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Casting Out the “Ruler of This World”

Apocalyptic Eschatology and Johannine Literary
Dualities in John 12:31-32; 18:36 and 19:16b-42

Alessandro Cavicchia

Introduction¹

Between the end of chapter 11 and the beginning of chapter 12, the so-called Book of Signs concludes with the narration of events that precipitate the decision to put Jesus to death (cf. 11:46–57). In these passages, the evangelist offers his theological interpretation of Jesus’ death. Following the anointing at Bethany (cf. 12:1-11) and Jesus’ messianic entry into Jerusalem (12:12-19), Jesus is approached by some Greeks who wish to see him (cf. 12:20-33). Jesus’ response to their request, delivered through the parable of the grain of wheat, appears indirect: to truly see Jesus is to witness his passion and glorification. The ensuing events, which emphasize the imminence of his death, serve to direct the narrative toward its culmination in Jesus’ crucifixion.

The voice from heaven (cf. 12:28b) represents the highest authority, providing the definitive interpretation of Jesus’ death and offering the reader the most significant preparation for understanding its meaning. Jesus’ statements point directly to the significance of his impending death, employing expressions that unite the imminent and eschatological aspects of the “hour” (cf. 12:31). The judgment of the world, the expulsion of the ruler of this world, and the exaltation and glorification of Jesus (12:31b-32) are presented in parallel. In John 12:32, the third prediction of Jesus’ death is followed by a further reference to his elevation, accompanied by the announcement that, from the cross, he will become the focal point of universal attraction.

¹ This article synthesizes and reorganizes various previous studies into a new form aimed at analyzing the figure of the “ruler of this world.” Particularly relevant are two previous papers: CAVICCHIA, *Il linguaggio della ‘glorificazione’*; CAVICCHIA, «Vedrete i cieli aperti...» (Gv 1,51). Translations are my own.

This study aims to explore the significance and the function of John 12:31-32 in the light of the following narration of Jesus’ Passion.

John 12:31-32	
³¹ νῦν κρίσις ἐστὶν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, νῦν ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου ἐκβληθήσεται ἔξω.	³¹ Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out.
³² καὶ γὰρ ἐὰν ὑψωθῶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς, πάντας ἐλκύσω πρὸς ἐμαυτόν.	³² And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw everybody to myself.

These verses encapsulate myriad issues present elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel, serving as a focal point for the scholarly debate. A primary research area regards the temporal adverb νῦν, which evokes the “hour” of Jesus. The subsequent issue concerns judgment which recurs in the third reference of the ἄρχων in John 16:8-11. The theme of judgment is also part of the apocalyptic language concerning the end times and overlaps with that of the hour, the eschatological time, the mention of the Son of Man (cf. 12:34), and the figure of evil. Ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, the ruler of this world, is usually understood as a figure of evil, an eschatological personal adversary, present in the apocalyptic literature and recurring in various Johannine passages (cf. διάβολος: 6:70; 8:44; 13:2; σατανᾶς: 13:27; ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου: 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). A further element involves the use of polarizing language, also commonly referred to as Johannine dualism. John creates a complex duality that distinguishes “this world” from another realm (cf. John 18:36).

In John 12:32, the lifting up of Jesus is recognized as the third prediction of the passion in the Fourth Gospel (cf. John 3:14; 8:28). In this context, Jesus situates himself within the temporal eventuality or the imminent future of his lifting up, which refers to his passion and resurrection. In the immediate context, the voice coming from above declare the glorification of Jesus both as an event occurred in the past (aor. ind.) and still as a task to be accomplished in the future (John 12:28: καὶ ἐδόξασα καὶ πάλιν δοξάσω).

In the narration that follows with the description of the passion of Jesus it is therefore necessary to highlight the ways in which the kingdom of Jesus is established, i.e. the Evangelist’s strategy in showing the elevation and glorification of Jesus. Consequently, the way through which the prince of this world is driven out will emerge. In the following paragraphs will be shown how this narrative strategy is presented. The present paper is then organized into two

parts: in the first, an essential literature review addresses the main questions raised. The second part offers a reading of the Johannine passion narrative and traces the hints that the evangelist has given to show how it can be understood as a victory, a judgment, and a glorification.

1 Brief Literature Review on the Emerging Issues

1.1 *The issue of time*

Research on Johannine eschatology has focused on the tension between the immediacy of the “hour” (cf. 4:23; 5:25: ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν) and the projection towards an exceptional “hour,” an eschatological event “on the last day” (cf. John 6:39.40.44.54; 12:48). This characteristic has been usually referred to as the present or realized eschatology of the Fourth Evangelist.

Recent research provided a new perspective on Johannine eschatology through a broader conception of time as constructed in the Fourth Evangelist’s narrative². This conception is distinct from both scientific criteria and the focus on precise measurement of time in regular units, as by techno-scientific culture³. Beyond this seemingly simple element concerning the measurement of time, there is a more significant aspect involving a particular phenomenon referred to as the “curvature” of time in the construction of the Fourth Gospel’s narrative. Although the Johannine narrative appears to flow in a linear progression of time, with references to liturgical festivals, periods of the year, days, and hours, it actually has a focal point in the “hour of Jesus”⁴. The sequence of episodes is thus measured not so much by an absolute chronology but by a “before” and “after” in relation to this central event. This “hour” is, in some respects, also capable of transcending the chronological boundaries of the narrative itself, entering the further reality of Jesus’ resurrection. It seems to reappear subtly in passages concerning the pre-Paschal events of Jesus’ life. The question that arises

² FREY, *Eschatology in the Johannine Circle*, 47-49; FREY, *Die Gegenwart*, 134; ZIMMERMANN, *Eschatology*, 292-94.

³ ESTES, *Time*, 41-43; 46; FREY, *Die Gegenwart*, 130.

⁴ ESTES, *Time*, 53-55; MARCHESELLI, *Percezione*, 162; ROWE – NEYREY, *Christ and Time*, 79.

in our research concerns the possibility that the light, or the effects, of Jesus’ resurrection can be detected in his passion and the way it is told.

1.2 *The ruler of this world*

In apocalyptic literature, the reality of evil does not necessarily take on the image of a specific character but is more frequently characterized by opposition to the realm of good. The figure of an adversary to God is not presented consistently, nor is it always present in the apocalyptic literature, but it is one of the prominent features of the related eschatology⁵. On this background, the Fourth Gospel uses various names, generally interpreted as referring to the eschatological personal adversary⁶. The function of the prince of this world in the annexed passages remains shrouded in a certain margin of opacity, leaving several questions opened. He is referred to as διάβολος in John 8:44 and defined as a murderer and liar from the beginning. He is mentioned in 13:2, when he influences Judas (τοῦ διαβόλου ἤδη βεβληκότος). Another occurrence is in 6:70, where Judas is identified as a devil (ἐξ ὑμῶν εἷς διάβολός ἐστιν). The term σατανᾶς appears only in 13:27, when his influence on Judas becomes manifest.

In three passages, the eschatological adversary is referred to as ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου. Besides John 12:31 this expression also appears in John 14:30, where the imminent arrival of Jesus’ adversary is announced, even though his power over Jesus is denied (ἔρχεται γὰρ ὁ τοῦ κόσμου ἄρχων· καὶ ἐν ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἔχει οὐδέν). Finally, in John 16:11, the judicial action of the Paraclete’s Spirit against him is declared. In Jesus’ prayer to protect the disciples, in John 17:14, the adversary is called πονηρός (ἀλλ’ ἵνα τηρήσης αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ)⁷.

The analysis of the character reveals his substantial inactivity in the Johannine narrative. The designations σατανᾶς and διάβολος place him in relation to the figures over whom he exerts influence and power, while the mention of ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου is fundamentally related to the Father, Jesus, and the action of the Spirit. In this way, the Johannine irony shows that he indeed has no

⁵ LEONHARDT-BALZER, *The Ruler of the World*, 180.

⁶ Some studies offer a different interpretation, such as Ali, who proposes to understand Jesus as the Ruler of this world: ALI, ‘The Ruler’ in the Fourth Gospel, 20-22.

⁷ VILLOTA HERRERO, ‘El Principe de este mundo’ Destronado (John 12,31), 146-148; MATHEWSON, *The Devil*, 421; SKINNER, *Overcoming Satan*, 118-119.

power over Jesus and that with Jesus' death, his ultimate defeat will actually occur⁸.

1.3 *Johannine dualities*

The polarizing, or dichotomous characteristic of the Fourth Evangelist has been evaluated in various ways. From Clement of Alexandria's definition, which sees the Gospel of John as a spiritual (πνευματικόν) gospel in contrast to the synoptic gospels which are more focused on corporeal (σωματικά) realities, this characteristic appears as its most mysterious, fascinating, and simultaneously elusive aspect of the Fourth Gospel⁹. The recent summary by Frey notes that, over the last century, starting with Ferdinand C. Baur and Rudolf Bultmann who have seen this characteristic as having roots in Gnosticism, it has fallen within the category of Johannine dualism. However, this view has not been without criticism and attempts at correction. Frey describes the many kinds of dualisms in John¹⁰.

In discussing the same phenomenon, it seems that authors use differing terms. It is noticeable that Koester defines "symbol" as follows:

A symbol is an image, an action, or a person that is understood to have transcendent significance. In Johannine terms, symbols span the chasm between what is "from above" and what is "from below" without collapsing the distinction. Images are things that can be perceived by the senses, such as light and darkness, water, bread, a door, a shepherd, and a vine. The actions that function symbolically in John's Gospel include non miraculous actions, like driving merchants out of the Jerusalem temple and washing feet, as well as miraculous "signs," like turning water into wine and raising Lazarus from the dead.¹¹

Also striking is the inclusion of terms related to the "sign," which is crucial in the Johannine narrative and is similarly characterized by duality and bearing

⁸ MATHEWSON, *The Devil*, 425-426; SKINNER, *Overcoming Satan*, 120; STUCKENBRUCK, *Evil in Johannine and Apocalyptic Perspective*, 207.

⁹ EUSEBIUS, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VI, 14,7 (LCL 265, 48-49); FABRIS, *Giovanni*, 73-74.

¹⁰ BAUR, *Vorlesungen über Neutestamentliche Theologie*, 359-361; BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, 12-13; FREY, *Dualism*, 274-275.

¹¹ KOESTER, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, 4.

revelation¹². Each sign, in the strict sense, denotes actions performed by Jesus that reveal his identity as the divine Messiah, sent by the Father to bring life to the world¹³. In a broader sense, both the Passion and the Resurrection have also been considered as signs¹⁴. But for other scholars, the term should not be limited to the miracles performed by Jesus; rather, every episode in the narrative is potentially a sign¹⁵. This is because a sign is characterized not so much by its miraculous aspect, but rather by the internal structure of meaning that leads the disciples from external perception to the dimension of faith¹⁶. And it can be extended further:

For the Fourth Gospel, there is a sign wherever there is a co-presence of two elements: the physical data, perceptible to the senses, and the additional divine dimension that can be discerned within it and which becomes present in it. It involves seeing what transcendent and divine is revealed within and beyond the material reality.¹⁷

Ultimately, the Gospel itself is referred to as the “book of signs” performed by Jesus, encompassing the entire narrative (cf. John 20:30-31). In this way it becomes a sign for the reader, who is provided with nothing but the book of signs containing the elements necessary to attain faith¹⁸. The words of Harold W. Attridge are remarkable:

... much the evangelist is a visual artist, focusing the sight of the audience on a crucial event, his medium remains words. The Word is finally incarnate for the hearers of the Gospel in the words of the drama. Recall the juxtaposition of vision and explanation in John 1:18. And sure enough, there are words that shape what the eyes of the audience see in their vision of the Cross.¹⁹

The present article, due to its object and scope, is not the place to delve into such a complex issue. It is sufficient here to highlight the worldview or the conception of reality of the Evangelist, which appears polarizing. This means

¹² MARCHESELLI, *Studi sul vangelo di Giovanni*, 32, n. 9.

¹³ SALIER, *The Rhetorical Impact*, 172.

¹⁴ SALIER, *The Rhetorical Impact*, 148-155, 170.

¹⁵ FREY, *Theology*, 155-156; FREY, *From the Sēmeia Narratives*, 215-216.

¹⁶ FREY, *From the Sēmeia Narratives*, 227.

¹⁷ MARCHESELLI, *Studi sul vangelo di Giovanni*, 88. Our translation. See also CASNEDA, *Giovanni 20*, 28-29.

¹⁸ FREY, *From the Sēmeia Narratives*, 228-229; 231; CASNEDA, *Giovanni 20*, 28-29, 147-148.

¹⁹ ATTRIDGE, *History*, 93-94.

that the visible or narrated reality is capable of revealing an additional realm—the divine perspective, meant by the Evangelist as the truth, bearing the true identity of Jesus of Nazareth, the incarnate Word and the Son of God sent by the Father to reveal salvation to the world.

The Fourth Gospel appears to intimately intertwine this conception with a series of literary devices, well known to scholars of John, that intertwine with it and serve it. These include Johannine irony, the double level of meaning, and double meanings of terms. Additionally, the use of scriptural citations deserves attention for their rhetorical function of presenting the divine plan in relation to the narrated history²⁰.

1.4 Glorification without δόξα

The dramatic passion of Jesus has been understood as incompatible with his glory. It has to be stressed also that the terminology of glory is notably absent in John 18–20²¹. The judgment and defeat of the ruler of this world are accomplished here in a partially obscure manner. On the other side, it remains problematic how to “see” Jesus’ glory in such a death. Frey refers to the understanding of the death of Jesus as “the core challenge”²². Judith Kovacs questions how glorification can be understood in the context of an ignominious death, asserting that the victory of Christ remains difficult to explain within the narrative²³. She ultimately argues that the Passion of Christ presents an actualized eschatology. The death, resurrection, and ascension to the Father are the turning point in the conflict between God and His adversary and they are already in the background of the gospel narration²⁴. Stuckenbruck also leaves a certain degree of uncertainty²⁵.

²⁰ For a literary review about the use of Scripture in John see MYERS, *Abiding Words*, 1-20. About the function of the use of the OT in John see SCHUCHARD, *Form Versus Function*, 41.

²¹ The noun δόξα occurs 16 times in John 1–12 and 3 times in John 17, while the verb δοξάζω appears 9 times in John 1–12, 13 times in John 13–17, and only once in John 21:19. In John 18–20 neither δόξα nor δοξάζω occur.

²² FREY, *Theology*, 154.

²³ KOVACS, “Now Shall the Ruler of This World Be Driven Out”, 246.

²⁴ KOVACS, “Now Shall the Ruler of This World Be Driven Out”, 231, 244, 246-247; SKINNER, *Overcoming Satan*, 118; STUCKENBRUCK, *Evil*, 205-206.

²⁵ STUCKENBRUCK, *Evil*, 207.

Other authors find the declaration of such glory more in the Farewell discourses than in the narration of the crucifixion²⁶. Gail O’Day explains Christ’s victory through the prolepsis of the resurrection within the story of Jesus. In John 16:33, Jesus’ victory seems to be already achieved in the present of the discourse (ἐγὼ νενίκηκα τὸν κόσμον), because “it is the risen Jesus who speaks, the Jesus who has already conquered the world”²⁷.

As noted by Frey, the death of Jesus is presented in such a way as to help the reader to contemplate his glory through his flesh, and the truth of the kingdom through the narrative of his exaltation on the cross.²⁸ In a detailed study of Johannine irony, Duke extensively analyzes the trial of Jesus (cf. John 18:28–19:22), demonstrating how both the Jews and Pilate are portrayed as contradictory and how Jesus’ kingdom is established up to the inscription of the *titulus crucis*²⁹. More recently, Villota Herrero has also highlighted the Johannine irony regarding Jesus’ enthronement. In the dialogue with Pilate, Jesus openly declares his kingship (cf. John 18:33-38). In John 19:13, Jesus, dressed mockingly as a king, is *truly* a king, and Pilate presents him to the Jews as a king (cf. John 19:14), while the Jews deny any kingship except for Caesar. Finally, the scene of the inscription of the royal title prominently manifests the enthronement of Christ³⁰. Thus, since in John 12:31 κόσμος should be understood as the humanity, the expulsion of the Ruler pertains to the human heart³¹.

1.5 Some observations

The Passion narrative in John is placed under the authoritative testimony of the disciple, as expressed in 19:35. The way this testimony has been understood varies among scholars³². Appropriately, Attridge observes that the eyewitness testimony reveals different levels of insight³³. The truth expressed by the eyewitness is capable of holding together both the visual level of reality,

²⁶ ATTRIDGE, *History*, 94; FREY, *Theology*, 154-155.

²⁷ O’DAY, “I Have Overcome the World”, 163.

²⁸ FREY, *From the Sēmeia Narratives*, 231.

²⁹ DUKE, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 126-137.

³⁰ VILLOTA HERRERO, ‘El Principe de este mundo’, 162-164.

³¹ VILLOTA HERRERO, ‘El Principe de este mundo’, 151-152.

³² Attridge sees in the eyewitness a possible source for the historicity of the Gospel: ATTRIDGE, *History*, 45-47.

³³ ATTRIDGE, *History*, 72-74, esp. 74.

described in literary terms through the selection of significant aspects, and the deeper level. Thus, the vision, the writing of concrete details, and their capacity to convey additional meanings are deeply interconnected. Indeed, it seems possible to consider this as the specific content of the testimony: how the passion and death of Jesus were a revelation of God's glory. It may not be surprising, then, that such ambivalence is found in the ironical characteristics of the text. The elements that compose the passion and death of Jesus of Nazareth are composed in their profound dimension of revealing the divine, which unfolded in these particular details, comprehensible also as historical events. The elements seen by the witness and presented to the reader both conceal and reveal the deep meaning of faith³⁴.

2 The Passion of Jesus as Exaltation, Glorification, and Fulfillment

Considering John 18:36 as a narrative sub-program of the Johannine passion, the following paragraphs will examine the passages concerning the royal indictment, the structure and some remarks concerning the use of the OT in John 19,16-42.

2.1 *The indictment as royal title and the double level of reading (cf. John 18:36; 19:19-22)*

Duke and Villota Herrero have shown how irony permeates the entire narrative of Jesus' trial. Overall, Duke highlights how Pilate progressively falls under the control of the Jews and their complicity in condemning Jesus, while the Jews are depicted in a downward movement in opposition with the elevation of Jesus. They proclaim Cesar as their only king (cf. 19:12), condemning Jesus. But ironically the narration shows Jesus' enthronement and his opponents' defeat³⁵.

The entire dialogue with Pilate reveals the accusation against Jesus. He is charged to be an evildoer (cf. 18:30b), to proclaim himself king (John 18:33: *σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων*;) and consequently to be an enemy of Caesar (cf.

³⁴ EDO LORRIO, *El lenguaje*, 31-32.

³⁵ DUKE, *Irony*, 127; VILLOTA HERRERO, 'El Principe de este mundo', 162-164.

19:12b). In the dialogue, the theme of royalty is a central idea³⁶. In Jesus’ response to Pilate in the first dialogue between the two (cf. 18:33-38a) Jesus presents the origin of his kingship as not coming “from this world” (v. 36a: ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου), or “from here” (v. 36b: ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐντεῦθεν). Jesus is presented as a witness to the truth (v. 37: ἐγὼ εἰς τοῦτο γεγέννημαι καὶ εἰς τοῦτο ἐλήλυθα εἰς τὸν κόσμον, ἵνα μαρτυρήσω τῇ ἀληθείᾳ). For the scope of this paper, it has to be stressed that the principle that determines this ambivalence concerns the power over the world. Kingdom and truth are inseparable, thus manifesting as an act of revelation. The truth stands in clear opposition to the lie, whose origin is the devil³⁷. The answer of a lost Pilate—what is truth? (v. 38a: τί ἐστιν ἀλήθεια;)—accompanies the narrative plot of the accusation and condemnation, leaving the reader with the dual interpretation of Jesus’ character, either as the Son of God and the king of the Jews, or the impostor, blasphemous, enemy of Caesar.

The theme of royalty emerges in the condemnation account in the scene of the *titulus crucis* (cf. 19:19-22). As will be shown in the next paragraph, in contrast to the progressive loss of importance of Jesus’ adversaries—almost a “fading” effect—the evangelist presents a series of very meaningful assertions. First, with respect to the reason for the sentence, in v. 19d, the royal title is affirmed³⁸: Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων. The relevance of the *titulus* in this context is given precisely in reference to the Johannine irony. If the royal title placed on a man condemned to death may appear to be a sneer, in this case it expresses the profound truth and the theological meaning of the event. Jesus is really considered by the evangelist to be “king”³⁹.

Jesus’ response to Pilate shows how the relationship between the prince of this world and Jesus’ kingship should be understood, within the localizing polarization between the world and the realm of God’s kingship. It is a decisive statement that establishes the two domains of power. And the Johannine irony

³⁶ According to SIMOENS, John 18:33–19:22 constitutes a unity basing on the royalty of Jesus, considered a unifying theme: SIMOENS, *Selon Jean*, 766.

³⁷ VILLOTA HERRERO, ‘El Principe de este mundo’, 162-164.

³⁸ FREY, “... dass sie meine Herrlichkeit schauen”, 392-393; LOADER, *Jesus in John’s Gospel*, 204-205.

³⁹ BROWN, *The Gospel According to John*, 919; BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, 506, 510, 518; EDO LORRIO, *El lenguaje de las vestiduras*, 125; KEENER, *The Gospel of John*, 1136.

shows the emptiness and evanescence of worldly powers, which are under the influence of the prince of this world, in contrast to what is being realized by the king appointed by God, namely the manifestation of truth.

2.2 *The organization of John 19:16b-42*

Several studies have been dedicated to the structure of the account of Jesus' condemnation.⁴⁰ In this section, a synthesis of a previous study is presented, highlighting the evanishment of Jesus' opponents, while his kingship is being established.

In John 19:16b-42, after the exposition of the narrative framework (*setting* in 19:16b-18), a concentric-parallel organization can be highlighted⁴¹:

- a) Explicit dialogue between the "Jews" and Pilate concerning the *titulus crucis* (vv. 19-22);
- b) Action of the soldiers against the living Jesus: spoliation (vv. 23-24):
 - Integrity of the tunic that is not torn;
 - Obstacle and Fulfillment of Scripture;
 - c) "Acceptance" of Jesus' words by the "manifest" disciples; the disciple "welcomes" the mother of Jesus (vv. 25-27);
 - d) Awareness of Jesus, perfect fulfillment of his mission and of Scripture, prolepsis of the gift of the Spirit (vv. 28-30);
- a') Narrated decision-making dialogue between the Jews and Pilate: fracture of the bones and deposition of the condemned (v. 31);
- b') Action of the soldiers against the dead Jesus: piercing (vv. 32-37):
 - Integrity of bones that are not broken;
 - Obstacle and Fulfillment of Scripture;
 - c') "Acceptance" of the body of Jesus by the disciples "in secret" for a royal burial (vv. 38-42).

⁴⁰ For a more in-depth analysis, see CAVICCHIA, *Il linguaggio*, 40-56.

⁴¹ CAVICCHIA, *Quale Potere?*, 307-308. For similar proposals see: MARZOTTO, *Struttura Letteraria*, 165; MARZOTTO, *L'unità degli uomini*, 201-203; SIMOENS, *Selon Jean*, 805.

Although not exempt from critical elements, this proposed structure highlights how the narrative plot of revelation and reversal, evident in the passage of the resurrection (cf. John 20–21), is already woven into the narrative of the passion itself. The character analysis of the Ruler of this world has shown that he does not act directly, but through the characters on which he has a decisive influence—in this case, the Jews, Pilate and the soldiers. In this structure, Jesus’ antagonistic characters pass from a role of power and decision-making to a level of lesser importance, evanescent, up to their disappearance. They, in fact, after obtaining the condemnation of their adversary (cf. John 19:16a) are first frustrated by their request regarding the *titulus crucis* (cf. 19:22: ὁ γέγραφα, γέγραφα), and by their intent to break Jesus’ legs to hasten his death, both remaining unrealized (cf. 19:33). It must also be pointed out that Pilate’s authority, already shown to be slender during the trial, appears completely powerless before the kingdom “not from here below” (John 18:36) that the crucified King is establishing. While these figures are significant in the decision-making of the events concerning the conviction, they are gradually disappearing from the scene. The correspondences of the same events narrated with Scripture assume the characteristic of fulfillment (πληρωθῆναι, divine passive from πληρόω in John 19:23.36) show how in reality the authority of God, the fulfillment of his plan and the words of Jesus are being affirmed (cf. 3:14; 8:28; 12:32; 19:28.30).

On the other side, Jesus’ disciples, the ones that welcome him, become the beneficiaries of his emerging kingdom of Jesus. The beloved disciple and Jesus’ mother while remain “anonymous” are defined through their relationship with Jesus, and through the acceptance of each other according to Jesus’ last will. Scholars usually agree in seeing in them the models of the nascent messianic community⁴².

2.3 The explicit quotations of Scripture (cf. John 19:23-24, 36-37)

The use of Scripture in John is particularly significant. Obermann pointed out that in Jesus, as the Incarnate Word, “*Die Schrift sich ereignet!*,” that is, Scripture is accomplished and becomes concrete, reality⁴³. The Christological presupposition in the use of Johannine Scripture is placed in the pre-existence of the Word and in his revelation in the history of Israel, transmitted by Scripture.

⁴² BROWN, *The Gospel according to John*, II, 923-924; SIMOENS, *Selon Jean*, 820-821.

⁴³ OBERMANN, *Die Christologische Erfüllung*, 426.

It is the creative Word-Wisdom that has set its tent in the history of Israel and is now fully manifested in the flesh and in the life of Jesus of Nazareth (cf. Wis 9:1-3; Pr 8:22-31; Sir 24:3-8, 23; John 1:1-3.14-18). The fulfillment of Scripture in the life and in the passion of Jesus manifests this intimate connection⁴⁴. The revelation of the *δόξα* of the Incarnate Word in Jesus of Nazareth is in continuity and fulfillment with the salvific-revelatory events of the past. The function of Scripture does not therefore arise at the level of the simple event-text correspondence, but as a progressive revelation of the mystery of God in Jesus of Nazareth⁴⁵. It is the same *δόξα* that now manifests itself in *σάραξ*.

In the context of the passion, three scriptural pieces are presented with an introductory formula and at least two others are alluded to within the story. Psalm 22:19 is quoted in John 19:24. The formula in John 19:36.37 introduces two passages of Scripture, a first probably composed of different texts and a second more easily identifiable in the Hebrew text of Zech 12:10. Among the passages alluded to, we must consider Ps 69(68):22 in John 19:28-29 and Deut 21:22-23 in John 19:31.

The quotes from Scripture frame two historically reliable episodes. Legislation about the division of garments is witnessed in the Hadrian period⁴⁶, while the *crurifragium*, the fracture of the bones of the condemned to accelerate their death, is also witnessed in several writings, also as a penalty⁴⁷.

⁴⁴ It has been noted that the fulfillment formula in the Fourth Gospel occurs only between John 12:38-40 and 19:36-37 to illuminate the "hour" of Jesus: FREY, Die „theologia Crucifixi“, 223-225.

⁴⁵ OBERMANN, Die christologische Erfüllung, 428-429.

⁴⁶ «Pannicularia [of the condemned] sunt ea, quae in custodiam receptus secum attulit»: BONFANTE et al. (eds.), *Digesta Iustiniani Augusti*, 1463; BARRETT, *The Gospel According to St John*, 550; BROWN, *The Death of the Messiah*, 955. BROWN appropriately questions the possible difference between the practice testified to in the Adriane period and the earlier one. It must be noted that the text attributed to Hadrian seems to indicate a modification of a previous law, restricting the right of soldiers to take the possessions of the condemned, in favor of the treasury. DYJAKOWSKA, Fund Collection through Litigation, 42-43; MINIERI, I Commentarienses, 10-11; JONES, The Roman Civil Service, 45-46; D'AMATO – SUMNER, *Arms and Armour*, 210, n. 966. See also KEENER, *The Gospel of John*, 1138-1139; SIMOENS, *Selon Jean*, 806-807.

⁴⁷ LACTANTIUS, *Divinarum institutionum* IV, 26, 32 (SC 377, 218-219); SUETONIUS, *Divus Augustus* 67, 2 (LCL 31, 228-229); SENECA, *De ira* III, 32, 1 (LCL 214, 332); MEYER, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Gospel of John*, 516.

Here the first of the two explicit quotations is analyzed as an example of the described Johannine style. Some brief notes will be added about the other one.

2.3.1 Psalm 22:19 cited in John 19:23-24

The citation of Ps 22:19 occurs in John 19:23-24. As noted in the proposed structure of John 19:16b-42, the soldiers are the executors of the sentence⁴⁸. As they proceed with the standard executing procedure accompanying the execution, a narrative device interrupts their purpose, thereby allowing the scriptural fulfillment. While they are dividing Jesus’ garments among them, they stop before his special tunic. The Evangelist’s description is unique and allows the reader to grasp a more profound meaning of the narrative⁴⁹.

2.3.2 Four parts (τέσσαρα μέρη)

The four parts of Jesus’ garments, described by the phrase τέσσαρα μέρη, have a nearly unique usage in the LXX, occurring only 13 times. Beyond its ordinary use in Gen 47:24 and Sir 37:17, in Exod 25:26, τέσσαρα μέρη describes “the four sides, or corners” of the ark in the tabernacle. In Exod 26:22-35, μέρος refers to each of the four sides of the tent. In Exod 38:24 (LXX) (MT: v. 5) and 1 Kgs 7:17 (MT: 7:30), τέσσαρα μέρη refers to the four parts of the sacred utensils. In the book of the prophet Ezekiel (cf. Ezek 40:47; 42:20; 43:16-21; 48:1), the same phrase denotes the four sides of the eschatological temple and the parts of the sacred furnishings. Explicitly, the glory of YHWH is invoked by the description of the theophany in Ezek 1:8.17; 10:11. The quadrangular shape is also characteristic of the altar (MT: רָחֵב רְבוּעַ; LXX: c in Exod 27:1; 30:2), and the breastplate of judgment (cf. Exod 28:15-16; 36:8-9 [MT]; 36:15-16 [LXX])⁵⁰. Beyond the synonymy with these latter examples, it is important to note that the phrase τέσσαρα μέρη, used in John 19:23, returns in relation to the ark, the

⁴⁸ For a review of the literature on the interpretation of Psalm 22:19 in John 19:23-24, see CAVICCHIA, *Le sorti*, 33-55; SIMOENS, *Selon Jean*, 809-815. For a diachronic approach to the topic, see the classic work by BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, 519.

⁴⁹ For more detailed analysis of the description of Jesus’ clothes in John 19:23 see CAVICCHIA, *Le sorti*, 345-350. A similar explanation is found in ARCANGELI, *Tipologia e compimento*, 207-210. For an overview on clothes in the Gospel of John, see FENÍK, *Clothing Symbolism*, 59-69. See also EDO LORRIO, *El lenguaje*, 115-144.

⁵⁰ BEALE, *The Temple*, 39; KEENER, *The Gospel of John*, 1140.

furnishings of the tabernacle, and in the description of the eschatological temple in Ezekiel.

2.3.3 A seamless tunic, woven from above in one piece (ἄραφος, ἐκ τῶν ἄνωθεν ὑφαντός δι' ὅλου)

The description of the tunic also makes explicit references to the cultic domain. The term ἄνωθεν is composed of the adverb of place ἄνω, meaning “above,” combined with the suffix θεν, which answers the question “where is it from?” Thus, the sense of ἄνωθεν is “from above” in a spatial sense, or “from the beginning,” “from the start,” and “again,” in a temporal sense⁵¹. In the LXX, the term appears approximately 23 times, often in a cultic context, where it denotes the “from above” origin of divine manifestations, such as YHWH speaking in the tent (cf. Exod 25:22; Num 7:89) and the origin of blessings and curses (cf. Gen 27:39; Job 3:4; Jer 4:28; Bar 1:61). ἄνωθεν is used to describe parts of the ark (cf. Gen 6:16), the tent-temple (cf. Exod 25:21; 38:16.19; 40:19; Num 4:6.25; 1 Kgs 7:40), and priestly garments (cf. Exod 36:27.38).

The frequent use of the adverb in cultic contexts to indicate the divine origin “from above” supports this interpretation also in the Johannine context. In John 3:3 and 3:7, the double level of meaning and Nicodemus’s misunderstanding play on the dual sense of ἄνωθεν, referring both to a “new” birth and to one “from above.” It is especially important to highlight the sayings where the origin of Jesus of Nazareth, the Incarnate Logos, is described as coming “from above”: in John 3:31 (Ὁ ἄνωθεν ἐρχόμενος ἐπάνω πάντων ἐστίν), the parallel in the second part of the verse clarifies the synonym “from heaven” (ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐρχόμενος [ἐπάνω πάντων ἐστίν]); in John 8:23, Jesus explicitly states his origin “from above” (ἐγὼ ἐκ τῶν ἄνω εἰμί)⁵².

The adjective ὑφαντός, meaning “woven” and derived from ὑφαίνω, which means “to weave,” “to make,” or “to prepare,” occurs in the LXX almost exclusively in reference to the weaving of the curtains of the Tabernacle (cf.

⁵¹ BLASS et al., *A Greek Grammar*, § 103-104; ROBERTSON, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 300.

⁵² SIMOENS, *Selon Jean*, 815-816.

Exod 26:31; 35:35) and the priestly garments (cf. Exod 28:6; 36:10.12.15.29.34), sometimes in conjunction with the adjective *ῥαός*⁵³.

Given the symbolic association between clothes and the person wearing them in antiquity, and the fact that Jesus’ body is explicitly referred to as the temple in John 2:21 (*ναός*), it is reasonable to interpret the description of Jesus’ garments as a reference to his identity as the pre-existent Word, who has “pitched his tent” among his people (John 1:14: *ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν*). In John 13:4, 12, the act of removing and putting on garments symbolically alludes to the giving and taking back of one’s life, connected with the discourse of the Good Shepherd in John 10:11.17. Now, in John 19:23-24, the stripping of Jesus’ garments again can signify the self-giving of the incarnate Word, with a particular emphasis on demonstrating that through the stripping of his body, the eschatological cult is being established in him.

2.3.4 Context of Ps 22:19

The gesture of Jesus is considered as the scriptural fulfillment of Ps 22(21):19. As outlined in a previous study, it is essential to consider the entire Ps 22(21) and its potential allusions in John 1:14.18; 20:17-18⁵⁴. The supplicant, a type member of Israel offspring, transitions from the drama of divine abandonment to the establishment of a universal worship capable of expanding among all peoples and nations and toward the deceased in the netherworld (cf. Psalm 22[21]:28-32). Jesus, like the mysterious figure of Psalm 22(21), thus experiences a path of glorification and exaltation that is understood in his passion as the fulfillment of Scripture, revealing God’s glory.

It has to be stressed, that while Jesus’ opponents are trying to put an end to his life and plans, Jesus accomplishes the goal of establishing the messianic cult in his body. In this case also the aim of the ruler of this world is frustrated.

2.4 *The double quotation in John 19:36-37 in the context of John 19:31-37*

From a diachronic perspective, the composition of verses 31-37 has been considered the work of the evangelist with some editorial additions⁵⁵. Such an

⁵³ SIMOENS, *Selon Jean*, 816.

⁵⁴ CAVICCHIA, *Le sorti*, 226-241.

⁵⁵ BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, 525.

interpretation risks obscuring the meaning that emerges from the syntactic and narrative analysis of the text's final form⁵⁶.

2.4.1 The worldly plan for a “Great Day”

In John 19:28-30, the death of Jesus is narrated (cf. 19:30c: “And bowing his head, he gave up his spirit”). Verse 31 shifts the focus back to the Jews and Pilate, who were last mentioned in verse 22 with the controversy over the *titulus crucis*. Now, they present a new request to Pilate: that the legs of the crucified be broken. The reason for this request is to avoid leaving the bodies exposed during the festival (cf. John 19:14). This likely refers to the regulation that prohibited leaving the corpse of a condemned person exposed overnight, as stated in Deut 21:22-23 (cf. Josh 8:29; 10:26-27)⁵⁷. The general request is immediately specified by the two subordinate clauses introduced by ἵνα (to break the legs and to remove the bodies), which describe how the death of the condemned is to be hastened. As noted by Mariano, this creates a narrative sub-program that arouses the reader's attention toward its fulfillment⁵⁸.

2.4.2 A coincidental hindrance?

In vv. 32-34, Pilate's assent to the request of the Jews is not reported, leaving a narrative gap; on one hand this is easily understood by the reader, on the other it overshadows the character. While the soldiers strive to accomplish the will of the Jews, they do not carry out it because Jesus is already dead. Jesus' death is a complication of the plot and definitively interrupts the narrative sub-program of v. 31: the will of the Jews, allowed by Pilate and entrusted to the soldiers, has not been fulfilled⁵⁹.

In v. 34, the adversative proposition accounts the accomplishment of an unforeseen action, that closes the scene. Instead of breaking Jesus' bones, a soldier pierces Jesus' side and blood and water came out (ἀλλ' εἰς τῶν στρατιωτῶν λόγχῃ αὐτοῦ τὴν πλευρὰν ἐνυξεν καὶ ἐξῆλθεν εὐθὺς αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ).

The syntactic and narrative construction seems to present this last action as a *climax* that goes in opposition to the narrative plan expressed in the will of

⁵⁶ MARIANO, *Tetelestai*, 99-109; MATEOS et al., *Il vangelo di Giovanni*, 777-782.

⁵⁷ BROWN, *The Gospel according to John*, 934.

⁵⁸ BLASS et al., *Grammatica*, § 392; MARIANO, *Tetelestai*, 100.

⁵⁹ MARIANO, *Tetelestai*, 101; BROWN, *The Death of the Messiah*, 1175.

the Jews and passively accepted by Pilate. This description makes the latter appear only as a shadow of that worldly power that he should impersonate as the representative of the emperor.

It is not a coincidence that such a hindrance allowed the fulfilment of the Scripture (cf. vv. 36-37). God’s plan is going to be accomplished instead of that of the mundane powers.

2.4.3 The gaze toward Jesus and the further fulfillment

In v. 35, the conjunction *καί* introduces the narrator’s comment without significant hiatus. But from the narrative point of view a significant break is indicated to draw the reader’s attention.

The intervention of the narrator-witness in v. 35 does not seem out of place⁶⁰. The construction of the two sections, vv. 31-34 and 35-37, shows an intimate connection in such a way that the first prepares the second: the narration of events—the historical level—, prepares the theological interpretation of the scene. In this case the role of the witness and truthful gaze is also defined, which is placed in the divine horizon of the narrated events. The one who sees offers the prophetic perspective of revelation of the divine plan that is realized in historical details.

In v. 35 the main propositions are composed in parataxis in the indicative mode and present authoritative assertions without uncertainties. They express the reliability of the witness, the invitation to faith and scriptural fulfillment. The sense of “seeing with one’s own eyes” is combined with the sense of witness⁶¹. This symmetry seems to unite the historical plan of events to the further plan expressed by the evangelist and made explicit through the scriptural quotations, toward which the adherence of faith is required.

The final volitional proposition in v. 35d (*ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς πιστεύ[σ]ητε*), indicates the purpose for which the evangelist inserted the commentary, that is, the faith of the community contemporaneous with him⁶².

⁶⁰ The consistency of the text challenges the usual diachronic interpretation of the passage, which views verse 35 as a redactional insertion, or it envisions a meticulous redactional intervention: BROWN, *The Gospel according to John*, 936.

⁶¹ MARIANO, *Tetelestai*, 105.

⁶² For the question of textus criticism, see BROWN, *The Gospel according to John*, 937; MARIANO, *Tetelestai*, 102-104.

The explanatory conjunction γάρ in v. 36 coordinates both the attestation of the eyewitness and the detail of the piercing of the side, expressed by the neutral pronoun ταῦτα. These two elements must be read in a coordinated way: the event of the piercing of the side, the intervention of the witness, and the correspondence with Scripture constitute a unity of meaning, since the invitation to faith is sustained by events and scriptural fulfillment. The link with the final proposition that closes v. 35 remains significant and perhaps the goal of the entire narrative of the Johannine passion. The evangelist bases his proclamation of faith on the complementary authority of the eyewitness and that of Scripture. While the eyewitness attests to the truthfulness of the facts, the Scripture manifests their correspondence with the divine plan. The evangelist combines the narrative, and possibly, the historical sense with its theological interpretation. The reader is thus invited to believe (ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς πιστεύ[σ]ητε), supported by scriptural quotations (ἐγένετο γὰρ ταῦτα ἵνα ἡ γραφή πληρωθῇ).

2.4.4 The quotation of the intact bones (cf. Exod 12:10, 46; Num 9:12; Ps 34:21)

The first quotation in John 19:36 (ὅστοῦν οὐ συντριβήσεται αὐτοῦ) may refer to several texts of the OT (Exod 12:10[LXX].46; Num 9:12; Ps 34[33]:21). Several scholars state that the best explanation of the form of the text is that John combined the different texts of the Old Testament, uniting the themes of both the paschal lamb and the suffering servant found in Ps 34⁶³.

At a first reading, the verbal aspect of the future of συντρίβω creates a direct relationship of the promise-fulfillment typology between Scripture (v. 36: ὅστοῦν οὐ συντριβήσεται αὐτοῦ) and the narrated events (v. 33: οὐ κατέαξαν αὐτοῦ τὰ σκέλη). The same relationship of promise (or intention)-fulfillment creates a tension instead with respect to the narrative program expressed in John 19:31, in which the Jews asked for the fracturing of Jesus' legs. In John 19:36-37, the meaning of the decisive obstacle to the plan of Jesus' antagonists is expressed by the Scripture, the word of God:⁶⁴ Jesus' bones are not

⁶³ MENKEN, *Old Testament Quotations*, 152; SIMOENS, *Selon Jean*, 859; BROWN, *The Gospel according to John*, 60-61; II, 953; see also FABRIS, *Giovanni*, 748. Regarding the theme of Easter in John, see ŠOLTÉS, *The Process of Relecture*, 36-39.

⁶⁴ ZUMSTEIN, *L'Évangile selon Saint Jean*, 260.

broken, because “no bone will be broken” and the body remains permanently in the view of the readers of the Gospel, as “they will see him whom they pierced” (19:37: ὁψονται εἰς ὃν ἐξεκέντησαν).

Thus, the evangelist shows how the divine plan unfolds within the narrated events. While Jesus is executed, the theological level manifests the institution of his kingdom. In the theology of the evangelist, the narrated events enter a direct relationship with Scripture, which are able to express their full meaning and historical-eschatological fulfillment.

2.4.5 The second quotation, a gaze full of questions (cf. Zech 12:10)

The last quotation of the Johannine passion recalls Zech, 12, 10⁶⁵. Due to the difference between TM and LXX, it can be assumed that John quoted the Hebrew text, adapted to the theology proper to the Gospel. It seems possible that the construction ὁψονται εἰς is the translation of וְהָבִיטוּ אֵלָיו. In the MT, the verb *nbṭ expresses the gaze turned towards Yhwh with a sense of discernment regarding his work. The mention of the pierced one can have multiple meanings⁶⁶. The most uncertain aspect concerns the one who is pierced. The Hebrew text can mean Yhwh himself and an unknown character, on whom a unique lament will be made (cf. Zech 12:11-14). The fact that John has unified the object of the gaze, Yhwh, and the pierced one makes it possible that they can be identified. Thus, the pierced one and YHWH can coincide. Several passages in the Gospel sustain this interpretation. Suffices it to recall 3:14-15; 8:28; 12:32-33, mentioned as the Johannine predictions of Jesus’ passion.⁶⁷ The identification of the sight of Jesus and the Father is explicitly expressed in John 14:9.11: ὁ ἑώρακὼς ἐμὲ ἑώρακεν τὸν πατέρα⁶⁸.

Before the pierced one, the greatest revelation of God is manifested in Jesus, humbled unto death on the cross, and the “truth” is fully disclosed.

⁶⁵ For a more detailed explanation see CAVICCHIA, «Guarderanno a colui che hanno trafitto», 461-468. See also BYNUM, *The Fourth Gospel*, 173-184; KUBIŚ, *The Book of Zechariah*, 115-218.

⁶⁶ Kubiś presents 19 different interpretations: KUBIŚ, *The Book of Zechariah*, 119-25.

⁶⁷ BROWN, *The Death of the Messiah*, I, 146; KUBIŚ, *The Book of Zechariah*, 200-201.

⁶⁸ KUBIŚ, *The Book of Zechariah*, 218.

2.5 Perfect fulfillment (cf. John 19:28-30)

A final remark is necessary for John 19:28-30. They are the central fulcrum in the proposed organization of John 19:16b-42, and quite rightly for their semantic scope.

Some references to John 13:1-3 are significant⁶⁹: the evil influence on Judah to deliver him over (cf. 13:2), Jesus' full awareness (John 13:1.3: εἰδὼς ὅτι πάντα; 19:28: εἰδὼς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἤδη πάντα τετέλεσται), the perfect fulfillment (13:1: εἰς τέλος; 19:28.30: τετέλεσται). These elements convey a link between the announcement of the hour (cf. 13:1: εἰδὼς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἦλθεν αὐτοῦ ἡ ὥρα) and its fulfillment (19:28.30: τετέλεσται)⁷⁰. It also emerges that the evangelist understands Jesus' death as the return to the Father⁷¹.

The use of the perfect passive of τελέω (τετέλεσται) seems also to be particularly significant⁷². The term in the active voice means "fulfil, accomplish, execute, perform" (LSJ), "bring to completion, finish, accomplish, perform, fulfill" (Montanari), whereas in the passive form "fulfil, accomplish, execute, perform," "to be brought to completion, to be finished or finished" (Montanari)⁷³. Thayer remarks the semantic ambiguity of the term, with the translation "to bring to a close, to finish, to end," and the passive, "passed, finished". Such ambiguity may not be coincidental⁷⁴. It fits well in the context of the Johannine passion and seems to be able to carry the difficulty of the Christological interpretation of the passage, showing the stylistic refinement of the fourth evangelist. The narrative

⁶⁹ Simoens makes the connection with τέλος: SIMOENS, *Secondo Giovanni*, 761. Several authors highlight the fulfilment promised in 17:4. See BROWN, *The Gospel according to John*, 476-477; KEENER, *The Gospel of John*, 1147-1148; LOADER, *Jesus in John's Gospel*, 114.

⁷⁰ NICOLACI, L'«ora» e i «signi», 403.

⁷¹ LOADER, *Jesus in John's Gospel*, 203; CHIBICI-REVNEANU, *Die Herrlichkeit*, 327.

⁷² Among the other details that could express a double meaning of the passage, see the use of the branch of hyssop as a possible connection with the paschal sacrifice, the meaning of Jesus thirst, or the allusion to Psa 69(68):22; see BROWN, *The Gospel according to John*, 927-931; SIMOENS, *Selon Jean*, 826-845.

⁷³ Montanari offers parallels with the meaning of dying (τὸν βίον τελεῖν in SOPHOCLES, *Antigone*, 1114 (LCL 20, 398). The use of the perfect tense seems to have the sense of fulfillment (see, for example, HOMER, *Odyssey* XIII, 40 (LCL 105, 4-5).

⁷⁴ RESSEGUIE, *The Strange Gospel*, 58.

describes (*showing*) what could be understood as Jesus’ annihilation, according to his opponents purview: the one of the Devil as a murderer (cf. 8:44), who acts through his influence on the Jews (cf. 11:53), on Pilate and on the soldiers as the executioners. On the opposite side, the evangelist describes the sense of fulfillment through Jesus’ words (the *telling* in 19:30) and the Scripture’s accomplishment.

The ambivalence of the text seems able to keep together the terrible sense of Jesus’ death, and the level of the divine plan, with the semantic sense of fulfillment. Every reader will never stop swaying in the shadows and lights of the condemned to death: “everything is over” *and* “everything is accomplished”⁷⁵.

This dual level can be meant in the expression of John 19:30 (παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα). It seems that in no passage of Greek literature is death described with the verb παραδίδωμι (LSJ: “give, hand over to another, transmit”; Montanari: “to give, to deliver: to leave as an inheritance, to transmit”). Also in this case, a first level of meaning must be recognized in the delivery of life by Jesus, to understand his own decision with respect to the act of the delivery-betrayal of Judas (cf. John 6:64.71; 12:4; 13:2; etc.)⁷⁶. However, it is not possible to deny an allusion to the gift of the Spirit, already expressed with the verb δίδωμι in John 3:34 (ἐκ μέτρου δίδωσιν τὸ πνεῦμα) and in 20:22 (ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον)⁷⁷. Especially in this last passage, the mention of the mouth of Jesus from which the Spirit is poured out shows the unity of the events of the death and the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

Conclusive Remarks

In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus’ opponent—the Devil, Satan, and the Ruler of this world—has been described as a murderer and a liar (cf. John 8:44). Opposing this, among other Christological definitions, is Jesus presented as the king of the Jews, giver of life and testimony of the truth (cf. 18:36).

In the decisive “now” of the Ruler of this world and the “hour” of Jesus, the Christ is proclaimed true king (cf. 12:31-32; 18:36; 19:19-22), while he is deprived of his garments, he institutes the eschatological cult (cf. 19:23-24), and,

⁷⁵ A similar interpretation is already proposed by BERNARD, *A Critical and Exegetical*, 638; ROBERTSON, *Word Pictures*, 303-304.

⁷⁶ LOADER, *Jesus in John’s Gospel*, 114, 188; SIMOENS, *Selon Jean*, 827-828.

⁷⁷ BROWN, *The Gospel according to John*, 931; SIMOENS, *Selon Jean*, 828, 846-847.

as he takes leave of his mother and the beloved disciple, he establishes the messianic-eschatological community (19:25-27). While he breathes his last, he delivers both his own life as a model of justice and love and the eschatological gift of the Holy Spirit, as the perfect fulfilment of the Scripture (cf. 19:28-30). While deposed from the cross, his body does not defile the earth, but it subsumes the upright servant of the Lord, and his death is like the sacrifice of the paschal lamb (cf. 19:31-36). The reader who “sees” him through the narration of his passion and death, at the very end, sees the revelation of the love and the salvific plan of the Father (cf. 19:37).

The evangelist thus shows how the divine plan unfolds within the story itself: whereas on the narrative-historical level Jesus is eliminated, the divine plan manifests on the contrary his path right up to its full fulfillment (cf. John 19:28.30: τετέλεσται).

It is possible to agree with Pablo M. Edo’s observation regarding the Johannine style, which skillfully combines concrete and realistic features, possibly even historically verifiable, with a deeper level of interpretation⁷⁸. This results in the characteristic that the evangelist attributes to the book: it is a collection of selected “signs” capable of putting together visible and described details with its deeper meaning of revelation of the divine realm (cf. John 20:30-31). This is also the aim of the eyewitness’ testimony in 19:35: to be a witness of the truth of what he has seen, so that the reader may believe. The result is a “visible” written account capable of unifying the story and its deeper meaning concerning the revelation of God. According to our analysis this is precisely what the Johannine account of Jesus passion offers to its reader. As already mentioned, “John is a visual artist [whose] medium remains words,” and—one may add—whose aim is telling God’s truth in Jesus Christ in order to encourage the reader to welcome faith⁷⁹.

The literary dimension of focusing on the concrete and the detailed elements, along with the literary techniques employed by the fourth evangelist, gives the Johannine account its distinctive richness, which opens up to the mystery of faith in the suffering and glorified Christ. Jesus is portrayed as suffering in the narrative description, glorified at a deeper level of reading, but the terms conveying this ambivalence are often the same. Thus, the historical

⁷⁸ EDO LORRIO, *El lenguaje*, 31-32; WILES, *The Spiritual Gospel*, 33.

⁷⁹ ATTRIDGE, *History*, 93.

level of events, the one of the *σάρξ* (flesh) with its drama and the inevitable pain of torture, is present in the narrative. However, the same details selected by the evangelist are characterized by an additional level of interpretation involving truth, faith, divine life, and glory.

Scriptural references serve this purpose too. This is in the citations introduced with fulfillment formulas and in the allusions, as well as with the use of terminology chosen for the description of the narrated elements. The characteristics placed within the narrative dimension (the *σάρξ*, or flesh) reveal themselves to be the symbolic instrument that intimately connects to the events to express the meaning of *δόξα*, or glory. The Scripture introduced with a fulfillment formula shows how the divine plan is also being accomplished. The *δόξα* of the Son and the Father is manifested because the *σάρξ*, the flesh of Jesus, and the narrated events, emit a deeper significance in the light of Scripture. Scriptural fulfillment is able to complete and confirm what emerges in the narrative, elevating it to the level of the divine perspective on the narrated events.

Johannine dualities sustained by the testimony of the Scripture offer a Christology capable of keeping together a truth made of story, maybe history, and the divine dimension revealed through Christ. Attention to the polarized style of the evangelist and the understanding of a theology of detail prevent possible non-adherent interpretations; e.g. a mythology, portraying Christ as a god walking on earth, or a theology without history, or a history without theology. It is possible to go beyond interpretations that definitely exclude the historical content of the narration.⁸⁰ Outside the objective difficulty of corroborating the events of the crucifixion with extra-biblical documentation (which is not totally absent), the narrative style of the fourth evangelist allows for the preservation of both levels of meanings: the narrative (and possibly historical) details and their theological interpretation.

⁸⁰ WREDE, *Vorträge und Studien*, 207, cited by TONSTAD, “The Fathers of Lies”, 197. The “Fourth Gospel is not interested in true facts, but in true life” (ZIMMERMANN, *Eschatology*, 293); and: “In the Johannine tradition, that process of “remembering” was not just an anxious or dutiful attempt to preserve the original wording of the tradition, let alone the possible historical “facts” behind it” (FREY, *Theology*, 156).

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Summary

The paper explores how the “Ruler of this world has been cast out” (see John 12:31) through the glorification of Jesus (cf. John 12:28.32). The discussion will briefly address John 18:36, where Jesus asserts that his kingdom is “not from down here” (ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐντεῦθεν), suggesting a thematic framework for the ensuing passion narrative. The article then examines with the actualization of such a kingdom in John 19:16b-42 by means of Johannine polarized thought and literary devices such as structure of John 19:16b-42, irony, *double entendre*, and, above all, the fulfillment of the Scriptures in John 19:23-24.31-37.

Keywords: Ruler of this world, Jesus’ glorification, Johannine passion, Johannine irony, Scriptures.

Zhrnutie

Článok skúma, ako je „knieža tohto sveta vyhnané“ (porov. Jn 12,31) prostredníctvom Ježišovho oslávenia (porov. Jn 12,28.32). Úvodná časť sa stručne venuje výroku z Jn 18,36, v ktorom Ježiš vyhlasuje, že jeho kráľovstvo „nie je z tohto sveta“ (ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ οὐκ ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ), čím naznačuje tematický rámec nasledujúceho rozprávania o utrpení. Následne sa štúdia zameriava na spôsob, akým sa toto kráľovstvo aktualizuje v rozprávaní Jn 19,16b-42. Analýza pritom sleduje charakteristické prvky jánovskej naratívnej teológie, najmä polarizovanú perspektívu evanjelistu a literárne prostriedky, ako sú kompozičná štruktúra úseku Jn 19,16b-42, irónia, dvojité významy a predovšetkým motív naplnenia Písma v Jn 19,23-24 a 19,31-37.

Kľúčové slová: vládca tohto sveta, Ježišovo oslávenie, jánovský príbeh o utrpení, jánovská irónia, naplnenie Písma.

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