

The Yarbrow Collins Pre-Markan Passion Narrative (2007)

Critique 3 (Mk 15:1-38)

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[TRIAL]

15:1a. Early in the morning, the chief priests

15:1a. So then, early in the morning, the chief priests with the elders and scribes and the whole (Judean) council,

15:1b. took counsel,

15:1b. held a consultation;

EBB: Another justifiable removal of “elders and scribes.” The 15:1b “consultation” is sufficient background for the following action; there need have been no formal trial, the account of which was plausibly excised by AYC at 14:54-72.

15:1c. bound Jesus, brought him, and handed him over to Pilate.

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15:2. And Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” He then said to him, “You say (so).”

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15:3. And the chief priests accused him of many things.

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15:4a. Pilate asked him again, saying, “Have you no response?”

15:4a. Pilate then asked him again, saying, “Have you no response?”

15:4b. Look how many accusations they make against you.”

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15:5. But Jesus no longer made any response, so that Pilate marveled.

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15:6-14. [om]

15:6-14. [The crowd’s choice between Jesus and Barabbas]

15:15a. [om]

15:15a. So Pilate, intending to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them,

AYC (714): “With v6, the narrative focus shifts from the hearing of Jesus’ case to the question of the release of a particular prisoner at the time of the festival. It is generally agreed that there is no evidence outside of the canonical Gospels for the specific custom mentioned here . . .”

EBB: This, however, is an argument from history rather than from the text.

AYC (720, ap 15:12): “Mark’s purpose in composing this question is to continue the construction of a scene in which the crowd, standing for the people of Jerusalem or for all the rebels in the Jewish war that began in 66 CE, is faced with a choice between Jesus and Barabbas.”

EBB: Two incidents excised by AYC, the Trial Before the Sanhedrin and the Crowd Demanding Barabbas, both tend to transfer the guilt for Jesus’s death from Pilate (Rome) to the Jews, *but in a different way*. In the former, the Jewish hierarchy actually condemns Jesus. In the latter, the final condemnation is rather by the Jews as a whole, not merely with the more limited Jerusalem collaborationist leadership. The link is the statement (15:11) that “the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead”).

Do these two incidents actually belong to the same stratum of Mark? Scattered throughout other chapters of Mark are statements indicating that the Jewish establishment had long sought to kill Jesus. The Sanhedrin Trial (excised by AYC) would have been the climax of that scenario. The Crowd Demanding Barabbas does not fit that scenario so well. If it is not part of that stratum, it might be either earlier or later. If earlier, it was one of the several Jerusalem crowd scenes, and shows the once favorable crowds turning hostile (or being replaced by differently minded crowds) once Jesus has been arrested. If later, it may have reflected the more thorough rejection of Jesus by the Jews which is worked out narratively in Acts. I consider it slightly more plausible, in terms of the scenario for later additions to the text, that the Crowd scene was early, and the phrase about the chief priests *inciting* the crowd was a harmonizing addition to it. See also next.

