*, 413; X. Léon-Dufour, *Lettura dell’Evangelo secondo Giovanni*, 740, 928; R. Schnackenburg, *Il Vangelo di Giovanni*, 2:649–651, 3:145; R.E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John (AncB 29; Garden City, 477)*. According to Zumstein the Johannine title “the ruler of this world” introduces a mythological figure. Cf. J. Zumstein, *L’Évangile selon saint Jean 1–12*, 404.

⁶ Cf. T. Aquinas, *Catena Aurea in Quatuor Evangelia: Expositio in Ioannem*, lect. 12,5.

⁷ Clement of Alexandria and Origen use the term ἄρχων to connote Christ. Cf. G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 241.

1. John 12:31

The first occurrence of a new title mentioned by Jesus ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου is found in a context where Jesus is speaking of his hour.⁸ Jesus presents two announcements that begin each with the particle νῦν: now is judgment of this world, now the ruler of this world will be cast out (cf. 12:31).

With regards to the first announcement, the subject κρίσις is without the article in order to stress quality or essence.⁹ The phrase νῦν κρίσις ἐστὶν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου is literally translated: “now judgment is of this world”.¹⁰ By interpreting the expression as an objective genitive,¹¹ a clarification about the author of this judgment is required. The Father does not judge anyone but has given the Son all judgment (cf. 5:22) and authority to make judgment (cf. 5:27). Jesus says that his judgment is just because he seeks only the will of God (cf. 5:30), who has sent him not to condemn but to save the world (cf. 3:17; 12:47). Jesus exercises a kind of judgment that saves the world without condemning it (cf. 8:11).¹² The authority he receives from the Father to judge is exercised by letting himself be condemned and in this way he continues to give life.¹³ This affirms that the noun judgment without the article underlines a quality of judg-

⁸ John 12:20–36 can be the delimitation used for the immediate context of John 12:31. Cf. J. Beutler, *Das Johannesevangelium*, 356. Two similar alternations occur within John 12:20–36 in which Jesus uses a title to speak of himself in the third person [ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (v.23); ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου (v.31)] and continues to speak in the first person [λέγω (v.24); ὑψωτῶ, ἐλκύσω (v.32)].

⁹ In the FG the word κρίσις occurs four times in the nominative with a determinative article (cf. 3:19; 5:30; 8:16) and without (cf. 12:31). Although the noun κρίσις in John 12:31 is without the article, Origen interprets the term as a determinative judgment instead of a quality of judgment. Cf. Origenes, *Fragmenta in evangelium Joannis (in catenis)* 89, 552–553.

¹⁰ In the FG the complement of specification τοῦ κόσμου τούτου occurs eight times, all are on the lips of Jesus [8:23; 11:9; 12:31(2x); 16:11; 18:36(2x)] except once (13:1).

¹¹ The complement of specification τοῦ κόσμου τούτου can be interpreted either as an objective genitive (“now judgment is upon this world”) or a subjective genitive (“now judgment is done by this world”).

¹² The Old Testament distinguishes two types of judgment: a forensic judgment (*mišpāt*) and a bilateral controversy (*rib*) with a distinction of fundamental hermeneutical importance between them, where the first is a judgment of condemnation and the second is a saving judgment. Cf. Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (HALOT), “טשפ”א”, 652.

¹³ Jesus takes away the sin of the world by giving himself to be the sacrificed lamb (cf. John 1:29).

ment rather than a determined judgment.¹⁴ Such judgment may explain why all will honor the Son as they honor the Father (cf. 5:23).

The Church Fathers interpret this first proclamation of Jesus, a judgment that saves the world and that is related to his hour. How does Jesus save the world in his hour? Origen recognizes judgment of this world in the suffering of Jesus on the cross,¹⁵ while John Chrysostom sees it as a tribunal and retribution.¹⁶ Augustine speaks of a judgment that does not condemn the world but liberates it from the servitude to the devil.¹⁷ Despite their different explanations, the Church Fathers link judgment with the death of Jesus.

With the second announcement “now the ruler of this world will be cast out,” Jesus explains how his hour will be a judgment that saves the world. This statement of Jesus arouses at least three questions: 1. Who is this ruler? 2. What is the meaning of “will be cast out”? 3. How can the ruler’s expulsion save the world?

Concerning the identity of this ruler, the Church Fathers are unanimous in pointing to the opponent of Jesus. Origen calls this opponent the tyrant,¹⁸ Chrysostom names it Satan, while Augustine nominates it the devil. Such identification seems to come from the juxtaposition with the Synoptic Gospels, where the term “ruler” has been attributed to Beelzebul.¹⁹ However, the form and context of the term are completely different from that of the FG.²⁰ On the one hand, in the Synoptics the noun appears only in the dative form of τῷ ἄρχοντι, specified by the genitive τῶν δαιμονίων without any reference to

¹⁴ In the FG there are other examples of nouns without the article such as πνεῦμά ἐστιν καὶ ζωὴ ἐστιν (6:63), προφήτης ἐστίν (9:17), μισθωτός ἐστιν (10:13).

¹⁵ Origen considers the coming of the light into the world (cf. John 3:19) as judgment by Jesus and quotes John 9:39 to speak of Jesus as he who came to save the world through a sentence; Jesus has come to judge and save the world, judging to save but not vice-versa. Cf. Origenes, *Fragmenta in evangelium Joannis (in catenis)* 41, 516.

¹⁶ Chrysostom uses the expression ἐν ἐμοί from John 14:30 and the first phrase of John 12:31 to form the following question: “how then is the world judged in me?” He explains that the whole world shall be avenged in Jesus, who was slain wrongfully by Satan, a term that is never on the lips of Jesus in the FG. This idea of vengeance (ἐκδίκησις) seems to come from the writer instead of the FG, where Jesus uses neither the verb ἐκδικέω nor the noun ἐκδίκησις. Cf. Chrysostom, *Commentary on Saint John: Homily 75 (John 14,15–30)*, 311.

¹⁷ Cf. Augustinus, *in Io. Ev. tract.* 52,7 (CC 36, 448).

¹⁸ Cf. Origenes, *Fragmenta in evangelium Joannis (in catenis)* 89, 552–553.

¹⁹ Cf. Matt 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15.

²⁰ There is one unique nominative occurrence of ὁ ἄρχων outside the FG and it is attributed explicitly to Jesus Christ (cf. Rev 1:5). There is also one extra biblical testimony that nominates Jesus Christ literally as “the Lord of all the world”. Cf. *The Epistle of Barnabas* 5:5.

the world and is pronounced by those who accuse Jesus of casting out demons by the ruler of demons. On the other hand, in the FG the noun appears only in the nominative form of ὁ ἄρχων, specified by the genitive τοῦ κόσμου and is always on the lips of Jesus. Therefore, the attribution of the term “ruler” to Beelzebub in the Synoptics should not be applied in the FG. By attributing the term ὁ ἄρχων in the FG to the same figure as in the Synoptics is textually forced.

On the significance of “will be cast out”,²¹ every Church Father has his own interpretation. For Origen, the expulsion of the ruler of this world is a dethronement of the tyrant that happens with the salvific suffering (τοῦ σωτηρίου πάθους) of Jesus.²² However, unlike Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels that speaks about his suffering with the term πάσχω,²³ Jesus of the FG does not mention suffering and never uses such term. By interpreting the adverb ἔξω as “the further darkness” (τὸ ἐξώτερον σκότος),²⁴ Origen loses the peculiarity of ἔξω in the FG.²⁵ Augustine interprets ἔξω as the casting of the devil out of the believer’s heart,²⁶ an interpretation that does not reflect the Johannine usage of the adverb. Chrysostom substitutes the locative ἔξω with the adverb κάτω and explains that the ruler of this world will be thrown down. Hence, on the one hand, Chrysostom does not take into account the textual preference of ἔξω in the majority manuscripts, on the other hand, Origen and Augustine do not interpret the adverb ἔξω according to its Johannine usage as exit from a certain belonging or physical space.

In the FG Jesus explicitly says that he does not cast out anyone (cf. 6:37). However, the Jews do put out the healed born blind man, who paradoxically becomes a believer after being cast out from the synagogue because Jesus turns his excommunication into a salvific experience (cf. 9:34.35). Jesus himself

²¹ The expression ἐκβληθήσεται ἔξω is in the passive form and with no specified agent, leaving the possibility of it as a theological passive. In the Synoptic Gospels, the verb ἐκβάλλω and the locative ἔξω is used by Jesus in the parable of the wicked tenants to preannounce indirectly about his own expulsion (cf. Matt 21:39; Mark 12:8; Luke 20:15). In Mark 1:12, the verb ἐκβάλλω has Jesus as its direct object.

²² Origen introduces the figure ὁ τύραννος that does not exist in the FG.

²³ Cf. Matt 17:12; Mark 9:12; Luke 9:22; 17:25; 22:15; 24:46.

²⁴ Cf. Origenes, *Fragmenta in evangelium Joannis (in catenis)* 90, 553.

²⁵ In the FG the locative ἔξω occurs twelve times, referring either to the outside of a certain belonging (6:37; 9:34.35; 15:6) or physical space [11:43; 12:31; 18:16.29; 19:4(2x).5.13; 20:11].

²⁶ Augustine explains that since the devil has been cast out from the believer’s heart, he can only attack the believer from the outside and not from within; Augustine excludes the interpretation of ἔξω in John 12:31 as the casting out of the devil into hell in the final judgment. Cf. Augustinus, *in Io. Ev. tract.* 52,7 (CC 36, 448).

undergoes a similar experience when he went out (ἐξῆλθεν) of the city to be crucified (cf. 19:17)²⁷ as his way of taking his life again (cf. 10:17). By saying that the ruler of this world will be cast out, Jesus preannounces indirectly his exit when he is lifted up from the earth.²⁸

With respect to the ruler's expulsion, Origen explains that this saves the world because it is about the dethronement of the tyrant. For Chrysostom this action against Satan is the divine way to glorify Jesus.²⁹ Augustine explains that after the expulsion, the devil will no longer be able to tempt the believers from within.³⁰ With their different explanations, the Church Fathers link the efficacy of salvation with the destiny of Jesus' opponent instead with the elevation of Jesus on the cross that saves the world. In fact, the expulsion of Jesus, the ruler of this world, will draw all to him (cf. 12:32). His elevation serves the same paradox of the snake in the desert, which as a symbol of death becomes the salvation for anyone who looks at it (cf. 3:14–15). The world is saved following this paradoxical logic of God that is completely assumed by Jesus.³¹ Hence, the theological passive ἐκβληθήσεται ἔξω finds its justification in this divine logic.

In conclusion, the interpretation of the Church Fathers that Jesus is speaking of his opponent with the Johannine title "the ruler of this world" would not be coherent with the language, vocabulary and theology of the FG. First, the language of Jesus in the FG does not always have its parallels in the Synoptic Gospels. The term ὁ ἄρχων in the FG, which appears in a different context

²⁷ The hatred of the world has ousted Jesus, who suffered and saved the world by being "outside". Cf. Heb 13:12.

²⁸ According to the punctuation of Nestle-Aland, John 12:31 ends with a semicolon and the speech of Jesus continues with a phrase introduced by the expression καὶ γὰρ, which occurs twenty-seven times in the FG (1:31.33.34; 5:17; 6:44.54.56.57; 8:26; 10:15.27.28.38; 12:32; 14:16.20.21; 15:4.5.9; 17:11.18.21.22.26; 20:15.21) and does not give an adversative sense to the phrase. The action of the grammatical subject that precedes every occurrence of the expression καὶ γὰρ is not in opposition with the action of the grammatical subject καὶ γὰρ. Hence, it can be deduced that the grammatical subjects of the two phrases are not antagonistic. By applying such condition, the Johannine title "the ruler of this world" (12:31) cannot be attributed to the opponent of Jesus. Although the real subject that will be cast out will be the same person Jesus who is lifted up from the earth, the two grammatical subjects are different.

²⁹ Chrysostom sees a close connection between John 12:31 and the phrase "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again" (12:28) as Jesus is pointing to the way of glorification in which Satan will be cast out. Cf. Chrysostom, *Commentary on Saint John: Homily 67* (John 12,25–33), 231–232.

³⁰ Cf. Augustinus, *in Io. Ev. tract.* 52,7 (CC 36, 448).

³¹ Jesus shows how he hates his own life in this world by allowing himself to be cast out as his way of judging this world (cf. 12:25.31).

and form, should not be attributed to the same figure as in the Synoptics. Second, the Johannine usage of the adverb ἔξω has its own coherence that must be respected for the comprehension of the text. Third, the Johannine Christology does not underline the suffering of Jesus but his glorification and links the world's salvation with the elevation of Jesus on the cross.

In order to sustain that the Johannine title refers to Jesus, it is important to first answer the following question: is there a valid reason for Jesus to call himself the ruler of this world with the announcement of his hour? The context favors a positive response because Jesus is speaking of his death (cf. 12:33) as an effective attraction (ἐλκύσω) in drawing all to him (cf. 12:32). With the two announcements, Jesus reveals that his judgment does not only have a salvific goal (cf. 12:31a) but also follows a strategy (cf. 12:31b) that is by letting himself be cast out he will draw all to himself with his lifting up from the earth. In fact, Jesus can draw all when he leaves the world (cf. 13:1; 16:28; 17:11). Therefore, the entire context and its specific vocabulary provide the comprehension that Jesus is using this Johannine title in reference to himself.

2. John 14:30

The Church Fathers apply their interpretation of the Johannine title in John 12:31 to the expression ὁ τοῦ κόσμου ἄρχων in John 14:30 and attribute this unique Johannine title to the opponent of Jesus.³² They disregard not just the absence of the demonstrative adjective τούτου in this title but also its context. The expression is the subject of the verb ἔρχεται, announcing the arrival of this figure.³³ The phrase is found within the farewell discourse before the departure of Jesus out of this world to the Father (cf. 13:1).³⁴ Jesus recommends his own not to let their hearts be troubled and gives several anticipations to prepare them to believe when all this will happen (cf. 14:27–29).

³² Cf. Augustinus, *in Io. Ev. tract.* 79,2 (CC 36, 526–527); Chrysostom, *Commentary on Saint John: Homily 75 (John 14,15–30)*, 311.

³³ In the FG the verb ἔρχεται occurs thirty-eight times, seventeen of which are on the lips of Jesus and its subjects are the wind/spirit (cf. 3:8), whoever does evil deeds (cf. 3:20), he who does the truth (cf. 3:21), the harvest (cf. 4:35), he who hears my word and believes in the one who sent me (cf. 5:24), whoever listens and learns from the Father (cf. 6:45), the night (cf. 9:4), the thief (cf. 10:10), no one (cf. 14:6), the ruler of the world (cf. 14:30), the hour (cf. 4:21.23; 5:25.28; 16:2.25.32).

³⁴ Section John 13:1–17:26 is considered a farewell discourse of Jesus. Cf. J. Beutler, *Das Johannesevangelium*, 6; X. Léon-Dufour, *Giovanni*, 1288.

The diachronic hypotheses considers the three chapters (15–17) of the FG as an addition³⁵ and by connecting the verb ἔρχεται in John 14:30 with that in John 18:3, the arrival of the ruler of the world is linked with the arrival of Judas.³⁶ The ruler of the world is identified with the devil (cf. 13:2) or Satan who entered in Judas (cf. 13:27a). However, such interpretation would be mixing the words of Jesus (cf. 14:30) with the commentary of the narrator (cf. 18:3). Moreover, both verses belong to two different contexts: the former is part of the farewell discourse of Jesus, while the later belongs to the passion narrative. Furthermore, since the three names for the opponent of Jesus exist in the FG,³⁷ it would be unlikely for Jesus to create another name to represent the devil, Satan or demon. In fact, by attributing this unique Johannine title “the ruler of the world” to the devil, the Church Fathers have to further justify their interpretation. Chrysostom redefines the Johannine title as “ruler of the darkness of this aeon”.³⁸ Augustine limits the devil as the ruler of this world insofar as he rules only those who are worldly.³⁹

The verb ἔρχεται in John 14:30 would be better matched with its occurrence in 16:25 for at least three reasons: both verses occur on the lips of Jesus, they belong to the same context of the farewell discourse and share three common vocabularies (οὐκέτι,⁴⁰ λαλήσω, ἔρχεται). With the common terms οὐκέτι and λαλήσω, Jesus declares that he will no longer speak many things to them (cf. 14:30) and will no longer speak in a veiled manner (cf. 16:25). With the common verb ἔρχεται, Jesus announces the arrival of the ruler of the world

³⁵ Cf. Beutler, *Das Johannesevangelium*, 417.

³⁶ Augustine’s commentary on John 14:30 states the subject of the verb ἔρχεται as the devil, who comes and cannot do anything against Jesus. However, Augustine specifies that the devil is not the “ruler of the world” but “the ruler of this world of darkness”, admitting thus that the true and only ruler of the world is Jesus Christ. Cf. Augustinus, *in Io. Ev. tract.* 79,2 (CC 36, 526).

³⁷ In the FG the noun ὁ διάβολος is on the lips of Jesus (6:70; 8:44) and is used once by the narrator to describe how the devil inspires Judas to betray Jesus (cf. 13:2); the name Σατανᾶς occurs just once, used by the narrator to mention Satan that enters into Judas (cf. 13:27) and the term δαίμονιον occurs six times in the FG but is used just once by Jesus to clarify the Jews that he does not have a demon (cf. 8:49).

³⁸ “ἄρχοντα τοῦ σκότους τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου”. Cf. Chrysostom, *Commentary on Saint John: Homily 75 (John 14,15–30)*, 311.

³⁹ Cf. Augustinus, *in Io. Ev. tract.* 79,2 (CC 36, 526–527).

⁴⁰ In the FG the particle οὐκέτι occurs twelve times, eight of which are on the lips of Jesus (14:19.30; 15:15; 16:10.16.21.25; 17:11). Jesus uses this particle for the first time when announcing that the world will no longer see him (cf. 14:19) and for the last time when he says to the Father that he is no longer in the world (cf. 17:11).

(cf. 14:30) and the arrival of the hour (cf. 16:25).⁴¹ Since Jesus comes precisely for the hour (cf. 12:27), it would be coherent for Jesus to speak of himself with the coming of the ruler of the world. Hence, the parallelism between John 14:30 and 16:25 favors the attribution of "the ruler of the world" to Jesus.

The expression ἐν ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἔχει οὐδέν (14:30c) is the main phrase of its subordinate phrase in v.31 and it can be translated in two ways.⁴² By considering the verb ἔχει as transitive, the translation of the expression would be "in me he has nothing" with the ruler of the world as its implied subject. The Church Fathers consider uncritically the opponent of Jesus as the subject of the verb ἔχει. If the verb ἔχει is considered intransitive with οὐδέν as its subject then the translation would be "in me there is nothing". This declaration is preferable because Jesus strengthens all his preceding statements about the constant presence of the Father in him (cf. 10:38; 14:10.11). Moreover, this reality is confirmed by its successive verse where Jesus states, "so that the world knows that I love the Father and I do what the Father has commanded me" (14:31).⁴³ Despite being the ruler of the world, Jesus acts according to his Father's command and there is nothing in Jesus except the Father.

3. John 16:11

The second occurrence of ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου is found in the farewell discourse (cf. 16:11). Jesus announces the action of the Holy Spirit, who is constantly at the service of the revelation of Jesus.⁴⁴ The Paraclete will convict⁴⁵ the world with regards to three realities: sin, righteousness and judgment (cf. 16:8). For the first two realities, the action of the Holy Spirit upon the world relates

⁴¹ In the FG the arrival of the hour corresponds to the arrest of Jesus (cf. 7:30; 8:20), to the abandonment from the part of his own (cf. 16:32) and to his glorification (cf. 12:23; 17:1).

⁴² With the presence of a semicolon, John 14:30c can be detached from its preceding phrase.

⁴³ A possible translation of John 14:30–31: "I will speak no longer many things with you, comes in fact the ruler of the world; and in me there is nothing, but so that the world may know that I love the Father and I do exactly as the Father commanded me"

⁴⁴ It is stated in the FG that the Father will send the Paraclete in the name of Jesus to teach and remember everything that Jesus has said (cf. 14:26) and to testify about Jesus (cf. 15:26).

⁴⁵ In the FG the verb ἐλέγχω occurs thrice and are on the lips of Jesus (3:20; 8:46; 16:8). With regards to the meaning of the verb, it is preferable to embrace both the forensic and didactic aspects of the verb. Cf. J. Beutler, *Das Johannesevangelium*, 438.

explicitly to Jesus.⁴⁶ With regards to the first reality on sin, the Holy Spirit will convict the world because they do not believe in Jesus (cf. 16:9). With regards to the second reality on righteousness, the world will be convicted guilty for not believing in Jesus despite his righteousness in going to the Father.⁴⁷ Finally, with regards to the third reality on judgment, the world will be convicted guilty for the ruler of this world has been judged.⁴⁸

In order to understand John 16:11, both the meaning of the verb ἐλέγχω and of the condemnation of the ruler of this world should be respected. The verb ἐλέγχω can have various meanings but in the FG prevails the meaning to convince one's guilt.⁴⁹ In this case, the guilty one is the world for having condemned the ruler of this world. How to take into account the meaning of the verb ἐλέγχω addressed to both the world and the condemnation of the ruler? By attributing the ruler of this world to the devil, the Church Fathers have to justify the action of the Holy Spirit in convicting the world. Augustine sees that the Holy Spirit convicts the world for imitating its ruler who has been judged.⁵⁰ According to Chrysostom, the world is guilty for judging Jesus wrongly in possessing a devil and casting out devils by Beelzebul; the ruler of the world will be judged with the resurrection of Jesus.⁵¹ There is a gap with this interpretation because Chrysostom does not clarify the link between the world's guilt and the judgment that has fallen on the ruler of this world.⁵²

In front of the different explanations by the Church Fathers, the hypothesis that Jesus is attributing this Johannine title to himself and not to the devil must clarify at least two objections: 1. No text states that the world has condemned Jesus; 2. No connection is between the condemned "ruler" and Jesus.

With regards to the first objection, it is true that the world is never the subject of the verb κρίνω. However, Jesus reveals that the light has come into the world but men have refused the light (cf. 3:19), confirming the statement in the

⁴⁶ By explaining the action of the Holy Spirit on the world with regards to sin (cf. 16:9) and righteousness (cf. 16:10), the Johannine Jesus uses the first person singular pronoun ἐμέ and με respectively, highlighting that in both realities the conviction of the Holy Spirit is connected to Jesus.

⁴⁷ The world would be convicted guilty for the righteousness of those who believe even though they do not see Jesus. Cf. Augustinus, in *Io. Ev. tract.* 95,3 (CC 36, 566–567).

⁴⁸ The perfect form κέκριται appears twice in the FG; the subject of the verb in its first occurrence is "he who does not believe" (cf. 3:18).

⁴⁹ Cf. R. Schnackenburg, *Il vangelo di Giovanni*, 3:208.

⁵⁰ Augustine specifies the term "world" as "the proud and ungodly man". Cf. Augustinus, in *Io. Ev. tract.* 95,4 (CC 36, 567–568).

⁵¹ Cf. Chrysostom, *Commentary on Saint John: Homily 78 (John 16,5–15)*, 342.

⁵² Cf. T. Aquinas, *Catena Aurea in Quatuor Evangelia: Expositio in Ioannem lect.* 16,3.

prologue (cf. 1:10). Jesus also knows that the world hates him for testifying that its works are evil (cf. 7:7). Although these texts do not state that the world has condemned Jesus, the refusal and hatred of the world towards Jesus are *de facto* the origins of his condemnation. Concerning the second objection, the link is found in the Johannine irony, where the condemnation that apparently has defeated Jesus is actually his victory over the world (cf. 16:33).⁵³ By presenting himself as the ruler of this world that has been judged,⁵⁴ Jesus encourages his own not to lose confidence despite his condemnation. The clarifications on the two objections permit to hypothesize that Jesus is speaking of himself in the third person.⁵⁵ As the ruler of this world, he has been condemned.⁵⁶ Moreover, by attributing the Johannine title to Jesus, the action of the Holy Spirit for all the three realities would be consistently connected to Jesus.

Conclusion

This article shows that Jesus uses both Johannine titles "the ruler of this world" (12:31; 16:11) and "the ruler of the world" (14:30) to speak of himself. The three occurrences of those titles form a concentric structure⁵⁷ and are connected to the hour as they are found within the first and final declaration of Jesus on "the

⁵³ In the FG the condemnation of Jesus is described by using the Johannine irony with the purpose to move from the appearance of the absurd inscription written by Pontius Pilate to the truth of the kingship of Jesus (cf. 19:19).

⁵⁴ This is possible because Jesus uses the authority given by the Father to execute judgment (cf. John 5:27) in a paradoxical way, that is by permitting himself to be condemned and thus he continues to give life (cf. John 5:21).

⁵⁵ In the FG Jesus speaks of himself in the third person with the following expressions: "the Son" [5:19–26(8x); 6:40; 8:36; 14:13; 17:1(2x)], "the Son of man" [1:51; 3:13.14; 5:27; 6:27.53.62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23; 13:31], "the Son of God" (5:25; 11:4), "him whom he (the Father) sent" (5:38; 6:29), "he who comes down from heaven" (6:33), "he who is from God" (6:46), "gift of God" (4:10), "Jesus Christ" (17:3). An analysis of the illeistic texts of Jesus suggests that Jesus speaks in the third person to draw on potential royal and divine connotations associated with it. Cf. R. Elledge, *Use of the third person for self-reference by Jesus and Yahweh: a study of illeism in the Bible and ancient Near Eastern texts and its implications for Christology* (London 2017) 149.

⁵⁶ In the FG, Jesus says that he has come into this world for a sentence (cf. 9:39) and the only judiciary process described until its execution falls exactly on him (cf. 11:53; 18:1–19:30).

⁵⁷ The two Johannine titles are arranged in a concentric structure ABA¹ with A. "the ruler of this world" (12:31); B. "the ruler of the world" (14:30); A¹ "the ruler of this world" (16:11).

hour has come”⁵⁸. With those Johannine titles Jesus reveals the purpose of his hour.⁵⁹ First, at the hour when the ruler will be cast out, Jesus makes his exit with his elevation and will draw all to him. Second, at the hour when the ruler comes, Jesus reveals that there is nothing in him except his love for the Father. Finally, at the hour of the ruler’s condemnation, the Holy Spirit will convict the world for condemning Jesus.⁶⁰ By referring to himself with those titles, Jesus prepares his own not to lose confidence before his condemnation for it is precisely through this way he has overcome the world.⁶¹ Finally, with those Johannine titles Jesus preannounces simultaneously his glorification.⁶²

Bibliography

- Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus*, in: *Corpus Christianorum* 36.
 Aquinas, T., *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, tr. F.R. Larcher, J.A. Weisheipl, Albany, N.Y. 1980.
 Beutler, J., *Das Johannesevangelium*, Freiburg i. Br. 2013.
 Brown, R.E., *The Gospel according to John*, AncB 29; Garden City, NY 1966.
 Chrysostom, J., *Commentary on Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist*, tr. T. A. Goggin, The Fathers of the Church 41; WA, D.C. 1959, 1977.

⁵⁸ The three analyzed verses (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) are situated within the first and last occurrence of the expression ἐλήλυθεν ἡ ὥρα (cf. John 12:23; 17:1).

⁵⁹ The noun ὁ ἄρχων is the subject of three verbs conjugated in the following order: future, present and perfect, describing the ruler of the world that will be cast out (cf. 12:31), comes (cf. 14:30) and has been judged (cf. 16:11). In his farewell discourse, with the future form “will be cast out”, Jesus announces what will happen to him, with the present form “comes”, Jesus points to his arrival that coincides with the arrival of the hour and with the perfect form “has been judged”, Jesus reveals his victory despite the judgment that has fallen on him. The negative outcomes related to the ruler who “will be cast out” and “has been judged” do correspond with the condemnation that has fallen on Jesus when he went out of the city to be crucified (cf. 19:17.20).

⁶⁰ This is in harmony with the definition of ἡ κρίσις in John 3:19.

⁶¹ By attributing to himself those two Johannine titles, Jesus presents a new portrait of ὁ ἄρχων that gives his own life for his subjects. In Matt 20:25 Jesus explains to the disciples that they should not act like the rulers (οἱ ἄρχοντες) of the nations (cf. Mark 10:42; Luke 22:25).

⁶² If in the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus announces his passion before it happens (cf. Matt 17:22–23; 20:18–19; Mark 9:31; 10:33–34; Luke 9:44), in the FG Jesus preannounces his glorification by speaking of himself in the third person with the two Johannine titles “the ruler of this world” (12:31; 16:11) and “the ruler of the world” (14:30).

- Elledge, R., *Use of the third person for self-reference by Jesus and Yahweh: a study of illeism in the Bible and ancient Near Eastern texts and its implications for Christology*, London 2017.
- Lampe, G.W.H., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford 1961.
- Léon-Dufour, X., *Lecture de l'Évangile selon Jean* (4 vol.), Paris 1988–1996; It. tr. *Lettura dell'Evangelo secondo Giovanni*, Milano ²2007.
- Origenes, *Fragmenta in evangelium Joannis (in catenis)*, in E. Preuschen, *Origenes Werke*, v. 4, Leipzig 1903.
- Schnackenburg, R., *Il Vangelo di Giovanni I–III*, Brescia 1973, 1977, 1981.
- Zumstein, J., *L'Évangile selon saint Jean 1–12*, Genève 2014.