

My post a couple of weeks ago about the burial of Jesus (understandably) struck a nerve for some readers; I was just now digging around in the archives, and see that I addressed most of the important issues, head on, in this rather controversial post I made back in 2012. All these years later, I'm still open to being convinced otherwise!!!

In my previous post I quoted a number of ancient sources that indicated that part of the torture and humiliation of being crucified in antiquity was being left, helpless, exposed not just to the elements but to scavenging birds and other animals. These sources suggest that the normal practice was to leave the victims on the cross to be pecked and gnawed at both before and after death; in some instances there are indications that this would go on for days.

And so the question naturally arises if the same thing could be expected in the case of people being crucified in Judea around the year 30 CE. As I pointed out John Dominic Crossan maintains that this was indeed the case and that Jesus corpse probably met the same fate. I used to think that was a ridiculous position to take, but now I'm not so sure.

To decide the issue, one needs to consider the ancient evidence, not simply go on what your personal opinions are based on what you've always heard and read about Jesus being buried by Joseph of Arimathea. The question is whether it is likely that some such decent burial was allowed by the Romans. To answer the question one has to look for instances in which Romans allowed such a thing. To my knowledge - and I will be very happy indeed if someone can tell me of more evidence! - there are four pieces of evidence that can be cited, and are cited, to suggest that the Joseph story could well be historical. None of them, however, seems to me to apply .

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