On the Lost Circus of Aelia Capitolina*

Joseph Patrich

The circus — an arena for chariot racing — was a popular entertainment facility in the Roman world. Whether or not there was a circus in Aelia Capitolina is a matter of debate. Thus, in a map charting the results of the detailed study of the Roman city by the Dominican Fathers Vincent and Abel, a circus is marked adjacent to the SW corner of the Herodian temple platform (Fig. 1);[1] such a notation is not found on the maps of Germer-Durand.[2] On an early map by Avi Yonah, a hippodrome (the Greek equivalent of the Roman circus) is depicted farther to the south, in the course of the central valley — the Tyropoeon Valley.[3] Bahat, in his first published version of the historical maps of Jerusalem,[4] adds a question mark to Vincent and Abel's circus, but leaves it in place. In his later versions, no trace of a circus or of a hippodrome is to be found.[5] Similarly, no circus or hippodrome appears in a later map published by Avi Yonah,[6] or in maps by Tsafrir[7] and Geva.[8] The absence of any reference to a circus in the recently published

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1 H. Vincent and F.-M. Abel, *Jérusalem — Recherches de topographie, d'archéologie et d'histoire* II: *Jérusalem Nouvelle*, Paris 1914, 1-39 and pl. I. Similarly in a map accompanying Abel's entry on Byzantine Jerusalem, F.-M. Abel, 'Jérusalem', *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* 7, Paris 1927, cols. 2304-74, map on cols. 2305-06. Vincent and Abel's map was adopted, in a Hebrew version, by Sh. Yevin, *The Bar Kokhba War*, Jerusalem 1948, 137 (Hebrew).

2 R.P. Germer-Durand, 'Aelia Capitolina', *Revue Biblique* 1 (1892), 369-87; id., 'Topographie de Jérusalem II: D'Hadrien à Eudoxie. 1. Aelia Capitolina', *Echos d'Orient* 7 (1904), 65-73.

3 M. Avi Yonah, *Carta's Atlas of the Period of the Second Temple, the Mishnah and the Talmud*, Jerusalem 1966, p. 85, map 129. The hippodrome of the Second Temple Period Jerusalem model, constructed under Avi Yonah's guidance at the Holy Land Hotel, was located at approximately the same place. This is also its site (marked 'stadium') on the map incorporated in the entry 'Jerusalem', in B. Mazar (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Jerusalem 1970, 219 and 225 (Hebrew). Neither a hippodrome nor a stadium is marked on the maps in the English version of the *Encyclopedia*, published in 1976.

4 D. Bahat, *Jerusalem — Its Epochs*, Jerusalem 1970, map of Aelia Capitolina (Hebrew).

5 D. Bahat, *Carta's Historical Atlas of Jerusalem*, Jerusalem 1980, 25. D. Bahat and H. Rubinstein, *Carta's Great Historical Atlas of Jerusalem*, Jerusalem 1989, 52.

6 M. Avi Yonah, map of Aelia Capitolina in D. Amiran et al. (eds.), *Jerusalem Atlas*, Jerusalem 1983, map 3.8.

7 Y. Tsafrir, 'Zion — The South-Western Hill of Jerusalem and its Place in the Urban Development of the City in the Byzantine Period', Ph.D. Dissertation, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1975, 18, fig. 4 (Hebrew); id., *Eretz Israel from the Destruction of the Second Temple Period to the Islamic Conquest — The Archaeology and Art*, Jerusalem 1985, 60

Figure 1. Abel, 1927

History of Jerusalem marks the oblivion into which it has fallen.[9] Thus it is evident that, while in their earlier publications Israeli scholars (Avi Yonah and Bahat) followed Vincent and Abel, according to whom Aelia Capitolina had a circus or a hippodrome, the contrary opinion denying the existence of a circus has prevailed since the early seventies

(Hebrew), and more recently, id., 'The Topography and Archaeology of Aelia Capitolina', in Y. Tsafrir and Sh. Safrai (eds.), *The History of Jerusalem — The Roman and Byzantine Periods (70-638 CE)*, Jerusalem 1999, 115-66 and large map appended at the end of the book.

8 H. Geva, 'Jerusalem', in E. Stern (ed.), *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Jerusalem 1992, 680.

9 See note 7.

of the twentieth century (Avi Yonah and Bahat in their later maps, as well as Tsafrir and Geva). It seems that the shift of opinion may be attributed to Milik's study (see below).[10]

In using city maps, an important methodological point needs to be remembered: even when there is no doubt about the existence of a particular urban structure, if its location is unknown, and if there is no archaeological finding or clear topographical reference, such a structure will generally be omitted from a map. Such, for example, is the case of the theater in Aelia Capitolina. The theater existed in the city, according to the *Chronicon Paschale* (see below), and theaters were regularly located within the walls of a Roman city, not *extra muros*, but in the absence of a definite indication of its location it is not included in some of the maps.[11] However, the issue at hand here — whether or not a circus should be shown on maps of Aelia Capitolina — derives from differing interpretations of a literary source, as will be explained below; the circus is excluded from maps and texts not because of lack of archaeological evidence regarding its location, but rather because of differing interpretations of that source.

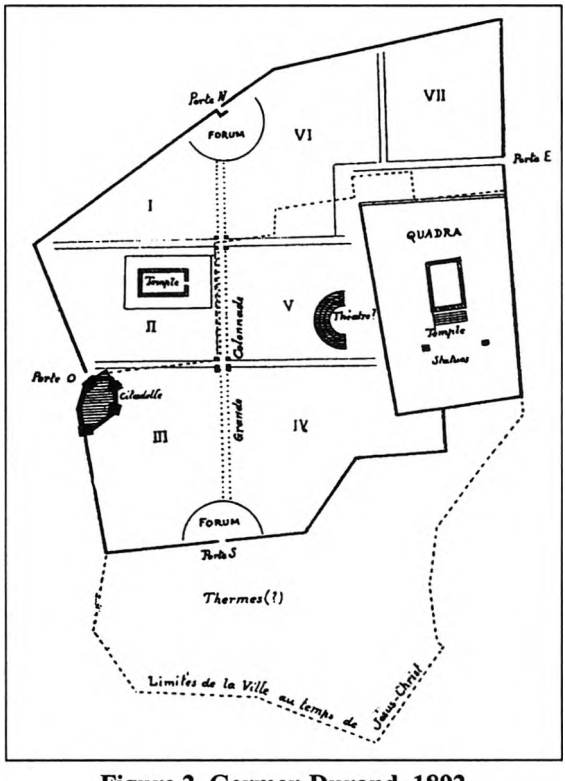

Figure 2. Germer-Durand, 1892

The source in question lists Hadrian's building projects in Aelia Capitolina, the Roman city which he founded on the ruins of Jerusalem. The passage is included in a document presented in the *Chronicon Paschale*, a seventh-century Christian chronicle written in Greek: 'And after destroying the temple of the Jews in Jerusalem, (Hadrian) built the two *demosia* (δημόσια), the theater, the *trikamaron* (τρικάμαρον), the *tetranymphon* (τετράνυμφον) and the *dodekapylon* (δωδεκάπυλον), which was formerly called *anabathmoi* (ἀναβαθμοί), and the *kodra* (κόδρα)'.[12]

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10 J.T. Milik, 'La topographie de Jérusalem vers la fin de l'époque byzantine', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph de Beyrouth* 37 (1960-61), 127-89, 175, 177 n. 1.

11 See works cited in notes 5, 6, 7 (1985) and 8.

12 *Chronicon Paschale* 1, 474 (ed. Dindorf, Bonn 1832); *Chronicon Alexandrinum seu Paschale*, col. 613 (ed. Migne, *PG* 92, 1865): καὶ καθελὼν τὸν ναὸν τῶν Ἰουδαίων τὸν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, ἔκτισε τὰ δύο δημόσια καὶ τὸ θέατρον, καὶ τὸ Τρικάμαρον καὶ τὸ

Demosia are public bathhouses. A *trikamaron* is a structure with three vaulted or arched rooms (or a building with three niches), and here the term probably refers to the *Capitolium*, a temple of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, which was erected on the Herodian temple platform,[13] presumably the *kodra* (a term derived from the Latin *quadra*, or square). A *tetranymphon* is presumably a fountain with four porticos, or four façades, or a fountain dedicated to four nymphs.[14] The most difficult term to understand is 'the *dodekapylon*, which was formerly called *anabathmoi*'. The interpretation of this term will determine whether or not there actually was a circus in Aelia Capitolina.

Dodekapylon literally means 'twelve gates', while *anabathmoi* are stairs. Yet the precise structure referred to is disputed. Some scholars have suggested that the reference is to the citadel of Aelia Capitolina, while others have opted for the temple of Jupiter and its gates, which was erected on the site of the Jewish temple.[15] Germer-Durand interpreted this passage as referring to the *cardo maximus* of Aelia Capitolina, which he regarded as a graded colonnaded street decorated with three *tetrapyla*.[16] Other scholars,

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Τετράνυμφον, καὶ τὸ Δωδεκάπυλον, τὸ πρὶν ὀνομαζόμενον Ἀναβαθμοί, καὶ τὴν Κόδραν. According to Orosius, Hadrian also restored the city walls of Jerusalem: *quam ipse in optimum statum murorum exstructione reparauit* (Orosius, *Adversus Paganos Historiarum Libri* 7.13.5 = p. 308 in the English translation, note 31 below).

13 The location of the Capitolium is a debated issue. According to Cassius Dio, Hadrian built a temple for Jupiter on the site of the Jewish temple: *Roman History*, 69.12.1 This statement of Cassius Dio is corroborated by later Byzantine sources of the 4th and 7th c. See: C. Mango, 'The Temple Mount, AD 614-638', in: J. Raby and J. Johns, Bayt al-Maqdis: Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem, I, (Oxford Studies in Islamic Art ,9), Oxford 1992, 1-16; B. Flusin, 'L'esplanade du Temple à l'arrivée des Arabes d'après deux récits byzantins', ibid., 17-31. J. Murphy-O'Connor, 'The Location of the Capitol in Aelia Capitolina', *RB* 101 (1994), 407-15, holds a different opinion. For the other literary sources see Y. Eliav, 'Hadrian's Actions in the Jerusalem Temple Mount according to Cassius Dio and Xiphilini Manus', *JSQ* 4 (1997), 125-44; and N. Belayche, 'Du Mont du Temple au Golgotha: le Capitole de la colonie d'Aelia Capitolina', *Revue de l'histoire de religion* 214 (1967), 387-413. A city coin, dating from the reign of Hadrian, depicts the Capitoline triad in a distyle temple. See coin no. 1 in Y. Meshorer, *The Coinage of Aelia Capitolina*, Jerusalem 1989. On the coins depicting a tetra style temple, Tyche is represented in the middle, flanked by two Victories. This is not a depiction of the Capitoline triad, as was assumed by Germer-Durand (n. 2), 379.

14 For a detailed discussion see Vincent and Abel (n. 1).

15 The citadel: M. Gregorovius; Jupiter's temple with its gates: G. Dalman; C. Schick; A. Schlatter and Père Nicole. For references, see Vincent and Abel (n. 1), 11.

16 Thus explicitly in his *Echos d'Orient* article (n. 2, 70). The interpretation in his earlier article (375-6) is less specific. Bearing in mind the oval shape of the depiction of Jerusalem in the Madaba mosaic map, Germer-Durand conceives Aelia Capitolina as comprising two parts (65-70, and the map on 67): in the east the compound now known as al-Haram al-Sharif, the construction of which he attributes to Hadrian, and not to Herod, with a Capitolium at its center, and in the west the city itself, surrounded by a polygonal wall, shaped like an oblong octagon, with a north-south colonnaded street down its middle, connecting the two *demosia* mentioned in the *Chronicon Paschale*, which he conceives as administrative buildings — the City Council Hall and the Praetorium — both basilical in shape. Vincent and Abel (n. 1), 11-12 rejected this theory altogether, on several grounds: why should three *tetrapyla* (the remains of which have not been found) be called *dodekapylon*? And

following Milik,[17] have interpreted *anabathmoi* as the graded street located on the course of the secondary cardo, which ran parallel to the Tyropoeon Valley down towards the Siloam Pool. This interpretation is expressed graphically in the maps by Bahat, Avi Yonah and Tsafrir.[18] According to this interpretation, *dodekapylon* referred to twelve arches which decorated the length of this street.

On the grounds that the word *anabathmoi*, commonly meaning stairs, could denote circus seats (a meaning already pointed out by Du Cange[19] and later by Reisch[20]), Vincent and Abel suggested that the term refers to the circus, hippodrome or amphitheater of Aelia Capitolina.[21] They maintain[22] that Hadrian restored and improved the Herodian hippodrome which existed in Jerusalem until the destruction of the city by Titus;[23] due to its size or its location it had escaped total destruction following the revolt. In their view, this structure continued to serve the garrison of the Roman legion stationed by Titus in Jerusalem, as well as the civilian settlement (*canabae*) established nearby prior to the foundation of Aelia Capitolina. This facility, they claim, was called *anabathmoi,* namely, graded seats, after the *cavea*. The Hadrianic reconstruction and improvements were followed by the change of name to *dodekapylon*. Vincent and Abel emphasized that the circus erected by Hadrian was inspired by the Circus Maximus in Rome, but they noted that there was no evidence that the Circus Maximus was ever known as *dodekapylon*.[24]

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why should we not see rather six groups of *dipyla*, two *hexapyla* or other combinations? Besides, grades are not required along the route of the Cardo Maximus, so why would this street be given the name of 'stairs' or 'grades'?

17 Milik (n. 10), as well as his article in *Revue Biblique* 66 (1959) 349, no. 42. Dalman mentioned this interpretation earlier (*apud* P. Thomsen, 'Das Stadtbild Jerusalem auf der Mosaikkarte von Madaba', *ZDPV* 52 [1929], 218, no. 35).

18 See works cited in nn. 5, 6, and 7.

19 See Du Cange's commentary to *PG* 92 (1865), col. 61h, which refers to the seats of the Red Faction in the hippodrome of Constantinople, mentioned in the *Vita Stephani Junioris,* an eighth-century Christian hagiography: 'Αναβαθμοί — *Gradus. .... nam alii sunt* ἀναβαθμοί *circenses, in quibus consistebant factiones. Vita ms. S. Stephani Junioris* 39: Ὁ δὲ τύραννος τὸν λαὸν συναθροίσας ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ τοῦ Ἱπποδρομίου πρὸς τοὺς ἀναβαθμοὺς, ἔνθα ἐπιλέγεται τὰ τοῦ Ῥουσίου — *ubi scilicet Russata factio circenses spectabat.* See M.-F. Auzépy, *La vie d'Étienne le Jeune par Étienne le Diacre* 39 (Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs 3, Variorum 1997, p. 139 [text] and p. 234 [tr.]); 40 (p. 140:4 [text] and p. 235 [tr.]). These seats were located near the *Kathisma*, the place where the emperors and their retinue sat. Yet Du Cange interpreted ἀναβαθμοί in the *Chronicon Paschale* as steps in crossroads, and not as ἀναβαθμοί *circenses*.

20 Reisch, ''Αναβαθμοί', *RE* I, 2015. See also Additional Note at the end of this article.

21 Vincent and Abel (n. 1), 11-14, and explicitly in the French translation of the passage in *Chronicon Paschale*, ibid., 6, in their concluding sentence on p. 12, and in their maps equating the circus with the *dodekapylon*.

22 Pp. 13-4.

23 Josephus Flavius, *Ant.* 17.255; *War* 2.44. In *Ant.* 15.268 an amphitheater is mentioned, but the general opinion is that the reference is to the same building (see, however, n. 44 below).

24 As expressed by the author, ibid., 14: 'J'ignore si le Grand Cirque fut jamais désigné par un vocable tel que "les douze portes"'.

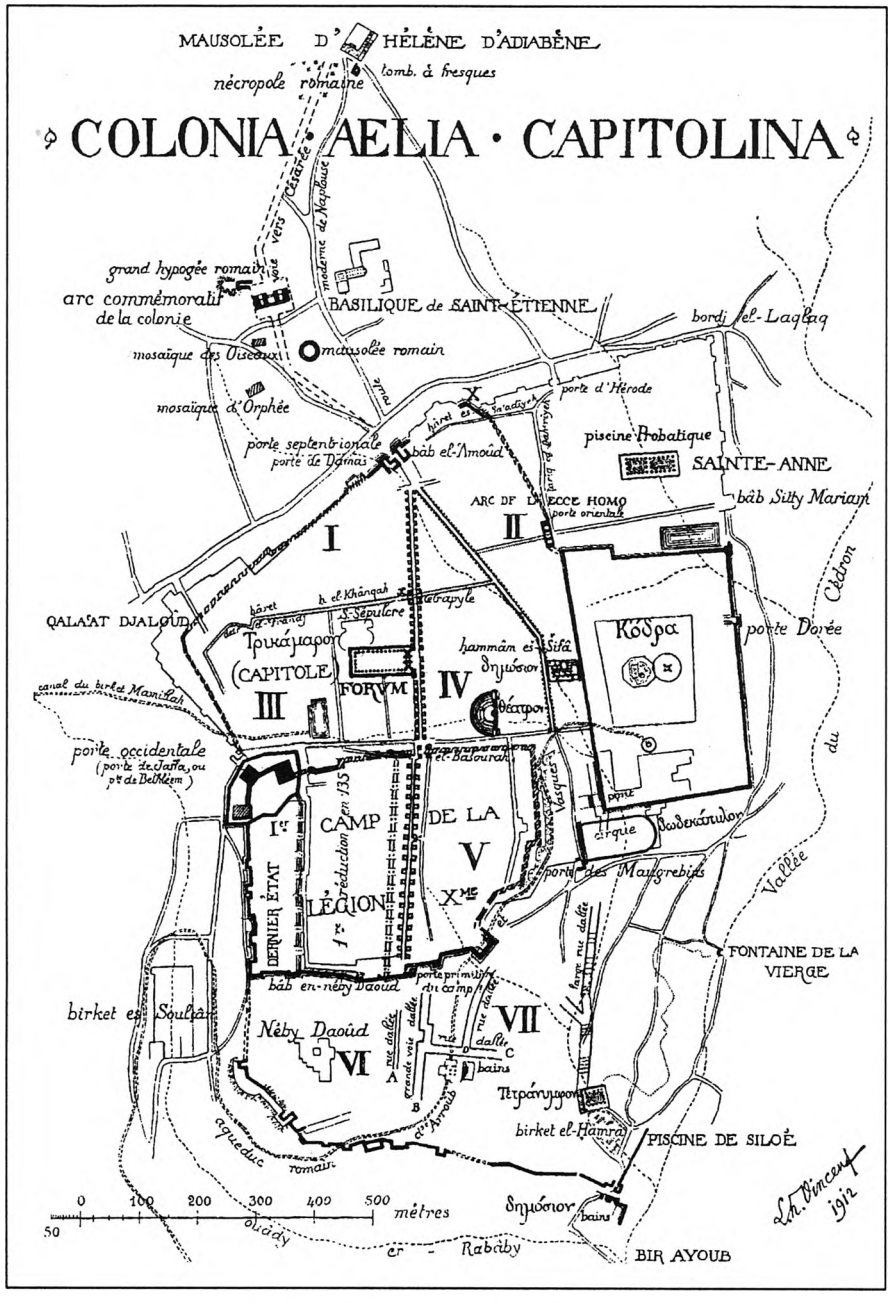

Figure 3. Vincent and Abel, 1914

I should like to argue here that Vincent and Abel's interpretation of the passage from the *Chronicon Paschale* is correct and that their arguments, based on the interpretation of *anabathmoi* as circus seats (*gradus circenses*), may be further supported by other testimony, including evidence indicating that the Circus Maximus, or one of its major components, was indeed known as *dodekapylon* ('The Twelve Gates').

The transliteration of the Latin *quadra* as κόδρα indicates that the chronographer (or his source) used a Latin source. It seems very likely that the phrasing of our passage originally contained the Latin words *duodecim portae* and *gradus*. As I have indicated, *gradus* was used in the second century to mean seats of a circus or amphitheater. As for *duodecim portae,* this is the precise name of the starting gates (*carceres*) of the Circus Maximus. This name is documented in sources ranging from the mid-first century BCE to the fourth century CE. The starting gates were called by this name even after a central, broad and high opening was added in the middle of the gates during Trajan's vast construction works, which increased the number of gates from twelve to thirteen. Two of the sources clearly indicate that the term *duodecim portae* was not only a designation of the number of stalls, but also the proper name of this architectural complex — the *carceres*.[25]

The expression *duodecim portae* first appears as a name for the starting gates and their vicinity in an anecdote describing an event, regarded as a portent, supposed to have occurred in 42 BCE, in which a mule gave birth at a site known as *ad duodecim portas*.[26] In a fourth-century Regionary Catalogue, a monument called *XII Portas* is listed among the structures of the eleventh region — *Regio* XI — the Circus Maximus district.[27]

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25 The sources (see below) are mentioned by J.H. Humphrey, *Roman Circuses — Arenas for Chariot Racing*, London 1986, 136-8 and notes on 650.

26 Julius Obsequens, *Liber prodigiorum* 70 (ed. A.C. Schlesinger, *Livy* XIV, 2nd ed., Cambridge, Mass. 1967, 237-319; ed. O. Rosbach, *Titi Livi Periochae* IV, Leipzig 1910, repr. 1973, 149-81): *mula Romae ad duodecim portas peperit.*

27 On Regionary Catalogues, see Humphrey (n. 25), 650 n. 38; S.B. Platner and T. Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, Oxford 1929, repr. Rome 1965, 198; E. Nash, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Rome* II, London 1968, 69 and fig. 756. It seems that Pliny, *HN* 3.66, in speaking about *duodecim portae* as a gate in the wall of Servius Tullius (578-38 BCE) in Rome, is in fact referring to this façade of gates, which gave Naevius, Varro and Festus the impression of a city wall. See Humphrey, 136. And indeed, the *carceres* seem to be located along the line of this wall (see A. Boëthius and J.B. Ward-Perkins, *Etruscan and Roman Architecture*, Bungay, Suffolk 1970, 86, fig. 52). In any case, only a single site in Rome mentioned in the Regionary Catalogues bore this name. The other sources listed by Humphrey indicate only that the Circus Maximus had 12 starting gates (as well as a central, broader and higher gate in the middle). These sources offer no evidence that *duodecim portae* was the proper name of the *carceres*. Thus, at the end of the fourth century, the Gallic man of letters Ausonius spoke of twelve gates and a central opening in their center, *Epistles* 13.11 (ed. H.G. Evelyn White, vol. II, London 1921, 42-3). In a poem contained in the *Latin Anthology* the twelve gates of the Circus Maximus were set against the 12 months and signs of the zodiac. See *Anthologia Latina* I.1 197.3-8 (ed. A. Riese, Leipzig 1894, repr. Amsterdam 1964). A similar interpretation was given in the sixth century by Cassiodorus, John Lydus and Malalas (*Chronographia*, ed. L. Dindorf, Bonn 1831, p. 175), and in the twelfth

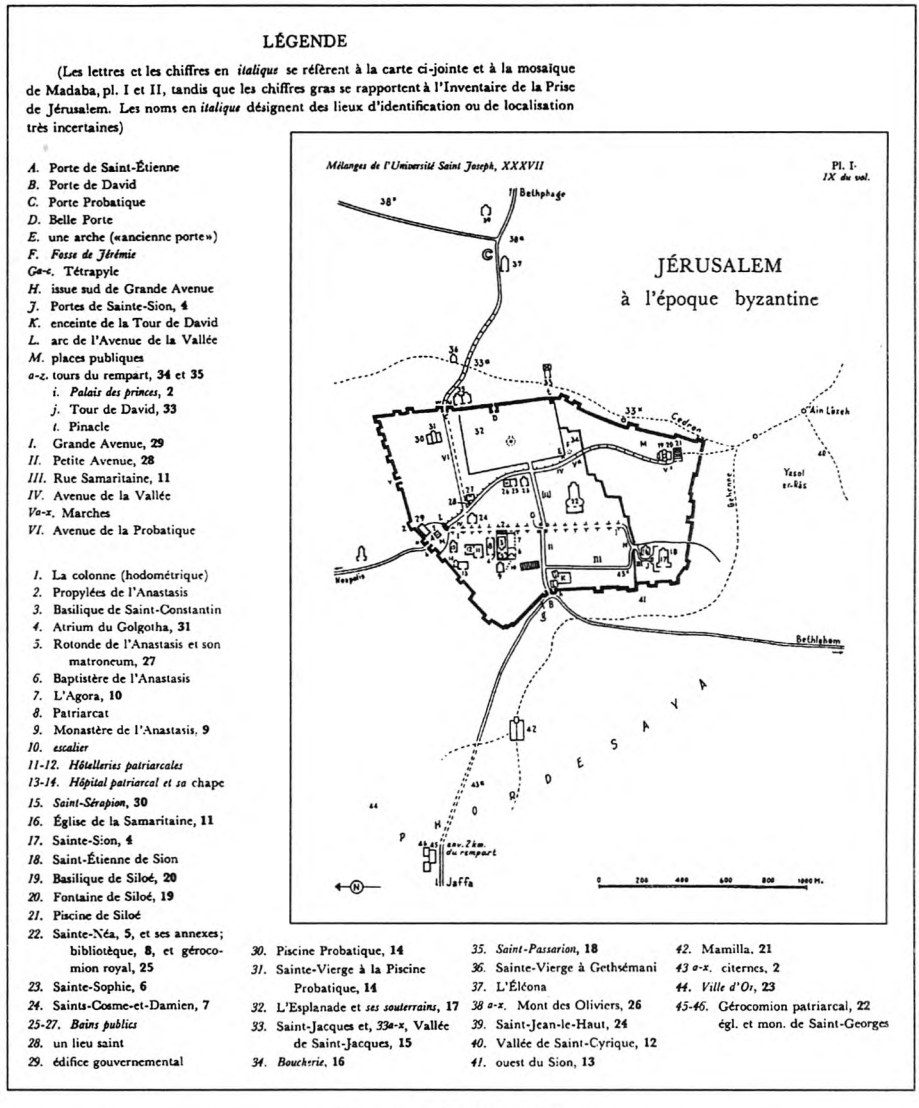

Figure 4. Milik, 1960-1

Thus it emerges that Hadrian added to the circus, formerly used by legionary soldiers, an elaborate complex of starting gates, similar to that of the Circus Maximus. There was nothing extraordinary about this. The Circus Maximus and its various components were the source of architectural inspiration for all circuses throughout the Roman empire. It is

century by Cedrenus (*Synopsis historion* I, ed. I. Bekker, Bonn 1838-39, p. 258). See also Guilland, n. 29 below, 383.

widely recognised that as a result many Roman circuses had twelve starting gates.[28] But the borrowing of a name is a different matter. As far as we know, none of the starting gates, or *carceres*, of any of the Roman circuses known to us was called 'The Twelve Gates'. Thus, for example, although it is agreed by most scholars that the *carceres* of the great hippodrome of Constantinople had twelve stalls, or starting gates, and that this architectural complex was known by many names, none of these was 'The Twelve Gates'.[29]

It is only in Aelia Capitolina that the *carceres* had the same name as those of the Circus Maximus in Rome. The *Chronicon Paschale* indicates that, in fact, this was the name given to the entire circus of Aelia Capitolina, replacing the former name of *Gradus*. We have here another example of a change of names associated with Hadrian's building projects, beyond the replacement of the name Jerusalem itself with Aelia Capitolina. It seems likely that the changing of the circus' name had symbolic and political significance as well, emphasizing the triumph over the Jews, just like the new name of the city and the replacement of the Jewish temple with the Roman Capitolium — wherever it was located (see no. 13). Such significance for the change is suggested by the fact that a triumphal arch with a single opening, erected by Titus in 80 CE, was incorporated into the other end of the Circus Maximus in Rome — the round end of the seats (*sphendone*). This arch bore a dedicatory inscription commemorating Titus' victory over the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem: 'The Senate and the people of Rome, to the Emperor Titus Caesar Vespasianus Augustus, son of the god Vespasianus, high priest, tribune for the 10th time, acclaimed imperator for the 17th time, consul for the 8th time, father of the fatherland, their ruler, for by following his father's orders and counsels and the heavenly omens he vanquished the Jewish people and destroyed the city of Jerusalem, which before him generals, kings and peoples had vainly attacked or not even tried to conquer'.[30] It seems that the arch of Titus, erected in order to commemorate another grand victory of the Romans over the Jews, is deliberately recalled in the new name for the circus of Aelia Capitolina. This is, in my view, the symbolic and political significance of this Hadrianic building project, and of the replacement of the circus' earlier name by a new one.

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28 Humphrey (n. 25), 171-2. We find *carceres* of 12 gates at many sites: Bovillaea (Italy, Augustan period), Alexandria, Merida (Spain, 1st c. CE), Lepcis Magna (2nd c.), Carthage (early 2nd c.) and Tyre (early 3rd c.). See also J. Patrich, 'The *Carceres* of the Herodian hippodrome/stadium at Caesarea Maritima and connections with the Circus Maximus', *JRA* 14 (2001), 269-83.

29 The *carceres* of the Constantinople hippodrome were known by the following names: μάγγανα, θύραι, ἀφετηρίαι, ἀψῖδες, κάγκελλα, βαλβῖδες, ὕσπληξ, but no Byzantine source mentions the number of gates. See R. Guilland, *Études de topographie de Constantinople Byzantine* I, Berlin 1969, 379-83; R. Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine — Développement urbain et répertoire topographique*, Paris 1950, 180; G. Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451*, Paris 1974, 322.

30 *ILS* 264: *Senatus Populusque Romanus/ Im(peratori) Tito Caesari Divi Vespasiani F(ilio) Vespasian[o] Augusto / Pontif(ici) Max(imo) Trib(unicia) Pot(estate) X Imp(eratori) XVII [C]o(n)s(uli) VIII P(atri) P(atriae) Principi Suo/ quod praeceptis patr[is] consiliisque et auspiciis gentem Iudaeorum domuit et urbem Hierosolymam omnibus ante se ducibus regibus gentibus aut frustra petitam aut omnino intemptatam delevit.*

The pagan nature of the reality of urban life, which included chariot racing and arena spectacles in Aelia Capitolina, continued into the fourth century. This reality is embedded in the first mystagogical catechesis of John II (387-417 CE), successor of Cyril as Bishop of Jerusalem, in which he praises the neophytes for renouncing the pomp (πομπή) of the Devil (Satan),[31] the theatrical shows, the chariot races, the arena combats and the temples of the idols.[32] The preacher, addressing his Jerusalemite audience, spoke of an urban reality which was familiar to his audience of local citizens.[33] This reality included chariot races. This is our second piece of evidence in favor of the existence of a circus in Aelia.

None of the few archaeological finds from Jerusalem indicate so far that a circus did in fact exist in Aelia Capitolina.[34] The faction of the Blues is mentioned in a

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31 On the renunciation of the 'Devil's Pomp' in the Christian baptismal liturgy, Piédagnel (see next note) refers to M.-E. Boismard, 'Je renonce à Satan, à ses pompes et à ses oeuvres', *Lumière et Vie* 26 (1956), 105-10; J.H. Waszink, 'Pompa Diaboli', *Vigiliae Christianae* 1 (1947), 13-41. Chariot races and amphitheatrical spectacles usually began with a solemn procession (πομπή) in which all chariots and combatants participated. The use of this term in the *catechesis* thus seems also to reflect the actual reality of the arena spectacles. John II (or Cyril) describes the spectacles in great detail. Gladiator combats and human fights against beasts took place in the circus at that time, just as in Herod's day (*Ant.* 15.268-74). According to Orosius, Julian the Apostate ordered the construction of an amphitheater in the city, *Adversus Paganos Historiarum Libri* 7.30.5 (*CSEL* V, Vindobonae 1882, ed. C. Zangemeister, p. 510; Eng. tr.: Paulus Orosius, *The Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, tr. R.J. Deferrari, Washington, D.C. 1964, 335). Julian, however, met his death on this expedition, and the amphitheater, as a structure separate from the circus, was never built.

32 For Cyril's text: *Catéchèses Mystagogiques*, ed. A. Piédagnel, *Sources Chrétiennes* 126, 2nd edition, Paris 1988, *Cat.* I, 6-8. For the attribution of these five *catecheses,* in their present redaction, to John II rather than to Cyril, see ibid., appendix I, 177-87. On the pagan reality of Jerusalem reflected in *Cat.* I, see G. Stroumsa, 'From Cyril to Sophronius: The Christian Literature of Byzantine Jerusalem', in Tsafrir and Safrai (n. 7), 425. Earlier, in the early 4th century, Eusebius tells us that the stones of the ruined Jewish temple in Jerusalem are taken for the construction of places of public spectacles (*Demonstratio Evangelica* VIII.3).

33 The claim that this sermon deals with a general renunciation of pagan practices rather than with the specific urban reality of Jerusalem, does not seem correct. The mystagogical catecheses were not intended to address all pilgrims and faithful present in the *Anastasis*, a cosmopolitan assembly of people (cf. the heterogeneous community described as gathered for the Dedication Feast [*Encaenia*], and for the Easter: *Égérie, Journal de Voyage*, 47-9, ed. P. Maraval, *Sources Chrétiennes* 296, pp. 314-19); rather, they were directed towards the neophytes, the new, recently baptized believers (although all believers could attend the ceremony and listen to the preacher). It seems reasonable to assume that most of the neophytes were people from Jerusalem and its surroundings, and it was thus appropriate to emphasize the immediate urban reality.

34 Among the oil lamps dating from the Roman period found in Jerusalem, there is a round discus lamp typical of the end of the first or the early second century showing a charioteer riding a *biga* on its discus (N. Avigad, *The Upper City of Jerusalem*, Jerusalem 1980, 204 [Hebrew]). It is not certain whether it is local ware, and this find alone can not constitute evidence for the existence of a circus in the city. A gemstone depicts a charioteer riding a *quadriga* and carries the Greek inscription Θελέ(μαχος) above, and another gemstone depicts a rider (O. Peleg, 'Roman Engraved Gemstones from the Temple Mount Excavations',

fragmentary Greek inscription found on a wall on the Via Dolorosa, near the Lions' Gate (adjacent to the nearby bath — Hammam Sitti Miriam), dated to the fifth or sixth century.[35] Two similar inscriptions have been found in Umm el-Jimal — a large town in south Hauran — and a third has been found in Taff — a village in northern Trachon[36] — all of which are sites with no hippodrome. Thus, the mere existence of such an inscription in fifth- or sixth-century Jerusalem does not in itself constitute indisputable proof of the continuation of such races in the city during these periods. And even if such races did exist, this circus was not among the celebrated circuses of the East.[37] However, the Blue and Green factions of Jerusalem are mentioned in the narrative of the Sabaite monk Antiochus Strategius (Eustratius) on the conquest of Jerusalem by the Persians in 614 CE. According to this narrative, the factions were identified by the colors of their garb. Some of them had arrived in the city recently,[38] while others had lived there before. Strategius condemned them as bands of villains who caused much trouble

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in A. Faust and E. Baruch (eds.), *New Studies on Jerusalem*, Proceedings of the Sixth Conference, Ingeborg Rennert Center for Jerusalem Studies, Bar Ilan University, December 7th 2000, Ramat Gan 2000, 133-65, and 11* [Hebrew]), but these private objects are also not evidence for the existence of a circus in the city. Similarly, the depiction of the Dioscuri on city coins (Meshorer [n. 13]), nos. 22, 23 [Antoninus Pius], 127, 129a [Elagabalus], and p. 28 n. 48), is also not evidence of a circus. The Dioscuri were patrons of horsemen and thus related to the circus (Humphrey [n. 25], 260-5), but they were also considered patrons of soldiers, and thus it is only natural to find them depicted on city coins of a Roman colony.

35 The acclamatory inscription reads: [Νίκα ἡ τύχη τῶν] (Β)ενέτον, π[ολ]λὰ τὰ ἔτη — '[May the Fortune] of the Blues [prevail]: may it live long', see P. Thomsen, *ZDPV* 64 (1941), 208, no. 10. The inscription was discussed again by L. Robert, *Hellenica* XI-XII (1960), 492, and is mentioned by A. Cameron, *Circus Factions. Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium*, Oxford 1976, 316, and by Y. Dan, 'The Circus and its Factions in Eretz Israel in the Byzantine Period', *Cathedra* 4 (1977), 138 (Hebrew). On the factions and their political role in the Byzantine city see also W. Liebeschuetz, 'The Circus Factions', *Convegno per Santo Mazzarino, Roma 9-11 maggio 1991, Saggi di Storia Antica* 13, 163-85. On their role in the public ceremonial, not only in Constantinople, but also on the municipal level, validating imperial power by acclamations, see Ch. Roueché, 'Acclamations in the Later Roman Empire: New Evidence from Aphrodisias', *JRS* 74 (1984), 181-99; eadem, *Performers and Partisans at Aphrodisias in the Roman and Late Roman Periods*, Leeds 1993, 143-56.

36 See Littman, Magie and Stuart, Robert, and Cameron (in previous n.), and A. Cameron, *Porphyrius the Charioteer*, Oxford 1973, 74-8, for similar inscriptions from other sites in Syria, Asia Minor and Crete.

37 The most famous circuses of the East were in Antioch, Laodicea, Berytus, Tyre and Caesarea. See *Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium*, 32 (ed. Rougé, *Sources Chrétiennes* 124, Paris 1966, 9-21). This composition is a fifth- or sixth-century Latin version of a fourth-century Greek source. See J.H. Humphrey, 'Prolegomena to the Study of the Hippodrome at Caesarea Maritima', *BASOR* 213 (1974), 31-45.

38 According to F.-M. Abel, *Histoire de la Palestine* II, Paris 1952, 389, they were refugees from the Syrian cities conquered by the Persians in 604-11 CE. For historical events in the East during that period, see also A.N. Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* (Eng. tr. by M. Ogilvie), Amsterdam 1968; Dan (n. 35), 139-40; Ts. Baras, 'The Persian Conquest and the End of the Byzantine Regime', in Ts. Baras et al. (eds.), *Eretz Israel from the Destruction of the Second Temple to the Muslim Conquest*, Jerusalem 1982 (Hebrew), 300-49.

for the citizens, in addition to having incessant quarrels among themselves. They assaulted and plundered the faithful and did not abstain even from bloodshed and murder. Their leaders had joined forces against the Patriarch Zacharias (609-14 CE), who was prepared to surrender and hand over the city to the Persians, but had been forced to give up this intention for fear of being killed.[39] It is possible that the inscription referring to the Blues, mentioned above, dates from this period — the reign of Phocas and the early years of Heraclius — a period of frequent violent clashes between the factions.[40] In the Byzantine period, the theater and circus factions of the Blues and the Greens acquired political importance and were involved in official and unofficial ceremonial acclamations in the presence of the emperor or his representatives. They were also organized as municipal militias and were entrusted with various urban tasks. It is true that none of this evidence refers specifically to chariot races. Yet it may nonetheless be argued that this cumulative evidence is enough to indicate that races did continue even at this late period under Christian rule.[41] We cannot be sure, since no mention of chariot races is

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39 There are four Arabic and three Georgian manuscripts of this composition: G. Garritte (ed.), *Expugnationis Hierosolymae A.D. 614, Recensiones Arabicae* A, B, CSCO 340-1, Scrip. Arab. 26-7, Louvain 1973; C, V, CSCO 347-8, Scrip. Arab. 28-9, Louvain 1974; translation in vol. 348, 74-5; id. (ed.), *La Prise de Jérusalem par les Perses en 614,* CSCO 202-3, Scrip. Iber. 11-12, Louvain 1960, text = vol. 202, II, tr. = vol. 203. For an English translation based on the Georgian version, see F.C. Conybeare, 'Antiochus Strategius' Account of the Sack of Jerusalem in A.D. 614', *English Historical Review* 25 (1910), 502-17, at 503-5. An Arabic version was published, with a French translation, by A. Couret, 'La prise de Jérusalem par les Perses', *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 2 (1897), 147-61.

40 This is also the opinion of Dan (n. 35), 139. Unrest associated with the factions started in the days of Bonosus, the loyal general of Phocas and *Comes* of the East, who tried to murder the Patriarch Isaac (601-9 CE).

41 Dan (n. 35), 138 n. 24, thought that these facts indicate that chariot races did exist in Jerusalem in this period. Strategius, however, when speaking of the Blues and the Greens, mentions their garb, not races. It is also noteworthy that no chariot races were included in the festivities that took place in the city when Heraclius himself returned the Holy Cross. Humphrey (n. 37), 36 does not accept the Greek inscription referring to the Blues as proof of the existence of chariot races. But Abel (n. 1, in *DACL*) did include a circus in his map of Byzantine Jerusalem. An interesting Jewish source mentioned by some scholars in relation to this period is the midrash about the Throne and Hippodrome of King Solomon in Jerusalem: L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* IV, Philadelphia 1913, 160-2, and notes in vol. VI, 298. Although during this period the city had a Jewish community, which was granted privileges by the Persians in the first years after the conquest, the hippodrome atmosphere with the four circus factions, as reflected in this midrash, originates in Constantinople rather than in Jerusalem under the Persian regime or earlier. In fact, the midrash is from the ninth or tenth century. See E. Ville-Patlagean, 'Une image de Solomon en Basileus Byzantin', *Revue des Études Juives* 121 (1962), 9-33, including a French translation. For the date — not earlier than the first half of the ninth century, during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Theophilus (829-42 CE) — see ibid., 16. Milik attributed this source to the Roman period, and thought it reflected Herod's hippodrome (J.T. Milik, 'Saint-Thomas de Phordêsa' et Gen. 14,17', *Biblica* 42 [1961], 77-84, at 83). According to Sharf it dates from the sixth to seventh century, A. Sharf, 'Byzantine Jewry in the Seventh Century', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 48 (1955), 107-8.

made in any of the abundant sources, of many literary genres, referring to Byzantine Jerusalem. It is possible that the races ceased around the beginning of the fifth century as a result of Church protests, as reflected in the preaching of Cyril or John, mentioned above. However, it is also possible that the reason for the silence of the sources lies in the location of the circus at some distance from the city walls (see below).

Indeed, where was the circus located? The hippodrome which stood in Jerusalem prior to the destruction of the city is mentioned by Josephus only once, in connection with the uprising against the Roman procurator Sabinus during Pentecost (end of May) of 4 BCE, at the beginning of Archelaus' reign, when, according to Josephus, a multitude of tens of thousands of pilgrims came to the city.[42] The pilgrims were stationed in three camps located outside the city walls. The hippodrome was adjacent to the southern camp.[43] Another topographical indication concerns the location of the Herodian amphitheater constructed 'in the plain' (ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ).[44] The festivities associated with its construction included horse and chariot races, so it is clear that it served also as a hippodrome.[45] These topographical data do not correspond with the location suggested by Vincent and Abel. According to them, the hippodrome was located in an east-west

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42 *Ant.* 17.254-64; *War* 2.42-54.

43 The location of the pilgrim camps: *War* 2.44. In the parallel section in *Ant.* (17.255) there is confusion between the location of the pilgrim camps and that of the strongholds occupied by the rebels during the unrest: the hippodrome, the northern portico of the Temple platform — as opposed to the fortress of Antonia, and the area around the Royal Palace and the tower of Phasael, where Sabinus and his Roman garrison were stationed. The locations of the northern and southern camps are given relative to the Temple, but it is evident that they were extramural compounds. On the Herodian hippodrome in Jerusalem, see also L.H. Vincent and A.M. Stève, *Jérusalem de l'Ancien Testament* II-III, Paris 1956, 709.

44 *Ant.* 15.268. Milik (n. 41), 83 n. 2, following the Latin text of Josephus, which speaks of erection of an amphitheater *in campo maximo*, proposes emending the Greek text to read: ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ μεγίστῳ ἀμφιθέατρον (an amphitheater in the Great Plain) instead of ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ μέγιστον ἀμφιθέατρον (a big amphitheater in the plain). The toponym *campus maximus* ('Great Plain') is, according to him, the Jordan Valley, referring to the amphitheater of Jericho (the sixth-century Latin translation of the original Greek of *Ant.* is preserved in a ninth-century manuscript; the Greek manuscripts date from several centuries later). The same reading had been suggested previously by Dalman, but rejected by Vincent and Stève (n. 43). The toponym μέγα πεδίον, or *campus maximus*, as used by Josephus and other ancient sources (Judith, Eusebius, the 'Bordeaux Pilgrim'), generally refers to the Jezreel Valley, not to the Jordan Valley. See Y. Tsafrir, L. Di Segni and J. Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani. Judaea/Palaestina*, Jerusalem 1994, 182. No Herodian amphitheater is known in that valley, so it seems that the Greek version should be preferred in this case.

45 Most scholars agree that the hippodrome and the amphitheater were one and the same structure (if indeed the one mentioned above by Josephus was in Jerusalem), both in the case of Jerusalem and in that of Jericho (*Ant.* 16.193-4; *War* 1.659-666). In Caesarea, Josephus speaks of an amphitheater (*Ant.* 15.341; *War* 1.415). Excavations have revealed a structure which served as a hippodrome as well. The complex of Jericho was also a composite structure, comprising a theater and a hippodrome, with a palaestra in their rear. For discussion and references (see n. 28); idem, 'Herod's Hyppodrome/Stadium at Caesarea and the Games Conducted Therein', L.V. Rutgers (ed.), *What has Athens to do with Jerusalem? Festschrift for Gideon Foerster* (forthcoming).

orientation, parallel to the southern wall of the temple platform, in immediate proximity to its SW corner (Fig. 1). However, in excavations carried out in this area, no remains of a hippodrome were found.[46] The location suggested by Avi Yonah — parallel to the course of the Tyropoeon Valley, at some distance from the SW corner of the Temple Mount[47] — does not fit Josephus' designation 'in the plain'. Ben Dov suggested that the hippodrome was located near Ein Rogel in the Kidron valley, to the south of the Siloam Pool. He claimed that early travelers saw there the remains of seats, which might have belonged to this structure.[48] Future excavations may confirm or refute this suggestion. Milik rejected Vincent and Abel's opinion about the location of the Herodian hippodrome.[49] From the *Targumim* (early Aramaic translations) to Gen. 14:17 — עמק שווה הוא עמק המלך ('the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale') — he concluded that the present-day neighborhood of Baq'a, identified by him as בקעת בית כרמא, 'Valley of the Vineyard', mentioned in *Gen. Apocryphon* 22:13-14, was known in that period (1st and 2nd century, prior to the Bar Kokhba revolt)[50] by the names: מישר פרדסיא, the 'Orchard Plain' (Vat. Codex Neofiti 1); בית ריסא דמלכא (אתר), the '(Site) of Beth Risa of the King' (Onkelos and pseudo-Jonathan); and מישר דחזוא (*Jerusalem Targum*), or משרה דחזוה (marginal note in MS Neofiti 1), 'Plain of the Vision' or 'Plain of the Spectacle'. 'Beth Risa' means, according to Milik, hippodrome, and the 'Plain of the Vision or Spectacle' is, according to him, the Valley of the Royal Theater, an interpretation which is also valid for an amphitheater.[51] If these Aramaic translations do indeed

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46 M. Ben Dov, *The Dig at the Temple Mount*, Jerusalem 1982, 181-2. Theater seats, albeit in secondary use, were found in this area during excavations. They may, however, have come from the theater, commonly located inside the city walls, rather than from the hippodrome, commonly located outside the city walls, as in Gerasa, or at the edge of the city. For these seats, see R. Reich and Y. Billig, 'Excavations near the Temple Mount and Robinson's Arch 1994-1996: Appendix: A group of Theater Seats From Jerusalem', in H. Geva (ed.), *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed: Expanded Edition 2000,* Jerusalem 2000, 350-2; iidem, 'A Group of Theatre Seats Discovered near the South-Western Corner of the Temple Mount', *IEJ* 50 (200), 175-84.

47 Avi Yonah (n. 3). If *Ant.* 15.268 does not refer to the amphitheater of Jerusalem, but to that of Jericho (above, n. 44), it is reasonable to imagine a location parallel to the course of the Tyropoeon Valley, nearer to the Dung Gate, in an area not yet excavated down to the Roman and Herodian levels, which may correspond to what Josephus (n. 42) tells us about the location of the hippodrome.

48 Ben Dov (n. 46), 182. However, he gives no reference to these travellers.

49 Milik (n. 41), 83 n. 2. He would rather locate the Herodian theater there.

50 For a short but useful review of the *Targumim* and their period, see E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.-A.D. 135)* I, edd. G. Vermes and F. Millar, Edinburgh 1973, 99-105.

51 Milik (n. 41), 81-4. In Greek Christian inscriptions and literary sources dating from the Byzantine period and cited by Milik, only the toponyms *Pordêsaya*, *Phordisia* or *Phordêsa* are preserved. These names make no allusion to the existence of a hippodrome or of an amphitheater in this area at that period, unlike the other, earlier toponyms. It is also worthy of mention that the LXX gives the word *hippodromos* in place of Ephrata in Gen. 48:7. The burial place of Rachel was 'in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem' (see also Gen. 35:19). It is quite possible that during the Hellenistic period there existed in this flat area, on top of the Judaean ridge, far from Jerusalem and to the south, a simple Hellenistic-type race

reflect an actual topographical feature of the city, it may be suggested that the Herodian hippodrome, which became the circus of Aelia Capitolina, was located in this area, at some distance outside the city walls.[52] In any event, in the absence of archaeological remains we may conclude that given the present state of research the location of this entertainment facility in the Herodian and Roman city must remain unknown. Literary sources, however, clearly indicate that a Roman circus did exist in Aelia Capitolina, as was suggested almost a century ago by Vincent and Abel. Even if the existence of this circus came to be forgotten in the scholarly literature, the evidence for it still survives. Thus we may add one to the list of Roman circuses in the eastern provinces of the Roman empire.[53]

Haifa University

Additional Note on ἀναβαθμοί

While Du Cange's sources, as well as the reference to be mentioned below, date from the eighth century, Reisch cites evidence from a second-century literary source of the use of this Greek term for seats in entertainment structures: Pollux, *Onomasticon* 4.121: τοὺς δ' ἀναβαθμοὺς καὶ βάθρα καὶ ἕδρας καὶ ἐδώλια and ibid., 4.132. Pollux was an author and rhetor in Athens under Commodus. His composition is organized in a thematic rather than an alphabetical order, and includes a collection of synonymous words, as in the present example. The *cavea* of the great hippodrome of Constantinople were commonly known as ἀναβάθρα. See Janin, p. 180, Guilland, pp. 379-83, Dagron, p. 553 (n. 29 above).

Another eighth-century source mentioning ἀναβαθμοί can be added to those referred to by Du Cange and Reisch. Here the reference is to the seats in the Kynegion — the great amphitheater of Constantinople: A. Cameron and J. Herrin (eds.), *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai* [= *Brief Historical Notes*], Leiden 1984, Ch. 28, pp. 88-91 (text and Eng. tr.), and cf. p. 205 (commentary to Ch. 29). Ch. 28 relates how two people came to the unused Kynegion in order to examine the statues that adorned it. While they were inspecting an inscription on the base of one of the statues, the statue collapsed and killed one of them. The second visitor (the narrator) feared that he would be accused of killing his fellow, as there were no eye-witnesses to the event — their escort, the mule drivers, had been left outside the ἀναβαθμοί. Cameron and Herrin thought that this referred to a flight of stairs through which the visitors had passed, but

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course, with no architectural structure. Eusebius and Jerome mention this under the entry Εφραθα/*Efratha*, specifying a distance of 4 miles from Jerusalem to the hippodrome (Eusebius), the site of Rachel's tomb. Jerome indicates that the word *hippodromos* is given by the LXX, and amends the distance from Jerusalem to the tomb to 5 miles. See E. Klostermann (ed.), *Eusebius. Das Onomastikon der biblischen Ortsnamen*, Leipzig 1904, repr. Hildesheim 1966, 82:13-14; 83:15.

52 C. Schick, *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* 1887, 161-6, believed he had traced the remains of the theater or amphitheater in Wadi Yasul, in the Abu Tor area, at a distance of ca. 550 m. south of the city wall of the Second Temple period. A sounding carried out by A. Kloner (*Hadashot Arkheologiyot* [*Archaeological News*] 50 [1974], 15 [Hebrew]) found no remains of these structures. Recently Kloner proposed locating the Herodian hippodrome in the Sultan's Pool (A. Kloner, 'Hippodrome/Amphitheater in Jerusalem', in Faust and Baruch (n. 34), 75-86, and 9* [Hebrew]). This location, however, does not fit Josephus' description.

53 Cf. Humphrey (n. 37) and id. (n. 25), 438-539.

such a flight of stairs is not mentioned in the text. I suggest that the correct interpretation is that the escort was left outside the amphitheater — an enclosure formed by an oval array of seats.

The Latin *gradus* had a similar meaning. In this connection *Mishnah, Abodah Zarah* 1.7 (ed. Rosental, 16-17), mentioning *grdwn* (גרדון), together with stadium (אצטדיא) and *bema* (בימה), is noteworthy. The term *grdwn* is regularly interpreted as a place of torture and execution, executioner's scaffold, gallows (M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, Philadelphia 1903, 265). According to S. Lieberman, 'Roman Legal Institutions in Early Rabbinics and the Acta Martyrium', *Jewish Quarterly Review* n.s. 35 (1944), 13-15, it was a small moveable platform, usually raised one step or more, where the accused were questioned in the hall of judgement. Lieberman maintained that it is equivalent to the *catasta* frequently mentioned in the trials of the Christian martyrs. And indeed, there are many passages in Rabbinic literature corroborating this sense. However, in the particular mishnah under consideration, especially in the light of its opening phrase: אין מוכרים להם דבין ואריות, "it is forbidden to sell them bears or lions", it should not be ruled out that *grdwn* could be conceived as equivalent to a stadium — namely, amphitheater — rather than as equivalent to *bema*, the raised seat of the judge. I am indebted to Professor David Rosental for bringing this *mishnah* to my attention and for suggesting this interpretation.

Another meaning of the word ἀναβαθμοί is that of an urban monument — a piazza with stairs where, both in Rome and in Constantinople, free bread was distributed to the citizens. In Rome this bread was known as *panes gradiles*, and in Constantinople as ἄρτοι πολιτικοί. See Cameron and Herrin, 205, with reference to Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* I, 696-701; G. Dagron (n. 29), 553; *Chronicon Paschale,* 531 (ed. Dindorf). In my opinion, this is not the meaning of the *anabathmoi* of Aelia Capitolina.