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The Trial of Jesus before Pilate in the Fourth Gospel: A Comparison with Mark

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Key words: Chief priests; exit; Jews; King; Kingdom; mocking; Pilate; scourging; trial.

I. Introduction.

Despite considerable differences between the Fourth Gospel's (FG) Trial Narrative and Mark's, their basic framework is similar (See Table I below). However, the FG is not cognizant of the Synoptic Gospels, and 'any overlap is best explained by oral traditions about Jesus coming to the evangelist independently'.¹ John alone has an extended exchange between Pilate and the chief priests and Jesus after the scourging and the troops' mocking of him, which, compared with Mark (Matt.), delays his being handed over to be crucified.² One thing is for certain that the position of the scourging and the soldiers' mocking prior to Pilate's extended questioning suited John's purpose, for it gave these acts a more significant role in his identification of Jesus as the Messianic-King than they play in Mark (Matt.). External data supports the view that both Mark and John's flogging is the scourging that invariably preceded Roman crucifixion. The suggestion that Jesus was lashed twice; once with a lighter whipping (Luke and John) and then with the pre-crucifixion scourging (Mark and Matthew) minimises John's intended dramatic sight of Jesus's exiting from the praetorium as the mocked and brutalised but true King of Israel.

II. The problem of the FG's location of the scourging of Jesus.

John's account of the Roman trial before the Prefect, Pontius Pilate, is considerably longer than the accounts in the Synoptic Gospels. John employs 593 words in describing the trial (18:28–19:16) compared with Mark's 265 words (15:1–20), Matthew's 338 words (27:11–31), and Luke's 252 words (23:1–5, 13–25). John's Passion Narrative is often seen as paralleling Luke's account, but as far as the trial before Pilate is concerned John is closer to Mark than to Luke. Among the Gospels the scourging of Jesus in the trial occurs in differing positions relative to his being handed over to be crucified. In Mark (and Matt.) the scourging occurs at the conclusion of Pilate's interrogation (Mark 15:15; Matt. 27:26), whereas Luke, other than Pilate's proposed lashing, makes no mention of Jesus actually being lashed or scourged. John, as so often, goes his own way and locates the scourging of Jesus in the midst (John 19:1) of Pilate's

¹ Richard A. Burridge, *Four Gospels, One Jesus? A Symbolic Reading* (Rev. Ed.; London: SPCK, 2005) 12.

² John is used for convenience and does not imply anything regarding the authorship or sources of the FG.

two investigations (18:28–38a; 19:4–15), that is, at the fourth (19:1–3) of the seven scenes that many recognize as comprising the FG’s account of the trial.³ The following table indicates the variations among the Four Gospels:

Mark 15	Matthew 27	Luke 23	John 18–19
Before Pilate vv. 1–5	Before Pilate vv. 2, 11–14	Before Pilate vv. 1–5	Before Pilate I, 18:28–38a
		Before Herod Antipas vv. 6–10	
		Mocked by Herod’s soldiers vv. 11–12	
Pilate/Chief Priests/Barabbas vv. 6–15a	Pilate/Chief Priests/Barabbas vv. 15–23 (wife’s dream v. 19)	Pilate/Chief Priests/Barabbas vv. 13–24 (proposed flogging vv. 16, 22)	Pilate/Chief Priests/Barabbas vv. 38b–40a
	Washing of hands vv. 24–25		
Barabbas released v. 15b	Barabbas released v. 26a	Barabbas released v. 25a	Barabbas possibly released v. 40b
Scouring v. 15c	Scouring v. 26b		Scouring 19:1
<i>Handed over v. 15c</i>	<i>Handed over v. 26b</i>	<i>Handed over as they wished v. 25b</i>	
<i>To be crucified v. 15c</i>	<i>To be crucified v. 26b</i>		
Mocking vv. 16–20a	Mocking vv. 27–31a		Mocking vv. 2–3
			<i>Before Pilate II, vv. 4–15</i>
			<i>Handed over v. 16a</i>
			<i>To be crucified v. 16b</i>
Led out v. 20b	Led away v. 31b	Led away v. 26a	Took Jesus v. 16c
Simon carries cross v. 21	Simon carries cross v. 32	Simon of Cyrene v. 26b	Jesus carries cross v. 17a
		Jesus’s words to women vv. 27–31	
Golgotha vv. 22–25	Golgotha vv. 33–36	Golgotha vv. 32–37	Golgotha vv. 17b–18

Table I

In Mark, Pilate, after having Jesus scourged, handed him over [to the soldiers] to be crucified (ο(de\ Pila=toj ... pare/dwken to\n70lhsou~n fragellw&saj i#na staurwqh, 15:15). Immediately after that the soldiers mock Jesus’s Messianic (royal) claim with typical barrack’s buffoonery, and then they ‘led him out to crucify him’ (kai\ e0ca&gousin au0to\n i3na staurw&swsin au0to/n, 15:20).⁴ Regarding the scourging of Jesus (Mark, fragellw&sav) and

³ Scene 1 (18:28–32), scene 2 (18:33–38a), scene 3 (18:38b–40), scene 4 (19:1–3), scene 5 (19:4–8), scene 6 (19:9–11), and scene 7 (19:12–16a), as in Raymond E Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels* (2 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1994) I:758. With slight variants see Jürgen Becker, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes Kapitel 11–21* (ÖTK 4/2; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1984) 561–81; Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Gospel of John in Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI/Leicester, UK: Eerdmans/IVP, 2009) 412–38.

⁴ Philo records how the Egyptians in Alexandria mocked the deranged Karabas as a king (*In Flaccum*, 36–40). Chapman sees this as a strong parallel to the soldiers’ ridicule of Jesus (David W. Chapman and Eckhard J. Schnabel, *The Trial*

(John, e0masti/gwsen) and the Roman soldiers' mocking of him, John basically parallels Mark, but he also differs from him in several critical ways:

1. Mark separates the mocking from the scourging by inserting between the two actions Pilate's handing of Jesus over to be crucified (15:15c–20a). However, John has the scourging and the mocking following one another in close sequence without any intervening action by Pilate (19:1–3) (See Table I above).

2. Mark allocates sixty-three words to his description of the soldiers' mocking of Jesus as a royal person (15:16–20a), but John needs only thirty-one words to describe the same event (19:2–3).

3. According to Mark, at the end of the soldiers' vicious sport, they remove the instruments of their abuse—the crown of pointed fronds and the royal robe—and clothe their victim with his own attire (15:20a). In contrast, John has Jesus appear before Pilate and the chief priests still wearing all the accessories of the soldiers' brutal fun (19:5).

4. In Mark, once the soldiers finish changing Jesus's garments, they immediately lead him off to crucify him (15:20b), but John places the second part of Pilate's interaction with the Jews (19:4–7) and further interrogation of Jesus (vv. 8–15) between the scourging, the soldiers' mocking of Jesus, and his being handed over to be crucified (See Table I above). John's purpose in doing this will be discussed below.

III. The sources and the place of scourging in Roman crucifixion.

There is considerable external data regarding Roman methods that give strong support to the accuracy of Mark's positioning of the scourging just prior to the crucifixion itself.⁵ Cook concludes that 'the sequence of scourging and then crucifixion is normal Roman procedure'.⁶

and Crucifixion of Jesus [WUNT 2/344; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015] III: 271–74); see also Joel Marcus, 'Crucifixion as Parodic Exaltation', *JBL* 125 (2006) 73–87. Cook notes that 'forms of *agere in crucem* (lead to a cross) are common' (John Granger Cook, *Crucifixion in the Mediterranean World* [WUNT 2/327; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014] 374–75 and n. 91, 423–24).

⁵ Cook, *Crucifixion*, 53, 64, 66, 84, 85, 164, 187, 194 and *passim*; Chapman and Schnabel, *Crucifixion*, III:556–57 (cit. 298), 590–92 (cit. 325), 629–30 (cit. 353), 649 (cit. 369), 651 (cit. 371) and *passim*.

⁶ *Crucifixion*, 242; also David W. Chapman, *Ancient Jewish and Christian Perceptions of Crucifixion* (WUNT 2/244; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 44, 75, 78, 85.

Chapman concurs and notes that “scourging” (*verberes*) typically precede crucifixion in the sources’.⁷ In fact, he found that scourging and torture prior to crucifixion were so standard that their occurrence may be assumed even when not mentioned in the texts themselves.⁸

Ignoring for the moment John’s different location compared with Mark of Pilate’s handing Jesus over to be crucified (v. 15d), the two Gospels preserve the same order after the Barabbas incident (Mark 15:15b; John 18:40b) for the flogging of Jesus and the soldiers’ mocking him (See Table I above). Since Mark is almost certainly referring to the severe scourging of Jesus prior to his crucifixion the parallel between them strongly implies that John is also. However, this means that John not only has the scourging of Jesus (19:1) prior to his being handed over to be crucified (v. 16a), but also the soldiers’ mocking (vv. 2–3) and then twelve more verses (vv.4–15, 253 words) of Pilate’s interaction with the Jews and interrogation of Jesus. Before attempting to respond to this unique element in the FG a number of other issues and proffered explanations need to be analysed.

IV. Does the FG align with Mark or Luke?

Of course as Table I (See above) demonstrates the FG aligns completely with neither Mark nor Luke. John alone has Pilate continue his interrogation not only after the scourging, but also after the soldiers’ mocking of Jesus. Yet some relate aspects of the FG’s account to Mark and others to Luke, which results in variant views as to the nature and number of the floggings that Pilate administered.

Many scholars argue that the FG refers not to the severe scourging that precedes crucifixion, but to some lesser lashing that is administered for various reasons. Luke is then appealed to for evidence that he and John are referring to a lighter lashing while Mark and Matthew focus on the severe scourging. This study has already argued that Mark (Matt.) and

⁷ Chapman, *Crucifixion*, III:557 (cit. 298). ‘Both Jewish and Roman sources illustrate that people who had been convicted were mocked and tortured’ (Schnabel, *Crucifixion*, II:270); ‘. . . the sequence of scourging and crucifixion corresponds to Roman custom’ (Cook, *Crucifixion*, 84–85).

⁸ Chapman, *Crucifixion*, III:673. He also mentions other tortures that were often part of the brutality that preceded crucifixion, such as beating with rods, twisting of limbs, and burning with pitch, candles or a heated iron (Ibid, 270–71 [cit. 107], 321, 537–38 [cit. 282], 600–601 [cit. 331], 606–07 [cit. 334], 666–67 [cit. 381]); Cook, *Crucifixion*, 66.

John all refer to the severe scourging that preceded the crucifixion.⁹ Nevertheless, the several forms of the lighter lashing idea need to be examined before presenting this essay's solution

1. Judicial torture or appeasement.

Several scholars argue that the lashing mentioned in the FG refers to one that Pilate administered as a judicial torture in an attempt to gain more information from an otherwise uncooperative prisoner.¹⁰ As Chapman and Cook have demonstrated, various tortures could precede crucifixion, but these were in addition to and not instead of the severe scourging (*verberatio*) that was invariably administered prior to the cross.¹¹ Other researchers contend that Pilate hoped that a lighter punishment might be sufficient to placate Jesus's accusers and thus gain his release.¹² Proponents of such an earlier lighter lashing that preceded the severe scourging associated with the crucifixion try to find support for it in Luke 23:16, 22.

2. The failure of the claimed parallel between Luke and the FG.

The purported parallel between Luke 23:16, 22 and John 19:1 regarding an earlier lashing has some serious shortcomings. First, John 19:1–3 has the scourging and the soldiers' mocking of Jesus in the same order as Mark (Mark 15:15c–20a), which differs from Luke (See Table I above). Second, the FG's *mastigo/w* (John 19:1) is nearer in meaning to Mark's Latinism

⁹ Brown contends that 'in terms of historicity no harmonization of a scourging in mid-trial (John) followed by a flogging at the end (Mark/Matt.) should be attempted . . .' (*Death*, I: 852).

¹⁰ Jennifer A. Glancy, 'Torture: Flesh, Truth, and the Fourth Gospel', *BibInt* 13 (2005) 107, 121; Paul D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985) 132; Stephen D. Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse: Postcolonialism and the New Testament* (BMW 12; Sheffield: Phoenix, 2006) 60–61; Cornelis Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* (Milton Keynes; Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2009) 185; *idem*, 'The Character of Pilate in the Gospel of John', in Christopher W. Skinner (ed.), *Character and Characterization in the Gospel of John* (LNTS 461; London: T & T Clark, 2013) 244; Tom Thatcher, *Greater than Caesar: Christology and Empire in the Fourth Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2009) 66, 82; Matthew L. Skinner, *The Trial Narratives: Conflict, Power, and Identity in the New Testament* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2010) 98; D. Francois Tolmie, 'Pontius Pilate: Failing in More Ways Than One', in Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie and Reuben Zimmerman (eds), *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Approaches to Seventy Figures in John* (WUNT 2/314; Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2013) 589–90.

¹¹ Chapman, *Crucifixion*, III:667–68 [cit. 381]; Cook, *Crucifixion*, 377, 423, 448. The relatives and friends 'were arrested, scourged (e0mastigou=nto), tortured, and after all these torments, as much as their bodies were able to hold, the last and lurking punishment was the cross (stauro/v)' (Philo, *In Flacc.* 72; see Chapman, *Crucifixion*, III:665 [cit. 380]) and Cook, *Crucifixion*, chapter six, 'Roman Crucifixion and the New Testament', 417–49.

¹² A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963) 27–28; F. F. Bruce, 'The Trial of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel' in R. T. France and D. Wenham (eds), *Gospel Perspectives: Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels*, vol. 1 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1980) 15; M. Sabbe, 'The Trial of Jesus before Pilate in John and its Relation to the Synoptic Gospels', in Adelbert Denaux (ed.), *John and the Synoptics* (Leuven: University Press, 1992) 370; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (2 vols.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003) 2:1120; Jerome H. Neyrey, "'Despising the Shame of the Cross.'" Honor and Shame in the Johannine Passion Narrative', *Semeia* 68 (1994) 125; Reprinted in Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Gospel of John in Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective* (Grand Rapids/Leicester, Eerdmans/IVP, 2009) 412–38; Becker, *Johannes*, 571 ('Sie ist aber auch als selbständige Strafe bekannt. So ist sie wohl bei Joh gemeint').

(fragello/w) than to Luke's paideu/w.¹³ Third, mastigo/w is used elsewhere in the Gospels for the scourging (*verberatio*) that preceded crucifixion (Mark 10:34; Matt. 20:19; Luke 18:33).¹⁴ Fourth, in John the scourging is not simply proposed as with Luke, but is actually carried out, as the aorist indicative demonstrates (e0masti/gwsin, 19:1).¹⁵ There is no indication in Luke that Pilate inflicted the proposed lashing, and since Jesus was not released, presumably he was not lashed.

Fifth, in Luke, Pilate's efforts to lash and then to release Jesus occur *during* the exchange concerning Barabbas and not after his release, whereas in John the scourging *follows* the Barabbas incident and is clearly separate from it, which again agrees with Mark but not Luke. Sixth, it is well documented that an offender often received several beatings before crucifixion and Luke could be referring to one of these, but the FG is too aligned with Mark (Matt.) to accept that it follows this explanation of Luke's language. Luke has only the one proposed (not actual) lashing, which means that he then omits any reference to the brutal scourging that always preceded the crucifixion.¹⁶ Consequently his conclusion to Pilate's interrogation is mild in its brevity: 'He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished' (23:25).¹⁷

As Table I (see above) demonstrates, other than Pilate's continuing interaction with the Jews and interrogation of Jesus (19:4–15), very little adjustment is needed to align John's Trial Narrative with Mark's.¹⁸ On the other hand, Luke's sequence of events is quite remote from

¹³ Many of the sources Chapman collected use mastigo/w or ma/stic for the pre-crucifixion scourging (*Crucifixion*, III:590 [cit. 325], 649 [cit. 369], 651 [cit. 371], 665 [cit. 380]). For Latin texts see Cook, *Crucifixion*, chapters 1 and 2, and 63 (*verbera*), 68 (*verbera*), 84 (*verberibus*), 173 (*verbera*), 390 (*flagella*). See also Josephus, *AJ* 12.256; *BJ* 2.306–308; 5.449–51.

¹⁴ A related verb (masti/zw) – which can also refer to the scourging that precedes crucifixion – is used in the context of Acts 22:25 to refer to a judicial beating designed to elicit information. The meaning of e0masti/gwsen in John 19:1 is also governed by the context, that is, the crucifixion of Jesus (v. 16); so all we learn from Acts is that word meanings vary according to the context.

¹⁵ The aorist active is commonly used (Moore, *Empire*, 56–59).

¹⁶ As is well known, Luke often leaves out of his account acts of brutality or passion, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX* (2nd ed.; AB 28; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985) 94–95; Brown, *Death* I:852.

¹⁷ In fact, in Luke the mocking and arraying Jesus in regal apparel occurs before Herod Antipas and his soldiers (23:6–12). As noted above the Romans often inflicted upon the victim many atrocities preceding crucifixion, but these did not occur without the final severe scourging.

¹⁸ For the FG's similarities with Mark see Richard Bauckham, 'John for Readers of Mark', in idem (ed.) *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge, U.K.: 1998) 147–71; Paul N. Anderson, *The*

Mark and John's accounts. Therefore, Luke should be dismissed as providing any insight into John's intentions in his Trial Narrative, which means that John and Mark are referring, as we have already argued, to the same scourging (Mark 15:15; John 19:1).

V. Dramatic sequence as a solution.

The failure of these efforts to distinguish the scourging in the FG from Mark's, still leaves the problem of John's sequence of the trial unresolved. At the end of the soldiers' mocking, Mark concludes *kai\ e)ca/gousin au)to\n i\$na staurw/swsin au)to/n* (15:20b), and Matthew is similar, *kai\ a)ph/gagon au)to\n ei)j to\ staurw~sai* (Matt. 27:31b). These two purpose clauses at the end of the soldiers' mocking repeat the earlier purpose clauses at the end of the scourging (*i3na staurwqh |~*, Mark 15:15; Matt. 27:26), and that indicates that the soldiers' mocking was a brief interlude between the scourging and the journey to Golgotha.

So the sequence in these two Synoptic Gospels is scourging, handing over, mocking, and then being led out to be crucified; whereas John's sequence is scourging, mocking, *Pilate's further interaction with the Jews and second interrogation of Jesus*, handing over, and proceeding to the crucifixion site. And that leaves us still with the original problem: if the scourging and mocking of Jesus in the FG are the same as the scourging and mocking in Mark and Matthew, as seems very likely, how do we explain their location in John *prior* to and not *after* Pilate had completed his questioning of Jesus?

John is a purposeful author and Barnabas Lindars focuses on this fact in his proposed solution: 'But it is quite clear that John has done this [location of the scourging and mocking] deliberately, regardless of the correct procedure (perhaps not knowing it). He wants to use the mocking as the jumping-off point for the dialogue which follows it, and of course the scourging goes with it'.¹⁹ John places the mocking *before* the handing over of Jesus to be crucified instead of *after* as with Mark for a dramatic purpose. John is a 'storyteller' or a 'dramatist' and he is

Riddles of the Fourth Gospel: An Introduction to John (Minneapolis, Fortress, 2011) 126–29. He refers to Mark and John as the 'Bi-Optic Gospels'. Bennema, 'The Character of Pilate', 251.

¹⁹ Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (NCB; London: Oliphants, 1972) 563–64.

concerned to present in his own creative and inimitable style the kingship of Christ.²⁰ Robinson long ago provided a helpful perspective on John's method of interpreting his historical data: 'Of course the story is written up to bring out the theological dimensions of the drama that is being enacted. But once again John appears to be giving the truth, as he sees it, *of* the history, rather than creating *ex nihilo*'.²¹ And 'John is concerned primarily with theological verity rather than with historical verisimilitude. Yet once again, it is the truth of the history that he claims to present, not of a fictitious tale'.²²

John has shaped his data so as to bring before his judge and his accusers a brutalized and battered Jesus, flogged to the edge of extinction and still draped with the garb of a comic-king. He develops this theme by splitting the trial before Pilate into two distinct stages separated by the scourging and the soldiers' mocking, which we will now examine in more detail.

VI. The drama before Pilate: part one (18:28–38).²³

The most important feature in both parts of the FG's Trial Narrative, is the concentration on the nouns *basilei/a* (18:36a, 36b, 36c) and *basileu/j* (18:33, 37a, 37b, 39; 19:3, 12, 14, 15b, 15c).²⁴ Fifteen (71 per cent) of John's twenty-one occurrences of these two nouns occur in the section dealing with Jesus's being handed over to Pilate through to his crucifixion (18:28–19:22).²⁵ This contrasts dramatically with the number of times these two nouns occur in the Synoptic Gospels' accounts of the same period compared with their total usage of *basilei/a* and *basileu/v*: Matthew (27:11–37) has three out of 77 (4 per cent), Mark (15:2–26) has five out of 32 (15.5 per cent), and Luke (23:1–38) has four out of 57 (7 per cent). These statistics alone

²⁰ 'Storyteller' is a term taken from the title of Mark W. G. Stibbe, *John as Storyteller: Narrative Criticism and the Fourth Gospel* (SNTSMS 73; Cambridge: CUP, 1992).

²¹ John A. T. Robinson, "'His Witness is True: A Test of the Johannine Claim', in Ernst Bammel and C. F. D. Moule (eds), *Jesus and the Politics of His Day* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984) 469.

²² *Ibid.*, 474–75.

²³ In total 256 words distributed as Narrator 107 words, Jesus 81, Pilate 52, and Jews 16.

²⁴ Mavis M. Leung, 'The Roman Empire and John's Passion Narrative in Light of Jewish Royal Messianism', *BSac* 168 (2011) 427.

²⁵ The usage is as follows: Pilate five times (or eight times if the inscription is included), Jesus four times, the soldiers once, the Jews once, and the chief priests once.

confirm the observation that the term ‘king’ ‘is the designation that has been the issue throughout the Roman trial’, and this is especially true of the FG.²⁶

In fact, John commenced preparing the reader for his emphasis on Jesus’s kingship in the trial from chapter one with Andrew’s calling him the Messiah, that is, Christ (1:41).²⁷ This is immediately followed by Nathaniel’s confession of him as the ‘Son of God’ and the ‘King of Israel’ (v. 49).²⁸ The FG’s only use of ‘Kingdom of God’ occurs in Jesus’s dialogue with Nicodemus (John 3), which telegraphs to the reader that his kingdom ‘is not from this world’ (18:36). After Jesus’s confession to the Samaritan woman that he was the Messiah (4:25–26), she went to her fellow villagers and hesitantly asked, ‘is this man [who told me as many things as I have ever done] perhaps the Christ (4:29)’?

The ongoing dispute in John 7 over whether Jesus is the Messiah or not (vv. 26, 27, 31, 41, 42) prepares the reader for the revelation at the end of the trial. Martha’s affirmation that Jesus was ‘the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world’ (11:27) points the reader in the direction of identifying Jesus as a Davidic king.²⁹ The same may be said of Jesus’s entry into Jerusalem and the crowd’s acclamation of him as ‘King of Israel’ (12:13), which John confirms with the quotation of Zechariah 9:9 (v. 15). John’s use of u(yo/w (3:14; 8:28; 12:32, 34) with its double-meaning of enthronement and crucifixion also relates to the FG’s portrayal of Jesus as the Suffering-Servant King.³⁰

Pilate’s interrogation immediately commences with a query that is identical with the Synoptic Gospels concerning Jesus’s regal status: Su\ ei] o9 basileu\ v tw~n Oloudai/wn; (18:33). After ascertaining whether Pilate is simply repeating the chief priests’ words or asking

²⁶ Brown, *Death*, I:801. Indeed, Jesus’s kingship ‘is one of the main Christological foci of John’s whole presentation’ (Christopher M. Tuckett, ‘Pilate in John 18–19: A Narrative-Critical Approach’, in G. J. Brooke and J.-D. Kaestli (eds), *Narrativity in Biblical and Related Texts* [BETL 149; Leuven: University Press, 2000] 134, n. 16).

²⁷ John is the only Gospel to use the Greek transliteration (Μεσσίας) of the Aramaic.

²⁸ Unlike Mark, who does not have Jesus addressed as ‘King’ until he stands before Pilate (see Marcus, ‘Parodic Exaltation’, 73).

²⁹ ‘Messiah’ in the NT has other nuances beside ‘Davidic King’, but the latter should not be excluded as a major meaning. See Mavis M. Leung, *The Kingship-Cross Interplay in the Gospel of John: Jesus’ Death as Corroboration of his Royal Messiahship* (Eugene; Wipf & Stock, 2011) 23–64, 152–72.

³⁰ Marcus, ‘Parodic Exaltation’, 74.

of himself, Jesus informs him that his kingdom is not of this world; indeed his kingdom neither originates from here (ε0nτεu=qen, v. 36ac) nor reflects the values of earthly kingdoms. If it (h9 basilei/a h9 ε0mh/) were from here, his servants would be presently fighting to prevent his being handed over to the Jews (v. 36b).³¹ Earthly kingdoms fight one another; his does not fight because it is from God. This does not mean that his kingdom has no impact on or any relevance for the world.³²

Pilate concludes from this assertion that Jesus is claiming a royal status of some kind: ‘Then you are a king, aren't (oujkou`n) you (v. 37)’?³³ Jesus’s reply is guarded but affirmative: ‘You say that I am a king’ (v. 37). John’s understanding of the term ‘king’ when applied to Jesus was undoubtedly different from Pilate’s and also from the chief priests’. Pilate then goes outside from the praetorium to address the Jews. He reminds them of their custom of having him release a prisoner (ε3na) on the Passover, and he then asks, probably mockingly, ‘Do you wish, then, that I shall release to you the king of the Jews (v. 39)’? The offer infuriates them and they cry out not him but Barabbas’.³⁴ The narrator then adds ironically, ‘And Barabbas was a brigand’ (v. 40).

VII. The drama before Pilate: part two (19:4–15).³⁵

By concentrating his references to the ‘king’ and ‘kingdom’ in the Trial Narrative, John obliges the reader to see Jesus’s kingship and the kingdom in terms of the humiliation of the cross.³⁶ That humiliation, which began at least in chapter 13 with the washing of the disciples’ feet, finds a dramatic expression in the closing scenes of the trial before Pilate. John, as with

³¹ The unfulfilled condition (h]n ... h0gwni/zonto) indicates present action.

³² Leung, ‘The Roman Empire and John’s Passion Narrative’, 436; Ignace de la Potterie, *The Hour of Jesus: The Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus according to John* (New York: Alba, 1989) 64.

³³ Ou0kou=n expects an affirmative reply. See A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (4th ed.; New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1923) 917.

³⁴ John has Pilate make the offer to release Jesus according to the Jews’ own custom at Passover (18:39), but Mark has the crowd initiate the request to Pilate to release a prisoner just as he usually did for them at Passover (kaqw_v e)poi/ei au)toi=v, 15:6, 8).

³⁵ In total 253 words made up of 136 for the Narrator, 54 for Pilate, 42 for the chief priests, and 21 for Jesus. Compared with Part One, Jesus is now taciturn and the Jews prolix. Thus almost 43 per cent of John’s Trial Narrative occurs *after* the flogging and mocking, but *before* the handing over of Jesus to be crucified.

³⁶ The references are as follows: ‘kingdom’, 3:3, 5; 18:36a, 36b, 36c; ‘king’, 1:49; 6:15; 12:13, 15; 18:33, 37a, 37b, 39; 19:3, 12, 14, 15a, 15b, 19, 21a, 21b.

Mark (15:15), simply states the fact of the scourging of Jesus without elaboration of the details (19:1). Likewise, John limits the soldiers' mocking to four elements that focus their ridicule on the claim that Jesus is a king. Hence, John's economy of words in this regard is due to his focus on Jesus as the King of Israel.

To achieve their contempt for any royal claim for Jesus the soldiers plait a mock crown from some pointed fronds and place it on his head; 'Mit deren bis zu 30 cm langen Dornen ist sie die Karikatur der Strahlekrone göttlicher Herrscher, so daß Jesus in dieser Szene als *divus rex radiatus* erscheint'.³⁷ They then drape a purple cloak over him (v. 2).³⁸ Having thus attired him, they keep coming to him and saying, 'Hail King of the Jews' (v. 3), but they reveal their true disdain by suddenly changing from mock homage to an insulting slap.³⁹ John entirely ignores the prior mocking in Caiaphas' house; and he makes no mention of the Roman soldiers' beating his head with a cane, spitting on him, or bowing in mock homage as in Mark's account (15:19).⁴⁰ Even if some of these elements were in his sources, John is interested only in those details that focus on Jesus as a King.⁴¹

That John wants the reader to take the mock coronation seriously becomes immediately apparent in the generally designated fifth scene (19:4–8). John keeps a closer association between Jesus's scourging and the soldiers' mocking him than Mark so as to have him immediately exit the praetorium in the humiliated state that the soldiers' abuse left him. Since in 19:4 Pilate goes outside again (ἐξῆλθεν παρὰ τὸ πραιτώριον), it is reasonable to infer that the scourging and the soldiers' mocking (vv. 1–3) occurred inside the praetorium.⁴² This follows Mark 15:16 regarding the location of the mocking, but it is contrary to him and historical

³⁷ Hartwig Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium* (HNT 6; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005) 722. Thus the purpose of αἰσθητικὴ is to simulate a radiant crown and not to inflict torture (Campbell Bonner, 'The Crown of Thorns', *HTR* 46 [1953] 48).

³⁸ John's choice of terms for the garment (ἵματιον πορφύρεον) is to portray the soldiers' intention; not to describe the actual nature of the improvised royal attire.

³⁹ The imperfect verbs (ἔκρουσαν, ἔδωκαν) indicate that the soldiers were relentless in meting out their abuse.

⁴⁰ John limits the abuse before Annas to a slap (ἔκρουσε). The mock reed scepter placed in Jesus's right hand is from Matt. 27:29; not the FG *pace* David E. Garland ('John 18–19: Life through Jesus' Death', *RevExp* 85 [1988] 491).

⁴¹ See fn. 4 for the mocking of Karabas as a king.

⁴² Josef Pichler, 'Setzt die Johannespassion Mattäus voraus?' in Van Belle (ed.), *The Death of Jesus*, 501.

precedence regarding the site of the scourging, which in the FG is also conducted inside Pilate's headquarters.⁴³ So why does John have the scourging as well as the mocking occur in such an unlikely place?⁴⁴ He does this so as to portray Jesus's exit from the praetorium with arresting and dramatic effect. It is the impact of Jesus's exits to which we now turn.

1. The first exit of Jesus from the praetorium (19:5–8)

Brown lists the seven scenes in a chiasmic format that makes the fourth scene (the scourging and mocking of Jesus, 19:1–3) 'the middle episode', which Byrne also calls 'the centrepiece'.⁴⁵ Moore agrees and concludes that this places the scourging 'on the topmost level of the narrative pedestal' where 'Imperial Rome, in the person of Pontius Pilate, confronts Jesus ... flagrum in hand (symbolically at least, if not actually), the inquisitor now become torturer'.⁴⁶ Thatcher disagrees that being the crux of a chiasmic structure makes the scourging in the fourth scene the 'the focal point of the narrative'.⁴⁷ Indeed he admits that he is 'not especially impressed with chiasmic outlines'.⁴⁸ For Thatcher the high point in the trial occurs in the fifth scene (19:4–8) with Pilate's reaction (v. 8) to the chief priests' ultimate accusation against Jesus.⁴⁹ I align myself with Thatcher regarding the centrality of the fifth scene, but I couple it with the seventh scene (vv. 12–16a) and place the emphasis on Jesus rather than Pilate. Brown suggests that 'for his own dramatic purposes John has shifted the scourging to the middle of the trial', but what are those 'dramatic purposes'?

From Caiaphas' residence they led Jesus into the praetorium, while his accusers stayed outside (18:28). Jesus remained in the praetorium concealed from his accusers' view for the next

⁴³ Mark 15:15–16 and Matt. 27:26–27 indicate that the scourging occurred outside the praetorium; which historically is more likely. See Brown, *Death*, I:853 and Henrike Maria Zilling, "Hänge ihn an den Baum des Unheils (Liv.1, 26,11)–das Kreuz in römischen Hochverrats-Prozessen," *Klio* 94 (2012) 429.

⁴⁴ Neyrey attempts to ameliorate this by suggesting that within the praetorium 'is still a "public" place occupied by Roman soldiers' ('Shame', 122).

⁴⁵ Brown, *Death* I:758; Brendan Byrne, *Life Abounding: A Reading of John's Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014) 301.

⁴⁶ Moore, *Empire*, 59, 74.

⁴⁷ *Greater*, 71.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 84.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 67, 84–85.

16 verses (18:28–19:5).⁵⁰ This situation required Pilate to go out to the Jews and into the praetorium to examine Jesus. In contrast, Mark has Pilate conducting the whole process in the presence of the chief priests. The back-and-forth procedure in the FG was not to demonstrate Pilate’s weakness, but to highlight the spectacle of Jesus’s long-delayed exit from the praetorium. Thus it is the exit scenes (fifth and seventh, 19:4–8, 12–16a) that are the climax of John’s drama, and not the scourging and the soldiers’ mocking (the fourth scene, vv. 1–3).

For the third time (18:29, 38; 19:4) Pilate came outside and announced to the Jews that he was bringing (7!Ide a!gw) Jesus out to them so that they might know that he had found no case against him (v. 4). Contrary to Pilate’s announcement, and, as is typical of John, Jesus brought (e0ch~!qen) himself out.⁵¹ In Mark Jesus is divested of the ‘royal’ robe and, presumably, the ‘regal’ crown (e)ce/dusan au)to\n th\n porfu/ran kai\ e)ne/dusan au)to\n ta\ i(ma/tia au)tou=, Mark 15:20, Matt. 27:31), but in John he continues to wear them.

He comes outside having just endured the abuse of the scourging and the soldiers’ mocking and still wearing the crown of pointed fronds and the purple robe over his lacerated back (e)ch=!qen ou]n o(7)Ihsou=j e1cw, forw~n to\n a)ka/nqinon ste/fanon kai\ to\ porfourou=n i(ma/tion, v. 5).⁵² The sight is astonishing: Jesus – humiliated, abused, powerless and adorned in such satirical attire as to appear almost comical – stands as a royal claimant before the all-powerful representative of Caesar and, for the first time in the trial, before his accusers. The irony is patent; this mocked and mutilated caricature of a king is for John indeed the Messiah. The crown and purple robe are for John, despite the soldiers’ intention, clues that point to Jesus’s true identity as the one sent from God.⁵³ ‘Behold the man’ or ‘Look at the fellow’ (Oldou\ o(a1nqrwpoj), Pilate contemptuously proclaims (v. 5), but Jewish ears would have immediately

⁵⁰ “... daß Pilatus zur Zeit der Geißelung wieder im Prätorium weilte und auch Jesus den Blicken der Juden entzogen war” (Becker, *Johannes*, 572).

⁵¹ For example, John 12:27; 19:17.

⁵² Duke notes John’s change of terms from Mark: e0ch~!qen for e0ca/gousin (Mark 15:20) and forw~n for e0ndu/w (*Irony*, 132).

⁵³ Der Joh. evangelist schildert diesen Auftritt so erschreckend plastisch, daß er *auch seine Leser* mit diesem Anblick ihres Herrn zutiefst berührt. Als gläubige Christen sollen sie diesen Mißhandelten und aller menschlichen Ehre brutal Beraubten als den Sohn Gottes und wahren König Israels (1,49) sehen! (Ulrich Wilckens, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* [NTD 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998] 284).

recognized the words of God when he directed Samuel to Saul, the first king of Israel (1 Sam 9:17).⁵⁴

John seems to enjoy putting true words into the mouth of opponents. Pilate points to the hapless figure before him and unknowingly declares, ‘Behold the man (whom God has chosen to rule over his people)’.⁵⁵ Given the OT association of Pilate’s acclaim, the reaction of the chief priests and their aides is then predictable. They vent their rejection of any suggestion that this mocked, parodied figure is their king by shouting, ‘Crucify him! Crucify him!’ (19:6a). John notes that it is *when* the chief priests and their aides saw the wretched figure of Jesus (ο3τε ου]n ei]don au)to\ n oi9 a)rxierei=j kai\ oi9 u9phre/tai) that they shouted out for his crucifixion. Pilate is surely toying with them when he proposes that they crucify him themselves, since he knew they could not do this without his authorization (v. 6b).

For the first time, and only in John, the chief priests reveal their true reason for wanting Jesus crucified, namely, that he made himself the Son of God. Why does this revelation make Pilate ‘more afraid’ (ma`llon ejfobhvqh, 19:8)?⁵⁶ There was only one Caesar, but in the first century there were many kings. Pilate could tolerate a claim to being a king when even the chief priests and people rejected him (18:35), but the claim to divinity lifted the stakes higher. ‘Son of God’ was a title being increasingly attributed to the emperors in the time of John. ‘Son of God’ (*Divi filius*) was frequently used in the East for Augustus in the expanding cult dedicated to him.⁵⁷ There was a temple to Augustus in Caesarea Maritima, Pilate’s usual headquarters. The mention of this title by the chief priests may well have given Pilate some concern about the status that Jesus’s followers were claiming for him.

⁵⁴ 1 Sam 9:17. The LXX translates: kai\ Samouhl ei]den to\ n Saoul kai\ ku/rioj a)pekri/qh au)tw~ | i]dou\ o(a1nqrwpoi o4n ei]pa/ soi ou{toj a1rcei e)n tw~ | law~ | mou. The allusion to 1 Sam 9:17 is more direct than Isa 52:13–14, which Udo Schnelle suggests (*Das Evangelium nach Johannes* [THKNT 4; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2009] 303). In support of 1 Sam 9:17 see Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel according to Saint John* (BNTC; London: Continuum, 2005) 466; D. Böhler, “‘Ecce Homo’ (Joh 19,5) ein Zitat aus dem Alten Testament,” *BZ* 39 (1995) 104–108.

⁵⁵ ‘...in den Augen der Welt erscheint Jesu Königtum als bloße Lächerlichkeit. Eine Karikatur und Jammergestalt, die ohne Gegenwehr die Schläge einfacher Soldaten erduldet. Der eigentliche Höhepunkt der joh. Darstellung folgt aber erst: Pilatus stellt den König der Juden seinem Volk vor’ (Schnelle, *Johannes*, 302).

⁵⁶ Rensberger’s suggestion that ma`llon means ‘instead’ or ‘exceedingly’ does not address the issue raised by the ingressive aorist—Pilate became more or exceedingly afraid, but why? (David Rensberger, ‘The Politics of John: The Trial of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel’, *JBL* 103 [1984] 405).

⁵⁷ LSJ s.v. ui9o/v; Thatcher, *Greater*, 84–85.

2. The Second Exit of Jesus from the Praetorium (19:13–15).

Once again Pilate returns to his headquarters and questions Jesus: ‘where are you from (po/qen)’ (19:8b–9).⁵⁸ Of the twenty-nine times that po/qen occurs in the NT, twenty-seven are in the Gospels, and thirteen of these (forty-eight per cent of the NT’s total usage) are in the FG. Pilate ignorantly asks the ultimate query in John – the whence of Jesus (7:27–28; 8:14; 9:29–30; 19:9). He responds by trying to release Jesus (19:12a).⁵⁹ Since v. 12 is the narrator’s comment, Piper argues that it indicates Pilate was genuine in his attempt.⁶⁰

Certainly the Jews take it seriously and play their main card threatening that anyone who claims kingship, or anyone who affirms such a claimant, opposes the eminence of Caesar (v. 12b).⁶¹ Releasing him would be, they argue, an affirmation of Jesus’s claims: ‘If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor’ (tou= Kai/sarov), that is, doing this would be an act of disloyalty by his personally appointed representative.⁶² And then they remind Pilate: ‘everyone who makes himself a king (pa~v o(basile/a e(auto\n poiw~n) is opposing Caesar (a)ntile/gei tw~| Kai/sari’, v. 12c, cf. v. 7).

On hearing these scarcely veiled threats, Pilate is coerced into action. He leads Jesus again outside and sits on the judgment seat (bh=ma, v. 13).⁶³ It is improbable on historical grounds that e)ka/qisen (‘seated’, v. 13) refers not to Pilate’s sitting (intransitive) on the judgment seat, but to Jesus being placed on it (transitive). It is not historically likely that a prefect, even in mockery, would place a Jew, especially one charged with treason, on the judgment seat.⁶⁴ John could have added au)to/n after the verb to avoid ambiguity; that he did

⁵⁸ After his dramatic exit from the praetorium, Pilate clearly has Jesus taken back into it.

⁵⁹ The imperfect (e)zh/tei should be noted. If it is inceptive, then the meaning is either that ‘he began seeking’ (Rensberger, ‘Politics’, 405) or that he ‘tried hard’ (NEB), but it may be iterative, ‘he kept on seeking’.

⁶⁰ Ronald H. Piper, ‘The Characterisation of Pilate and the Death of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel’ in Van Belle (ed.), *The Death of Jesus*, 151. Bennema puts his failure down not to any weakness in Pilate, but ‘because he underestimates the determination and shrewdness of “the Jews”’ (‘The Character of Pilate’, 251).

⁶¹ ‘Rather than the Johannine Pilate having succeeded in manoeuvring “the Jews,” “the Jews” have succeeded in trapping Pilate’. In fact, ‘Pilate has been forced to act to declare his own loyalty to Caesar’ (Piper, ‘Characterisation’, 151–52).

⁶² Brian E. Messner, “‘No Friend of Caesar:’ Jesus, Pilate, Sejanus, and Tiberius’, *Stone-Campbell Journal* 11 (2008) 47–57; Leung, ‘The Roman Empire and John’s Passion Narrative’, 439.

⁶³ The Lithostrotos or the Gabbatha on which the judgment seat was placed was a platform made of stone blocks.

⁶⁴ Barrett suggests that John is conscious of the ambiguity and intends the reader to understand that though Pilate sat on the *bēma*, Jesus is in reality the Judge (C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John* [2nd ed.; London: SPCK, 1978] 544).

not, indicates that the author was comfortable with the ambiguity and unconcerned about historical implausibility. However, whatever the nuance of the verb, the reader is certainly given the impression overall that Jesus and not Pilate is the true Judge.⁶⁵

The narrator reminds the reader that it was the Preparation day (Friday) of the Passover (Sabbath), about noon (19:14a). This was a day of high religious significance for the Jews, which adds a bite to Pilate's contemptuous acclamation: 'Behold your King!' (7!Ide o(basileu\vu(mw~n, v. 14b), which parallels his earlier 'Behold the man' (v. 5). Presumably Jesus is still wearing the regal vestments of a parodied king. This is Pilate's disdainful response to the Jews' warning against accepting in the slightest way Jesus's regal claims. They respond to Pilate's taunt with cries for Jesus to be taken away and crucified (v. 15a). Since the language and the response parallel their interaction recorded in vv. 5–6, we may assume that Pilate must have expected this reaction. This allows him scornfully to ask, 'Shall I crucify your King (v. 15b)'? This is greeted with the chief priests alone making the extraordinary assertion: 'We have no king but the Emperor (Caesar)' (v. 15c).

Pilate's taunts had achieved their vicious goal. The determined chief priests had declared Caesar to be their sole king. In the heat of the moment they had gone further than necessary. It was enough to denounce Jesus as their king; the chief priests had no need to affirm Caesar as their monarch. They must have put out of their minds the words of 1 Samuel 8:7 (NRSV): 'for they have not rejected you (Samuel), but they have rejected me from being king over them'. Their passionate rejection of Jesus as King had impelled them to make an exclusive confession of allegiance to Caesar in conflict with their faith (Judg. 8:23; Isa. 26:13; 44:6; Jer. 10:10; Pss. 47:6, 7, 8; 95:3; 145:1).

John has now reached a climax in his portrayal of the trial of Jesus. He presents two kingships in stark contrast, and the chief priests had made their choice. Jews were accustomed to

⁶⁵ 'Nicht Pilatus ist der Richter, sondern Jesus, und zwar dadurch, daß er nicht erkannt und anerkannt wird . . . Aber schweigend spricht er, indem er mit der Scheinkrone und dem Purpurmantel auf dem Richterstuhl sitzt' (Ernst Haenchen, *Das Johannesevangelium; Ein Kommentar* [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck)], 1980] 548); Sung Uk Lim, 'Biopolitics in the Trial of Jesus (John 18:28–19:16a)', *ExT* 127 (2016) 209–16.

having a king in their distant and immediate past, and whatever Caesar's reluctance in taking the title 'king', his eastern subjects had no hesitation in addressing him as a king, including the biblical writers.⁶⁶ The chief priests' confession must mean that for them Caesar had the exclusive *role* of a king, even if he did not apply that *title* to himself. The Jews' relentless adherence to their monotheism and their rejection of Caesar's image are now compromised. Therefore, Pilate immediately hands Jesus over to them to be crucified (v. 16).

The game is over. Jesus is no longer needed as the foil with which to goad the Jews. Pilate has got what he wanted; but then, so had the chief priests. The tussle between Pilate and the chief priests ends in a win-win: Pilate's scorn and baiting of them, traps them into making a blasphemous claim, which was the original charge against Jesus (Mark 14:64, cf. John 10:33, 36). However, the priests get their desired outcome too; Jesus is handed over *to them* to be crucified (19:16).⁶⁷

Given the social horror of crucifixion, the superscription that Pilate placed on the cross of Jesus was intended to insult the chief priests – and it worked. The cross was near the city on a major access road (19:20).⁶⁸ The title was in the three languages of Hebrew (Aramaic), Latin and Greek. Pilate wanted as many Jews as possible to see what Rome thought of Jewish messianic hopes. The text read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews' (v. 19). The intended insult succeeded and it stung the chief priests, who asked for the text to be modified to read that he claimed to be the king of the Jews. Pilate dismissed their request and said, 'What I have written, I have written' (v. 22). In Pilate's opinion, the hapless crucified figure was a king fit for the Jews.

⁶⁶ Notice the synonymous parallel of Kai/sarov and basile/a in Acts 17:7. In 1 Peter 2:13–14 basileu/v clearly refers to Caesar, for only he could be described as supreme and as sending governors. Furthermore, Josephus uses basileu/v for the Roman emperor (*BJ*, 3.351; 4.596; 5.58, 563).

⁶⁷ Bennema, 'The Character of Pilate', 251.

⁶⁸ Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion: In the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (Eng. Trans.; London: SCM, 1977) 50, 87.

VIII. Conclusions.

1. Despite paralleling Mark's Trial Narrative, the FG differs from it by having Pilate continuing his interaction with the chief priests and with Jesus after the scourging and mocking prior to his being handed over to the chief priests to be crucified.

2. Recent extensive studies of Roman crucifixion methods have confirmed the veracity of Mark's ordering of Jesus's trial before Pilate and thus to a degree John's basic sequence, as he parallels Mark (and Matt.) to quite a degree. The parallels are clear even though John differs in his location of the handing over of Jesus to be crucified, and his addition of Pilate's extensive interaction with the Jews and Jesus outside and inside the praetorium (19:4–11).

3. Efforts to resolve the tension between Mark and John's sequence of events in their respective Trial Narratives by suggesting a second minor lashing in Luke and in John instead of the severe scourging found in Mark and Matthew were found to be less than convincing.

4. The flogging of Jesus in the FG is the same severe scourging associated with Roman crucifixion as found in Mark and Matthew. Nevertheless, the FG's ordering of events in contrast to Mark should be listed:

- In contrast to Mark, John sets both the scourging *and the mocking* prior to Pilate's ending of his second interrogation (18:33–38; 19:1–3; 19:9–11);
- In contrast to Mark, John has the scourging and the mocking occurring out of the sight of the chief priests and their aides;
- In contrast to Mark, John leaves the crown of pointed fronds upon Jesus's head and the purple robe hanging across his lacerated back following the soldiers' mocking;
- In contrast to Mark, John uses the nouns 'king' and 'kingdom' most frequently in his Trial Narrative;
- In contrast to Mark, John makes the implications of Pilate's *Ecce Homo* explicit by repeating it in an unambiguous form, 'Behold your king' (19:5, 14, 15);

- In contrast to Mark, John does not have Jesus's inquisition in public, but mostly in seclusion until his two dramatic exits (vv. 5, 13) from the praetorium.

However, these differences are not random. For John all these factors cohere – after repeated and lengthy private exchanges between Pilate and Jesus (18:28–19:4; 19:9–11) – to help the reader to see a helpless and lacerated Jew dressed in burlesque royal vestments finally make a dramatic entrance to face his accusers for the first time as ‘the King of the Jews’. After a long trial, virtually *in absentia*, Jesus does not stride out with coruscating regal pride, but rather he staggers out ‘to the people in an unforgettable parody of kingly epiphany’.⁶⁹ However, in the final seventh scene (19:12–16a), Pilate, having brought Jesus out again, announces twice, mockingly no doubt (vv. 14, 15b), the fact of Jesus's royal status. John, in contrast to the Markan tradition, but without differing from its intention, has Jesus make two dramatic exits into the presence of his accusers as a true King, exultant in his humiliation.

Abstract

This essay proceeds through a series of integrated sections. First, the problem of the Fourth Gospel's (FG) positioning of the scourging of Jesus and the Roman soldiers' mocking of him in the midst of the trial is compared with Mark's account of the trial. Second, by drawing on contemporary sources the methods of Roman crucifixion are examined to provide a guide for interpreting the Biblical data. Third, the efforts to harmonize the FG with the other Gospels by suggesting it referred to a lighter lashing are examined and found wanting. The next four sections develop John's approach to the Trial as a drama; not as fiction, but as a creative reshaping of his data. By placing the mocking as well as the scourging of Jesus prior to Pilate's handing him over to be crucified allows the FG to climax the drama with Jesus finally exiting from the praetorium to face his accusers for the first time as their King (Messiah).

⁶⁹ Marcus, ‘Parodic Exaltation’, 74.