

THE MARTYRS OF CAESAREA: THE URBAN CONTEXT

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The archaeological excavations conducted in Caesarea over the last 30 years enable us to conceive better the Acts of the Martyrs of Caesarea in the urban context, and to examine several issues pertaining to the urban topography. Much of the new material so far has been published only in preliminary reports;¹ several of the large urban complexes were excavated by more than a single expedition, and the interpretation and chronology of some structures are therefore debated issues. But in spite of these difficulties, pertaining to the availability and interpretation of the archaeological data, there is room for the examination of the topographical details incorporated in these *Acts* in light of the new archaeological finds, even if not all may share my conclusions.

The Acts of the Martyrs of Caesarea are given by Eusebius, the future bishop of the city, in the *Ecclesiastical History* (=HE) and in much more detail in the *Martyrs of Palestine* (=MP),² recording “the persecution in his

1. For an updated archaeological survey of the Late Roman/Byzantine city, with further references see: J. Patrich, “Urban Space in Caesarea Maritima, Israel,” in: J. W. Eadie and T. Burns (eds.), *Urban Centers and Rural Contexts*, Michigan State University Press 2001: 77 - 110.

2. Eusèbe de Césarée, *Histoire Ecclésiastique* [text Grec, traduction et notes, ed. G. Bardy, Sources Chrétiennes 41, 55, 73 (Paris 1952-1967)]; Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History* (Gr. text and Eng. tr. by J. E. L. Oulton and H. J. Lawlor, Loeb Classical Library, London 1973). The Greek texts of *The Martyrs of Palestine* are given in Vol. III of Bardy's edition: *Histoire Ecclésiastique, Livres VIII-X et Les Martyrs en Palestine* - Sources Chrétiennes 55, (Paris 1967)]. The Syriac: Eusebius, *History of The Martyrs in Palestine* (Syriac text and English translation and notes by W. Cureton) (London and Paris 1861). Also consulted was the English translation: Eusebius Pamphilus, *The Ecclesiastical History* (English tr. Ch. F. Cruse) (London 1850, rpt. 1991): 349-78: The Book of Martyrs. The references below to the Greek text of MP indicate paragraph and page in Bardy's edition. The references to the Syriac text indicate page number of the Syriac text. I am indebted to Ofer Livneh for assistance in reading the Syriac. On Christian martyrdom see: H. Gregoire, *Les persécutions dans l'empire Romain*, Brussels 1950; G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, “Aspects of the ‘Great Persecution’,” *Harvard Theological Review* 47 (1954): 75-109; W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus*, Oxford 1965; H. Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, Oxford 1972; R. L. Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, Cambridge 1986: 419-492; P. S. Davies, “The Origin and Purpose of the Persecution of AD 303,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 40 (1989): 66-94; G. W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, Cambridge 1995; B. D. Shaw, “Body/Power/Identity: Passions of the Martyrs,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4/3 (1996): 269-312;

own days,” to which he was an eye witness.³ The work has reached us in two recensions, of which only the shorter is extant in Greek. The longer recension is extant only in a Syriac translation, the vernacular of Palestine, dated to 411 CE, and in some Greek fragments.⁴ Both recensions were the work of Eusebius.⁵ The long one, a separate treatise, was intended for the instruction of the people of Caesarea, who were eye witnesses to the events.⁶ Therefore, although preserved only in a redaction made about a century after the events, it is of the utmost interest, especially with regard to the urban topography. The shorter recension, intended for wider circulation, was incorporated by Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History*. Eusebius must have also published a collection of more ancient Acts, pertaining to the persecutions of earlier days, to which he refers repeatedly in his *Ecclesiastical History*.⁷ But this composition has perished, and thus there are only brief allusions to these events in the *Ecclesiastical History*.

The first martyrs of Caesarea were Ambrose, the patron and associate of Origen, and Protocletus, a presbyter. Both became martyrs in 235 CE,

D. Mendels, *The Media Revolution of Early Christianity. An Essay on Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History*, Grand Rapids, MI 1999: 51-109. On the persecutions at Caesarea see also: T.D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981): 148-163.

Another contemporary Latin source for the persecutions of Diocletian and his co-rulers is Lactantius's *The Death of the Persecutors* (*De mortibus persecutorum*, ed. S. Brandt, Vienna 1897; Eng. tr. W. Fletcher, *The Works of Lactantius*, Vol. II, 1871; Latin text with Fr. tr. - *Sources Chrétiennes* 39). Lactantius was an eyewitness of the events; living at the court of Diocletian in Nicomedia he had a first-hand information.

3. See explicitly his words in *HE* VIII.13.7.

4. The Greek fragments of the long recension were published by H. Delehay, *Analecta Bollandiana* 16 (1897): 113-38. The fragments are also found in Bardy's edition. On Syriac / Palestinian Aramaic being a vernacular of Palestine see: *Égérie, Journal de Voyage* 47.3-4 (ed. P. Maraval, *SCh* 296): 314-315 - in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre there was a priest whose task was to translate for the neophytes the Mystagogical Catecheseis of the bishop from Greek to Syriac; Procopius was an interpreter from Greek to Aramaic / Syriac - *MP* Syr.4, p. 4; Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 18, 38 (ed. Schwartz, Leipzig, 1939: 28, 56). See also *Vita Hilarionis* 22, 23, 25 and the discussion on these passages in S. Weingarten, *Jerome's World: The Evidence of Saints' Lives*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Tel Aviv University Nov. 2000: 81-82, 104-107

5. Bardy, *op. cit.*: 35-36; Cureton, *op. cit.*: i-xi: preface; J. Quasten, *Patrology* III, Westminster, MD 1990: 317-19.

6. J. B. Lightfoot, *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, Vol. II: 320-21; H. J. Lawlor, "The Chronology of Eusebius' 'Martyrs of Palestine'," *Eusebiana. Essays on The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphili, ca. 264-349 A.D., Bishop of Caesarea*, Oxford 1912 (reprt. Amsterdam 1973): 179-80; *idem*, "The Earlier Forms of *The Ecclesiastical History*," *ibid.*: 279-83.

7. *HE* IV.15.47; V. Pref.2; 4.3; 21.5.

1 in the persecutions under Maximin.⁸ Origen's treatise *On Martyrdom* was
2 dedicated to their memory. Origen, who made Caesarea his residence after
3 leaving Alexandria, found refuge in Cappadocia during this period. But 15
4 years later, in the persecution under Decius, he was imprisoned and tortured
5 severely on the rack in Caesarea.⁹ A short while later he died. Under Va-
6 lerian, in the persecution of 258, three martyrs of the countryside, Priscus,
7 Malchus, and Alexander, and a woman of the sect of Marcion, were cast to
8 the wild beasts.¹⁰ Under Gallienus, in the persecution of 260 CE, Marinus
9 was beheaded by the governor Achaeus. His act was not a typical one, but
10 it illustrates the role of the governor as a judge. Marinus, distinguished by
11 birth and wealth, was an officer in the army. He wished to be promoted and
12 become a centurion. During the process, before the tribunal (*bema*) presi-
13 ded over by the judge-governor, who was also the commander-in-chief of
14 the army, he was accused by another officer of being a Christian who did
15 not sacrifice to the emperors. After an interrogation the hearing was po-
16 stponed, and Marinus was given three hours to reflect. After the appointed
17 time was over he was summoned again by the herald (*kerux*) to the court
18 of justice (*dikasterion*). Refusing to repudiate his faith, he was beheaded
19 straightaway.¹¹ In the same *dikasterion* the later martyrs were sentenced
20 after being imprisoned in the same compound where Origen (and earlier
21 St. Paul¹²) were.

22 Persecutions were resumed in 303-311 CE under Diocletian and his
23 successors - Galerius and Constantius as Augusti and Maximinus Daia and
24 Severus as Caesars - who assumed the government on May 1st 305, upon
25 the abdication of Diocletian and his co-ruler Maximian. Maximinus ruled
26 the prefecture of Oriens, in which the province *Syria Palaestina* was in-
27

28 ———
29 8. *HE* VI.28, LCL p. 81. No martyrs are recorded for the persecutions under Septimius
30 Severus in 203 CE. A few years earlier, ca. 190, the Quatrodeciman synod was convened
31 in Caesarea, at which bishop Theophilus was the leading personality. There are only few
32 details about the local Church from year 60, when St. Paul was dispatched in a ship from
33 Caesarea to Rome, to the convening of the Quatrodeciman synod. See I. L. Levine, *Caesarea under Roman Rule*: 127-34. Only 9 bishops are recorded up to the episcopate of
34 Eusebius (315/16 - 339). See: Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis*, Padova 1988,
35 p. 1014. To his list should perhaps be added as Eusebius's immediate predecessor Agricola,
36 who subscribed to the synod of Ancyra in 314 CE, according to the Latin minutes of that
37 synod (Bardy, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Valesius, in: Cruse, *op. cit.*, p. x).

38 9. *HE* VI.39, LCL p. 95.

39 10. *Ibid.* VII.12: 167-69.

40 11. *Ibid.* VII.15: 171-73.

12. *Acts* 21:15-27:1; see also: J. Patrich, "A Chapel of St. Paul at Caesarea Maritima?" *Liber Annuus* 50 (2000): 363-382 and Pls. 27-30.

cluded. The number of martyrs in Palestine during this period was 83. Far more numerous was the number of confessors. There were also Christians who had renounced their faith and apostatized, unable to bear the hardship and torture. Eusebius was at that time already a presbyter of the church of Caesarea. There are no clear details how he managed to escape the fate of his confrere Pamphilus and his circle, but it is certain that he did not renounce his faith and sacrifice.¹³ Sometime after 307 he escaped to Tyre, and later to the Thebaid in Upper Egypt, and to Alexandria, becoming an eye witness to and a reporter of the massacre of Christians there as well.

According to Lawlor, a careful examination of the chronology indicates that at Caesarea the persecution took the form of five intermittent onslaughts on the Church, of which four were initiated by imperial edicts and the fifth by a visit by Maximinus himself to Caesarea for the celebration of his birthday. Each assault was followed by a period of inactivity; in all they lasted no more than three years and a half.¹⁴ Thereafter a similar time elapsed until the end of the persecution. But even in the intervals that were free of martyrdoms there was persecution of a sort: the Christians were not allowed full liberty of worship, and confessors who had been imprisoned were not released (Pamphilus and his companions were kept in prison about two years, as was Agapius).¹⁵

The urban context

Caesarea was the capital of the province of *Syria Palaestina*, the seat of the provincial governor. Edicts issued by the tetrarchs ordered the leaders (*archontes*) of each city to ensure that all Christians in each city sacrificed and offered libations. In Caesarea, by the order of the governor, public heralds (*kerukes*) called upon men, women, slaves, and even children to assemble in the pagan temples. In addition, the tribunes (*chiliarchoi*) and centurions summoned them by name, according to a list of citizens, going

13. Lightfoot, *op. cit.*: 311-12; Valesius, in: Cruse, *op. cit.*: ix-x; Bardy, *op. cit.*: 30-33; Quasten, *op. cit.*, p. 310. His accusation of apostasy occurred only at the Council of Tyre of 335, made by his opponents.

14. Lawlor, "The Chronology of Eusebius ..." (*supra*, n. 6), p. 210. The first lasted about six months, from June to November 303. The second and third seem to have been very brief, and may be dated respectively March 305 and March-April 306. The fourth was much the longest, continuing for about a year and eight months, from November 307 to July 309. The last covered some five months, from November 309 to March 310.

15. *Idem, ibid.*

1 from house to house in all quarters (*amphoda*).¹⁶ Those who violated these
 2 orders were brought to be interrogated and sentenced before the governor
 3 in the law court located in his *praetorium*. During their trial they were also
 4 imprisoned, and tortured in the *praetorium*. Apart from this seat of power,
 5 the gates, streets, porticos, and entertainment structures of Caesarea are all
 6 mentioned in the *Acts*.

9 Walls and Gates:¹⁷

11 Some of the non-local martyrs and confessors were arrested by the guards
 12 in front of the city gates (πρὸ τῶν τῆς πόλεως πυλῶν), before entering
 13 the city. These were Procopius of Scythopolis, Adrianus and Eubulus from
 14 Batanea, and five Egyptians.¹⁸

15 Two semicircular city walls are still recognizable beyond the rectilinear
 16 shorter line of the Arab-Crusader wall (Fig. 1). The inner line is Herodian
 17 and the outer Byzantine. The Herodian fortification line was abandoned in
 18 mid-4th century. The Roman city, extending beyond the Herodian wall, had
 19 no outer wall for more than three centuries. Caesarea acquired a new wall
 20 only in the fifth century. The road system emerging from the city suggests
 21 the existence of four gates. The southern one was a monumental triple-en-
 22 trance gate.¹⁹ A Greek inscription from a Roman monumental arch referring
 23 to the city as metropolis, a rank granted to the city by Alexander Severus,
 24 was uncovered near the conjectured location of the east gate,²⁰ indicating
 25 that as in the case of Gerasa, Jerusalem, Scythopolis, Gadara (and Athens),

29 16. *MP* Gr. IV.8 - p. 131 (the long recension is more detailed); IX.2 - p. 148. See also G.
 30 E. M. de Ste Croix, "Aspects," 99, 112-113.

31 17. Patrich, *supra* n. 1, p. 84-86, with references.

32 18. *MP* Syr. 4 - p. 4 (Procopius); *MP* Syr. 48 - p. 45; Gr. XI.29 - p. 168 (Adrianus and Eu-
 33 bulus); *MP* Syr. 43 - p. 40; Gr. XI.6 - pp. 157-58 (Egyptians). Three other Egyptians were
 34 similarly arrested at the Gates of Ascalon - *MP* Syr. 38, Gr. X.1 - p. 151. The Syriac (4 - p.
 35 4) renders: *thr'aya dmdyntha* and (43 - p. 40): *bth_a dqsrya mdyntha*. Arrest and interro-
 36 gation by the guards (φυλακές) are mentioned in the case of the Egyptians in Caesarea and
 37 Ascalon, and of Adrianus and Eubulus.

38 19. Thus M. Peleg and R. Reich, "Excavation of a Segment of the Byzantine City Wall of
 39 Caesarea," *Atiqot* 21 (1992) 137-70, but recent IAA excavations suggest that this was the
 40 royal entrance of a theatre stage. If so, the southern gate in the Byzantine city wall, running
 more to the south, has still not been uncovered.

20. F. M. Abel and A. Barrois, "Fragment de Césarée la metropole," *Révue Biblique* 40
 (1931) 294-95.

the limits of the city were indicated by a monumental arch long before a city wall was actually constructed. Procopius, Adrianus, and Eubulus were apparently arrested at this gate, as it is located on the road from Batanea and Scythopolis to Caesarea. The five Egyptians were presumably arrested at the north gate, since they were on their way back home to Egypt from Cilicia. The north Byzantine gate disappeared, being eroded by the sea. Topographically, it must have laid at a lower elevation above sea level relative to the Herodian/Early Roman north gate, exposed by the Italian expedition. Here, as well, like in the east, a gate without a wall might have marked the outskirts of the expanded city, although the Herodian/Early Roman north gate might still have been in use.

The corpse of another martyr, Apphianus, cast with stones into the sea, was vomited back by a storm (*tsunami*) following an earthquake, washed ashore by the waves, and deposited before the gate of the city.²¹ This may have been perhaps the northern extramural gate mentioned above, located near the sea shore. The Herodian/Early Roman north gate is located too high above sea level.

Eusebius defines the earthquake, that occurred on April 2, 306 as extraordinary and severe (παράδοξος σειμὸς, *ῥω' a qshya*). It made the entire city to tremble, and people supposed that the whole place, together with its inhabitants, was about to be destroyed on that day. But neither casualties, nor damages are recorded. It seems, therefore, that it was not devastating for Caesarea.²² The effects of this earthquake have not been recognized so far in the archaeological excavations at the site.

21. *MP* Syr. 18 - p. 17 (Epiphanius), Gr. IV.15 - 135-36 (Apphianus). The πρόπυλοι in the long recension may suggest a more articulated and architecturally elaborate city gate, unless it refers to a square or a piazza in front of the gate. Eusebius emphasizes that he was an eyewitness to this prodigy. The burial of some other martyrs was forbidden by the order of governor Urbanus, their corpses being left outside the city gates as prey for beasts and birds (*MP* Gr. IX.11 - p. 151, Syr.34 - p. 33: Ennathas / Mannathus and others). For refusal of burial by the Roman authorities cf. *HE* V.1.59-62 - LCL pp. 435-37, pertaining to the devoured and charred corpses of the Martyrs of Lyons and Vienne.

22. Eusebius, *Chronicon* (Migne, PG 27: 664) mentions a terrible earthquake which destroyed many buildings in Tyre and Sidon and crushed innumerable people. In a marginal note in Migne's edition the date 306 CE is given to this event. If correct, one would expect that the earthquake at Caesarea at that same year, recorded by him in *MP*, will also be mentioned. K. W. Russell, "The Earthquake Chronology of Palestine and Northwest Arabia from the 2nd through the Mid-8th Century A.D." *BASOR* 260 (1985): 37-59, suggested on p. 42, that a date ca. 303 may be more correct for the earthquake that had struck Tyre and Sidon. The earthquake at Caesarea in 306 is not mentioned either by Russell, *ibid.*, or in: Emanuela Guidoboni, A. Comastri, and G. Traina, *Catalogue of Ancient Earthquakes in the Mediterranean Area up to the 10th Century* (tr. from the Italian by B. Phillips), Rome 1994.

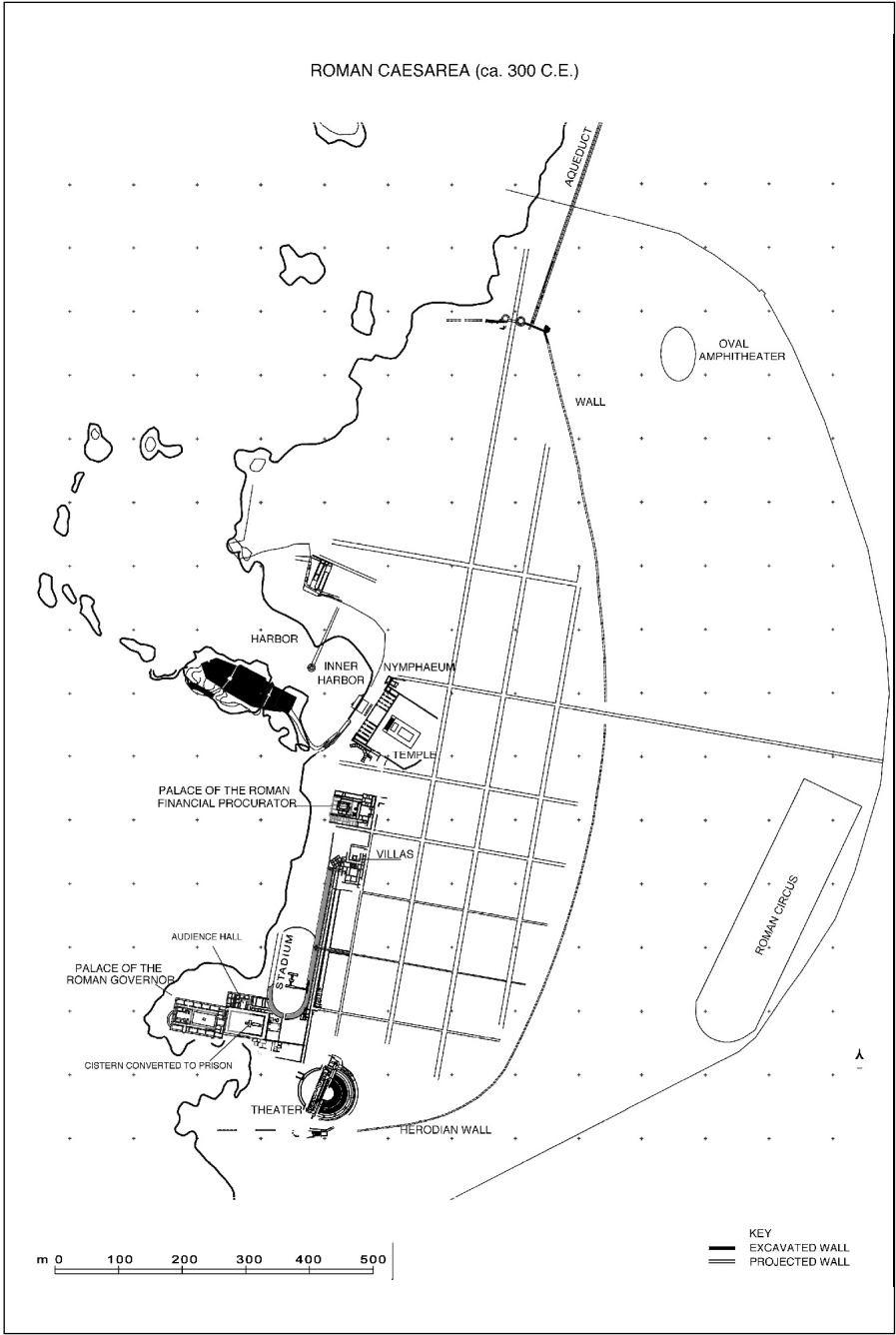


Fig. 1: Map of Caesarea in the Roman period.

Procopius was put to death on June 7th 303, was the first martyr of Caesarea under Diocletian. He was a lector, an interpreter from Greek into Aramaic, and exorcist of the church of Scythopolis. His *Acts* are typical in their outlines. He was first brought to be interrogated before the tribunal of the governor. Refusing to sacrifice to the gods, or offer libations to the four emperors, he was beheaded.²³

The most renowned martyr of Caesarea was Pamphilus, a priest and admired teacher of the local church, head of the Christian academy founded by Origen, and friend of Eusebius, after whom he called himself Eusebius Pamphili. Pamphilus and his household and students were put to death in 309 CE, after a confinement of two years and many tortures of all sorts.²⁴

The right to inflict a death penalty - the *ius gladii* - belonged to the provincial governor.²⁵ The law court was a wing of the *praetorium* of the Roman governor at Caesarea. He presided over the court of justice in such affairs, and therefore the governor (*hegemon*) is regularly referred to as the judge (*dikastes*). The Christians were brought to his tribunal (*dikasterion*), where he interrogated them about their name, place of origin, family, and faith. But the governor held assizes in other cities, as in the case of the martyrs and confessors sentenced in Gaza, Lud/Lydda, and Ascalon.²⁶

The degree of harshness with which the edicts were imposed on the Christians in each province depended greatly on the provincial governor. Three governors were in office in Caesarea during this period: Flaminius

23. *MP* Gr. I.1-2; *Syr.* 3-5.

24. *MP*. Gr. XI.1-3, *Syr.* 26-28, 38-42. The long recension of the martyrdom of Pamphilus, first published in *Analecta Bollandiana* 16 (1897): 129ff., is reproduced by Bardy, *op. cit.*: 153-56. Eusebius wrote an account of his life, now lost. See: *HE* VI.32.3; VII.32.25; *MP*, *ibid.*

25. P. Garnsey, "The Criminal Jurisdiction of Governors," *Journal of Roman Studies* 58 (1968), p. 51f. See also A. Schalit, *The Roman Rule in Eretz Israel*, Tel Aviv 1937: 91-93, 98-99 (Hebrew).

26. *MP* Gr. III.1, *Syr.* 9-10 (Gaza); *Syr.* 29 (Lud/Lydda; it is said there that the Greek name of the city is Diocaesarea, instead of Diospolis; the Gr. recension omits any city name; only the territory of the Jews is indicated); *Syr.* 37-8 (Ascalon). The trials in Zauara/Zoora and Phaeno (*Syr.* 49-50) was by the *dux*. On assizes held by the governors while on an administrative itinerary in the province, see: G. P. Burton, "Proconsuls, Assizes and the Administration of Justice under the Empire" *JRS* 65 (1975): 92 - 106; L. Di Segni, "Metropolis and Provincia in Byzantine Palestine", in: A. Raban and K. G. Holum (eds.), *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective after Two Millennia* (Leiden-New York-Köln 1996): 575-592. See also: S. Ronchey, "Les procès-verbaux des Martyres Chrétiens dans les *Acta Martyrum* et leur fortune," *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome. Antiquité* 112 (2000): 723-752.

(303-4), Urbanus (304-7), and Firmilianus (308-9).²⁷ The governors had an escort of military bodyguards (περὶ τὸν ἡγεμόνα στρατιωτικὸν στίφος)²⁸ while walking in the city. Soldiers were also on guard outside the law court, where the prisoners sat awaiting their trial.²⁹

The *Praetorium* of the governor

Herod's palace, constructed on a promontory to the south of the harbour, was enlarged and elaborated, becoming the *praetorium* of the Roman governors. According to the inscriptions the *praetorium* was still in full activity under the tetrarchy.³⁰ It housed the hall of justice (*dikasterion*).³¹

The archaeological excavations carried out in Caesarea since the mid 1970s have brought to light the entire complex, including the law court (*dikasterion* of the *Acts of the Martyrs*), with a permanent elevated platform (*bema*) at its inner end.³² A small altar (βωμός) with a sacrificial fire

27. Urbanus and Firmilianus, each in his turn, were finally put to death at the orders of the emperors: *MP Gr.* VII.7 - p. 143-44 (Urbanus), XI.31 - p. 168 (Firmilianus).

28. *MP Gr.* IV.8 - p. 132. See also II.4 - p. 127; IV.10 - p. 133; VII.7 - p. 143. Being a military escort, it should be differed from the escort of civilian *lictores*, mentioned also in a contemporary Rabbinic source (PT Megilla, III.2, 74a). The *lictores*, five in number, were the only civilian *apparitores* allocated during the Principate to a *legatus Augusti pro praetore*, see B. Rankov, "The Governor's Men: The *Officium Consularis* in Provincial Administration," in: *The Roman Army as a Community*, [Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplement Series 34] (1999): 15-34, p. 17). Military bodyguards serving in the *officium* of a governor were the legionary *protectores* and the *singulares*, who were auxiliaries (Rankov, *ibid.*, p. 22). The escort under discussion seems to be composed of such soldiers, presumably the legionary *protectores*.

29. *MP Gr.* VII.2 - p. 141; XI.20 - p. 164.

30. B. Burrell, "Two Inscribed Columns from Caesarea Maritima," *ZPE* 99 (1993), 287-95.

31. For *dikasterion* see: *MP Gr.* I.1 - p. 122; IV.11 - p. 133; VII.1 - p. 140, including the long Gr. recension, here preserved. The Syriac (16 - Cureton, p. 15) renders *byth dyna*, or *dyqstry*n (31 - Cureton, p. 29).

32. Roman legal institutions referred to in the *Martyrs of Palestine* (and the contemporary Rabbinic literature) were discussed in great detail by Lieberman, and there is no need for a repetition here. See: S. Lieberman, "Roman Legal Institutions in Early Rabbinics and the *Acta Martyrum*," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 35 (1944): 1-57. The platform (*bema*) of the judge is mentioned in *MP Gr.* VII.7 - p. 143 (the judge hands down his verdict from the elevated platform - ἐφ' ὑψηλοῦ βήματος δικάζων, surrounded by a guard of soldiers); IX.8 - p. 150. See also *HE* VIII.9.5 - LCL, p. 276-77, referring to the persecutions in the Thebaid. I am of the opinion that the law court of the *Acts of the Martyrs* is the same hall

(ἡ πυρά) burning on it was also located inside.³³ A large prison can also be identified in this huge complex.³⁴

The *praetorium* extended over two terraces with a difference of elevation of ca. 3.6m. The lower terrace served as the private wing. It occupied a natural promontory, extending 100m into the Mediterranean. The upper terrace, on an upper part of the promontory, and of a slightly different orientation, served as the public wing. It was built around a vast courtyard surrounded by porticoes.³⁵ A raised square platform, for some monument, or for the emplacement of a outdoor *bema*, stood in its center.

The northern wing of the upper terrace held two suites separated from each other by a service corridor. The western suite (on the excavation area of the Pennsylvania expedition) faced south, while the eastern one (on the IAA excavation area) faced north. The western suite, of symmetrical layout, had in its center a basilical audience hall. This was the law court of the *praetorium*. The elevated northern part of the hall accommodated,

as the audience hall (τὸ ἀκροατήριον) of Acts 25:23, were the hearing of St. Paul in front of Festus took place. See J. Patrich, *supra*, n. 12. Archaeologically, only a single hall that could fulfill these functions was uncovered in the excavations of the *praetorium*.

33. *MP* Gr. VIII.7 - p. 146; Syr. 31 - p. 29.

34. On this complex, excavated by several expeditions (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, University of Pennsylvania University, and the Israel Antiquities Authority) see: L. Levine and E. Netzer, *Excavations at Caesarea Maritima 1975, 1976, 1979 – Final Report* [*Qedem* 21], Jerusalem 1986; E. Netzer, *The Palaces of the Hasmoneans and Herod the Great*, (Jerusalem 1999) 109-114 (Hebrew), E. Netzer, "The Promontory Palace," in: A. Raban and K. G. Holum, *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective after Two Millennia* (Leiden–New York–Köln 1996), 193-207; Kathryn L. Gleason, "Ruler and Spectacle: The Promontory Palace," *ibid.*, 208-228; Barbara Burrell, "Palace to Praetorium: The Romanization of Caesarea," *ibid.*, 228-47. See also: B. Burrell, K. L. Gleason, and E. Netzer, "Uncovering Herod's Seaside Palace," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 19 (1993), 50-57, 76. K. L. Gleason *et al.*, "The Promontory Palace at Caesarea Maritima: Preliminary Evidence for Herod's *Praetorium*," *JRA* 11 (1998), 23-52. During 1995-97, in the framework of Israel Antiquities Authority excavations directed by Y. Porath, more parts of the N, S, and E wings of the praetorium were exposed. For a short preliminary note see: B. Rochman, "Imperial Slammer Identified," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 24.1 (1998), 18; Y. Porath, "Caesarea – 1994-1999," *Hadashot Arkheologiyot: Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 112 (2000):36*. See also J. Patrich, "A Government Compound in Roman-Byzantine Caesarea," in *Proceedings of the Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Division B, History of the Jewish People*, Jerusalem 2000: 35*-44* (English section); idem, "Urban Space," 90.

35. The W half of the upper terrace was excavated by the University of Pennsylvania expedition, directed by Glieson and Burrell, while the E half, and areas farther to its E, belonging to the Roman *praetorium*, and the entire S wing, all yet unpublished, were excavated by the Israel Antiquities Authority expedition headed by Yosef Porath (*supra*, n. 34).

so it seems, the dais, or the *bema*.³⁶ It had a heated floor set on stone *suspensurae* / *hypocaust*. Over this *bema* the Roman governor and his *concillium* of friends and relations held their assizes, including trials of martyrs.³⁷

The entrance to Herod's palace was from the east, via a square *propylon* with four turrets set at its corners. Another, higher, tower, rose above this *propylon* overlooking the hippodrome/stadium. Under Roman rule Herod's palace was extended farther to the east, adding about 50m along the southern curved end of the hippodrome/stadium. Four Latin inscriptions found in this extension mention military personnel active in the governor's *officium*. They mention Assistants of the Office in charge of the Prisoners or the Prison (*adiutores custodiarum*), imperial couriers (*frumentarii*), *beneficarii* - soldiers who received an administrative job from the governor (in this case Tineius Rufus, the governor of Judaea when the Bar Kokhba revolt broke out), numbering as many as 120 in Judaea - and a Club Room of the Centurions (*schola centurionum*).³⁸

There were also women martyrs: Thecla of Gaza, who was cast to the wild beasts; Theodosia of Tyre, who was thrown into the sea,³⁹ and similarly Valentina of Caesarea together with Hatha, another Gazaeen. All were virgins. Valentina, protesting against the judge for the prolonged tortures inflicted against Hatha - being first scourged, then raised on high on the rack, lacerated and galled in the sides - was seized, and driven to the midst of the place of judgement. They dragged her to the altar, and tried to force her to sacrifice, but she kicked the altar and overturned the fire. The judge,

36. See plan and reconstruction in Gleason *et al.* *JRA* 11 (1998) (*supra*, n. 28) 33, 45-48, Figs. 4c and 7 and 13, and discussion in Burrell, *Caesarea Retrospective* (*supra*, n. 28), p. 229.

37. The τῶν ἄφ' αὐτόν, or *concilium*, is mentioned in *Acts* 25:12, pertaining to St. Paul's hearing before Festus in the *praetorium* of Caesarea. Eusebius regularly mentions the judge (*dikastes*) alone. In *MP Gr.* X.2 - p. 152 mention is also made of "those around him" (τῶν ἄφ' αὐτόν).

38. Hannah M. Cotton and Werner Eck, "Governors and Their Personnel on Latin Inscriptions from Caesarea Maritima," *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* VII.7, Jerusalem 2001: 215-240;. For governor's *officiales* see: Rankov, "The Governor's Men," 15-34; B. Palm, "Die *Officia* der Statthalter in der Spätantike. Forschungsstand und Perspektiven," *Antiquité Tardive* 7 (1999): 85-133. For a *frumentarius* sent by Sabinus, the prefect of Egypt, to pursue bishop Dionysius in the streets of Alexandria in the persecution under Decius see *HE* VI.40.2-3 - LCL p. 97. Also, a *frumentarius* escorted Cyprian, after his arrest, to face trial in Utica (Cyprian, *Epistle* 81.1).

39. *MP Gr.* III.1, VI.3, Syr. 10-11 (Thecla); Gr. VII.1-2, Syr. 23-25 (Theodosia).

infuriated, ordered the two young women to be bound together and hurled into the sea.⁴⁰ An altar for libation that stood in the law court was not discovered in the excavations.

The prison

The prison (τὸ δεσμωτήριον, ἡ ἐίρκη, *beth asyra*) is frequently mentioned. Pamphilus and his circle spent two years in the jail before being executed.⁴¹ A Latin mosaic inscription mentioning the prison wardens was found in a room in the southern wing of the upper terrace. It reads: *Spes bona adiutorib(us) offici custodiar(um)* - "Good hope to the Assistants of the Office in charge of Prisoners (or of the Prison)."⁴² Presumably, the prison was located nearby, but so far it has not been identified archaeologically. However, an enormous underground water cistern, with two compartments, T-shaped in its ground plan, constructed under the courtyard, was later converted into a vast subterranean space, and a narrow subterranean corridor led into it. This gloomy space apparently served as a prison, as Greek Christian inscriptions were smeared in mud on its walls, by a certain Procopia, seeking help from the Lord (Κύριε βοήθι Προκοπία) - a most dramatic find pertaining, perhaps, to another woman confessor.

The need to convert a water cistern into a jail might be reflected in Eusebius's words that the number of prisoners increased tremendously during this period: "everywhere the prisons, that long ago had been prepared for murderers and grave-robbers, were then filled with bishops and presbyters and deacons, readers and exorcists, so that there was no longer any room left there for those condemned for wrongdoing."⁴³ This might have been the

40. *MP* Gr. VIII.5-8, Syr. 30-32 (Valentina and Hatha). See also: Elizabeth A. Clark, "Eusebius on Women in the Early Church History," in H. W. Attridge and G. Hata (eds.), *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism*, Detroit 1992: 256-69; S. G. Hall, "Women among the Early Martyrs," In Diana Wood (ed.), *Martyrs and Martyrologies: Papers Read at the 1992 Summer Meeting and the 1993 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, Oxford 1993: 1-21.

41. *Desmoterion*: *MP* Gr. III.4 - p. 127, Syr. 12 - p. 11; IV.10 - p. 133; VII.4 - p. 142-143; VII.6 - p. 143; XI.7 - p. 158. *Eirke*: Gr. IV.10 - p. 133 (Apphianus, long recension); XI.5 - p. 157 (Pamphilus and his circle being detained for two years). Gr. I.1 - p. 122: ἡ φυλακή.

42 Cotton and Eck, *supra*, n. 38, p. 230; B. Rochman, "Imperial Slammer Identified," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 24.1 (1998), 18.

43. *HE* VIII.6.9.

dungeon into which Origen was cast, or the “deep dark prison” into which Apphianus was cast⁴⁴ (if this is not a literary expression, of course).

The city streets

The confession and martyrdom of Ennathas in the streets of Caesarea, in the sixth year of the persecutions (Nov. 13, 308 CE) was extraordinary in its cruelty.⁴⁵ She had been brought by force from Scythopolis. Maxys, “who was set over the streets of the city,”⁴⁶ stripped her naked down to her groin, and carried her about through the whole city, being tortured with leather straps, even without the approval of the superior authority. Then she was taken before the tribunal of the governor. After suffering tortures of every sort she was condemned to be burnt, together with other martyrs. Moreover, the governor Urbanus forbade their burial, ordering that their bodies will be guarded day and night before the gates of the city, until they will be completely devoured by wild beasts and consumed by birds. After this had gone on for many days, a prodigy occurred in the midst of the city: “The atmosphere was perfectly calm and clear, when, all of a sudden, the columns supporting the public stoas of the city (τὴν πόλιν κιόνων οἱ τὰς δημοσίας ὑπήρειδον στοάς) emitted spots, as it were of blood, while the market places (ἀγοραί) and the colonnaded streets (πλατεῖαι) became sprinkled and wet as with water, although not a single drop had fallen from the heavens. And it was declared by the mouth of every one that the stones shed tears, and the ground wept.”⁴⁷

44. For Origen’s dungeon (μυχός εἰρκτή) see *supra*, n. 9. For Apphianus/Epiphanius see *MP* Gr. IV.10 (long recension, p. 133: εἰς τὸν τῆς εἰρκτῆς σκοτεινὸν μυχὸν ἀνελαμβάνετο), Syr. 16 - p. 15.

45. *MP* Gr. IX.6-8, Syr. 34 (Mannathus).

46. Thus the Syr. 35 - p. 32, while the Gr. IX.7 - p. 150 refers to him as an army tribune (*chiliarch*) stationed in the vicinity of the city. The Syr. text, derived from the long Greek recension, written for the Christians of Caesarea, seems preferable in this case; but he might have been an officer in charge of internal security on the city streets, a post which would meet both designations. Cf. the fate of the martyrs of Lyons and Vienne under Marcus Aurelius, being dragged into the market-place by the tribune (*chiliarch*) and the chief authorities of the city, and at last being shut up in the prison until the coming of the governor (*HE* V.1.7-8).

47. *MP* Syr. 35 - Curton: 33-34; Gr. IX.12 - Bardy, p. 151. We may have here a literary *topos*, since a similar prodigy is given in the Rabbinic sources: BT *Moed Katan* 25b: “When R. Abbahu died the pillars of Caesarea shed tears;” PT, *Abodah Zarah* III.1, 42c, interpreted as an expression of mourning the death of R. Abahu. See S. Lieberman, “The Martyrs of

The Herodian, orthogonal city-plan was maintained throughout antiquity with only minor modifications. Colonnaded streets (*platea* and *stoa*) in Caesarea are also mentioned in other Rabbinic sources.⁴⁸ The line of the *cardo maximus* seems to be preserved in the line of the Crusader eastern city wall; the *decumanus maximus* was seemingly parallel to the present asphalt road. Many of the street columns were incorporated in the Muslim and Crusader city wall and in the north quay of the Crusader harbour. Other public structures mentioned by Eusebius are the temples and the bathing places (τὰ λουτρά).⁴⁹

Tortures

Tortures inflicted in the prison, or publicly at or near the law court, by tormentors (βασανισταί, *qstwnra*)⁵⁰ on behalf of the judge/governor as a means of coercion to renounce the Christian faith, included hunger, hanging head down, flagellation, scourging and lacerations of the sides, and castration. The instruments of torture included iron combs and the rack. This was a frame on which a person was stretched by having the feet placed in holes set apart at intervals (the fifth hole being at the largest interval), or by wheels. Sharp reeds were also driven through the fingers, under the tips of the nails.⁵¹ Tortu-

Caesarea,” *Annuaire de l’Institut de Philologie et d’Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 7 (1939-44): 400-402, who comments that Eusebius’s dating of the occurrence, between mid-November to mid-December 309, in the sixth year of the persecutions, establishes the *terminus ante quem* for R. Abahu’s death. The city market places (*agorai*) are also mentioned in *MP* Gr. IX.2 - p. 148, Syr. 34 - p. 31 (*shwqa*).

48. PT, *Nazir* VII, 1, 56a; Tosefta, *Oholot* XVIII, 13.

49. *MP* Gr. IX.2 - p. 148 (baths; bath attendants are also mentioned); Gr. IV.8 - p. 131, Syr. 15 - p. 14, and 34 - p. 31 (temples). In autumn 308 Maximinus issued edicts ordering the reconstruction of all temples and the revival of cult therein, with specific instructions to the provincial governor and *dux* in each province, and to the city magistrates - the accountants (λογισταί), στρατηγοί (*duumviri* in case of a Roman colony) and *tabularii* (*MP* Gr. IX.2 - p. 148, Syr. 34 - p. 31). On λογισταί or *curatores* nominated by the central government to control cities accounts see: J. Reynolds, “Cities,” in: D. Braud (ed.), *The Administration of the Roman Empire 241BC - AD 193*, Exeter 1988: 41-42.

50. *MP* Gr. VIII.6: p. 145, XI.16: p. 162; Syr. 8: p. 7, line 27 (in Antioch), 47: p. 44, line 19 (Julianus); here the Gr. XI.26: p. 167) has οἱ τῶν φονῶν διάκονοι. Syr. 31: p. 29, and 45: p. 42 (*hnwn dsrqyn*). *Quaestionarii*, from which the Syriac *qstwnra* is derived, who constituted an integral part of the governor’s *officium*, serving as judicial interrogators (Rankov, “The Governor’s Men,” 23), are not mentioned in the corresponding passages in the Greek recension of *MP*.

51. *HE* V.1.27, VIII.7.1-8.1, VIII.10.8, VIII.12.6-7 - LCL pp. 419 (Vol. I), 271-75, 283, 291 (Vol. II) respectively; *MP* Gr. VII.4 - p. 142 (castration).

re in slow fire was the fate of Apphianus (Syr. Epiphanius), after suffering various othertorments: flagellation, scourges, and the rack. His feet were wrapped in linen (Gr.; the Syr. renders cotton) dipped in oil, which was set alight at the command of the governor. "The fire, after consuming his flesh, penetrated to the bones, so that the humours of the body, liquefied like wax, fell in drops."⁵² Final execution was decapitation by sword, burning, strangling, and casting into the sea.⁵³ Boats could sail out to the deep sea directly from a short jetty projecting from the north wing of the lower terrace of the *praetorium*, rather than from the harbour. The site of execution and decapitation was open to the public, which included Jews and Samaritans, not just pagans.⁵⁴

When the death penalty was annulled for a while, "orders were given that their eyes should be gouged out, and one of their legs maimed. ... The right eye was first cut out with a sword and then cauterized with fire, and the left foot rendered useless by the further application of branding irons to the joints, and after this they were condemned to the provincial copper mines (at Phaeno)."⁵⁵

Some were condemned to be left as prey for the wild beasts - lions, leopards, bears of different kinds, wild boars, and bulls goaded with hot iron (see below), a common form of execution for criminals under Roman law.⁵⁶ Youth of fine and bold stature were dispatched to the *ludus*.

52. *MP* Gr. IV.12 - Cruse, p. 356, Bardy, p. 133-34; Syr. 16-17 - Cureton, p. 15.

53. Martyrs thrown into the sea were Apphianus/Epiphanius, Agapius ("of the stadium"), Theodosia of Tyre, Valentina, and Hatha.

54. *MP* Gr. VIII.11-12 - p. 147, Syr. 32 - p. 30.

55. *HE* VIII.12.10 - LCL p. 293. On this penalty see: F. Millar, "Condemnation to hard labour in the Roman empire, from the Julio-Claudians to Constantine," *Papers of the British School in Rome* 52 (1984), 124-47.

56. K. M. Coleman, "Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments," *Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990): 44-73; D. Potter, "Martyrdom as Spectacle," In Ruth Scodel (ed.), *Theater and Society in the Classical World*, Ann Arbor, MI 1993: 55-88; P. Veyne, "Païens et chrétiens devant la gladiature," *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome. Antiquité* 111 (1999): 883-917. For condemnation to the wild beasts see farther below and compare *HE* V.1.37-57 - LCL pp. 425-35, pertaining to Maturus, Sanctus, Blandina, and Alexander the Phrygian, Martyrs of Lyons and Vienne in the amphitheatre of Lyons under Marcus Aurelius in 177 CE; *ibid*, VIII.12 - LCL pp. 167-69, concerning the martyrs of 258 in Caesarea under Valentinian; *ibid*, VIII.7.5-7 - LCL p. 273 - the martyrdom of five Christians in Tyre during these great persecutions; and that of Perpetua and Felicitas in Carthage in the persecution of 203 CE under Septimius Severus: *Passion de Perpétue et de Félicité* (ed. J. Amat, *Sources Chrétiennes* 417) Paris 1996; B. D. Shaw, "The Passion of Perpetua," *Past and Present* 139 (1993): 3-45. For a Hebrew translation of the *Passion* see: A. Kleinberg, *Fra Ginepros Leg of Pork*, Tel Aviv 2000: 70-83.

The *ludus*

In the fifth year of the persecution (307), three young Christians, Timotheus, Theophilus and Theotimus,⁵⁷ were condemned by Urbanus to take part in pugilistic combat (Gr. εἰς μονομαχίαν ἐπὶ πυγμῇ καταδικάζει - to contest in gladiatorial fights; Syr. *lwdwn/ludus*).⁵⁸ The next year (308), under governor Firmilianus, they refused to be nourished from the imperial treasury (which attests that this was an imperial *ludus*, see below, not a municipal or private one), or to train and obey the *epitropoi* and *hegoumenoi*. They were summoned to Maximinus himself, but to no avail.⁵⁹ Back in the law court of the governor, his verdict was that the right eye and left leg of each of them be mutilated, and that they are to be sent to the mines.

The fact that the final sentence of the three martyrs was before Firmilianus, the provincial governor, indicates that the *ludus* under discussion, and the entire affair, were in Palestine. It is reasonable to assume that this *ludus* was located in Caesarea, no doubt in conjunction with the oval amphitheatre.

The *ludus* was a school or caserne for training gladiators. In the Roman world there were three types of *ludus*, imperial, municipal, and private. The references by Eusebius to the imperial treasury, and to Maximinus indicate that the *ludus* under discussion was an imperial one, being a component in the framework of the imperial *munera*, not a municipal establishment. Each

57. Their names are given only in the Menologia; see Bardy, p. 142, n. 7.

58. *MP* Gr. VII.4 and VIII.2-3 - Bardy pp. 142, 145; Syr. 26 and 30 - Cureton p. 24 and 28. In the Rabbinic sources there are references also to Jews, including the 3rd c. sage Reish Lakish, who sold themselves to the *ludus* (PT Gitt. IV 46b and 47a; Ter. VIII 45d; Pesikta de Rav Kahana 12b). See also: M. Z. Brettler and M. Poliakoff, "Rabbi Simeon ben Lakish at the Gladiator's Banquet: Rabbinic Observations on the Roman Arena," *Harvard Theological Review* 83 (1990) 93-98. It is reasonable to assume that this was the same *ludus* at Caesarea.

59. The phrasing of Eusebius with reference to Maximinus seems to indicate that the latter was in Palestine at that time, though not in Caesarea. Otherwise, if the three had been summoned to him in another province, once outside the jurisdiction of the provincial governor of Palestine, they would have been sentenced abroad rather than being brought back to Palestine. Was Maximinus's stay a continuous one, since celebrating his birthday in Caesarea on Nov. 20 306 (*MP* VI.1 - Bardy p. 138)? A *terminus ante quem* for their case being brought before Maximinus is July 15 or 25 308 - *MP* Gr. VIII.5 and 12 - Bardy pp. 145 and 147 respectively. Leah di Segni is of the opinion that some details in the martyrdom of the three martyrs under discussion, especially their summons to Maximinus, are void of any historicity, since the narrative is structured according to that of Daniel and his three companions, refusing to eat from the meat and wine allotted to them by Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 1:5-16). Although I am not sure whether her conclusion in this case is correct, I am indebted to her for many other useful comments on the present article.

imperial *ludus* was headed by a *procurator ludorum*, while this imperial system as a whole was directed (in the Early Empire) by the procurator of the *Ludus Magnus* in Rome.⁶⁰

Bardy renders both *epitropoi* and *hegoumenoi* as governors, and similarly Cruse (p. 362).⁶¹ But Robert, Ville (and earlier Valesius) are right in noting that the *epitropoi*, the equivalent of the Latin *procuratores*, were those in charge of the *ludus* and their assistants.⁶² In Rome, the *Ludus Magnus*, and the *Ludus Matutinus*, or *Bestiarius* (for the practice of the *bestiarii* - the hunters in the *venationes*, held in the mornings), were each headed by a procurator. Outside Rome a Latin inscription mentions *procur(ator) ludi famil(iae) glad(iatoriae) Caes(aris) Alexandriae ad Aegyptum*.⁶³ A *proc(urator) Aug(usti) familiae glad(iatoriae)* is mentioned in a Latin inscription from Pergamon.⁶⁴ Galen served as a physician at the Pergamon *ludus*. Elsewhere we hear of a *proc(urator) fam(iliarium) glad(iatoriarum)*, or *proc(urator) Aug(ustorum) ad famil(ias) gladiator(ias)* in charge of sev-

60. L. Robert, *Les gladiateurs dans l'Orient grec*, Limoges 1940 (reprint Amsterdam 1971): 267-68; H. G. Pflaum, *Les procurateurs équestres sous le haut-empire romain*, Paris 1950, p. 51; G. Ville, *La gladiature en occident des origines à la mort de Domitien*, Rome 1981: 277-87, 295-306; J.-C. Golvin, *L'amphithéâtre romain*, Paris 1988: 148-56. In the eastern provinces imperial *ludi* are known to have existed at Pergamon, Cyzicus, Ancyra, Thessalonike, and Alexandria. Robert, Pflaum, and Ville are aware of the reference to the *ludus* in the *MP* (but not in the Rabbinic sources). See L. Robert, *Hellenica* III, p. 120-21; H. G. Pflaum, *Les carrières*, p. 76; Ville, *op. cit.*, p. 287, n. 140.

61. Eusebius refers regularly to the governor as *hegemon* - ἡγεμών (*MP* Gr. VII.2 - p. 141), but at times also as *hegoumenos* (*MP* Gr. VIII.1 - p. 144). But the event under discussion took place after the abdication of Diocletian in May 1, 305, namely, in a post-reform period, when the province was already governed by a civil governor (*praeses/hegemon*), and a military governor (*dux*), and not in the pre-reform system of double regime of a governor and a financial procurator (Gr. - *epitropos*). This is another indication that Bardy's translation (if meaning provincial governors) is wrong (see below). Pflaum also interprets these *epitropoi* as the regional equestrian procurator and his "adjoint affrachi." See Ville, end of previous note.

62. For Robert, and Ville see *supra*, end of n. 60. These are Valesius's words: "He means, as I judge, the Procurators of the company of gladiators and of the morning exercises for the gladiators were committed to their care, and they gave them their allowances out of their treasury" (*Ecclesiastical History*, Eng. tr., p. 163, note b, *apud* Cureton, p. 66). According to Robert, these are "sans doute, le responsable provincial, ses adjoints et le directeur de *ludus*."

63. CIL, X, 1685; Robert, *supra*, n. 60 (1971), inscr. 70: 124-125 (from Naples).

64. Robert, *op. cit.*, inscr. 258, p. 215. In cities, like Aphrodisias, *familiae* (= troupes) of gladiators and wild beasts fighters were maintained by the high-priests of the imperial cult, in order to mount gladiatorial contests which were characteristic elements of the civic festivals of the cult. See Robert, *op. cit.*, 56-64; Ch. Roueché, *Performers and Partisans at Aphrodisias in the Roman and Late Roman Periods* (Leeds 1993): 61-80.

eral provinces in Asia Minor.⁶⁵ An *epitropos* of a *ludus* is mentioned in two Greek inscriptions, one from Ancyra, the other from Thessalonike.⁶⁶ The *procurator ludorum* (Latin), or *epitropos loudon* (Greek), and their staff were in charge of recruiting gladiators for the imperial *munera*, training and feeding them, providing all their needs from the imperial treasury, and dispatching them to the imperial spectacles in Rome or elsewhere.⁶⁷

The number of known structures throughout the Roman world that might be identified as *ludi* is relatively small compared with the number of amphitheatres (or amphitheatrical theatres).⁶⁸ Some were rectilinear, with a large courtyard that served as a training ground, surrounded by porticoes, dwelling rooms for the gladiators and their trainers, and offices. Any wealthy mansion with a fairly spacious inner courtyard could have served this purpose. In the more elaborate structures, like the *Ludus Magnus* and *Ludus Matutinus* in Rome, an oval or circular arena was inserted into the courtyard.

The location and shape of the *ludus* in Caesarea are not known, but these *Acts* of Eusebius indicate that gladiatorial combats (*munera*) were still a living practice in Caesarea in the early 4th century, and its *ludus* constituted an integral component of the infrastructure established for the imperial *munera*.

Several martyrs were condemned to be devoured by wild beasts: Auxentius, a venerable old man (5th year, 307),⁶⁹ and the two last martyrs of Caesarea, Adrianus and Eubulus. Each was thrown to a lion and then put to death by the sword. Their executions took place on March 5 and 7 310 CE, during

65. CIL, III, 6753 (from Ancyra), 6994 (from Prousa). See Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 267, note 1.

66. Robert, *op. cit.*: 267-68, note 1. Pflaum (*Carrières*: 698-99) had suggested to read in a Greek honorary inscription from Prusias (*IGRom* III, no. 1420; *SEG* XXVIII, no. 1043) *procurator ludorum (epitropon epi loudon)* in the provinces of Phoenicia, Arabia, and Syria Palaestina. But I. Piso, *Chiron* 8 (1978), p. 517 is of the opinion that the reference might have been to the *procurator vicesimae hereditatum (epitropon eikostes kleronomon)*, in charge of the 5% tax on inheritances for these provinces. I owe the references to this inscription to Dr. Leah Di Segni.

67. P. Leipzig, 57 mentions the provision of clothing for the gladiators (Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 125).

68. Golvin, *supra*, n. 60: 148-56; J.-C. Golvin and C. Landes, *Amphithéâtres et gladiateurs*, Paris 1990: 156-159. They are not aware to the existence of an imperial *ludus* in Palestine, located, most probably, in Caesarea.

69. *MP Gr.* VII.4 - Bardy p. 142, Syr. 26 - Cureton, p. 24. The name of the old man is given only in the Gr. recension; Eusebius does not give the date in the year. The name is not mentioned in the *menologia*.

the feast of the local Tyche.⁷⁰ But the arena in which the events took place is not mentioned. Far more detailed is the case of Agapius (see below).

The reference to the feast of the local Tyche is of interest. Tyche is depicted on many of the city coins as an Amazon-like figure holding a spear or a standard in her left hand, and the emperor's bust in the right.⁷¹ Similarly she is depicted in a marble statue, where her right leg is set on the prow of a ship, and near her right leg a smaller half figure, depicting a sea creature holding a harness, is shown.⁷² She is shown in this posture also on a bronze cup with silver and enamel decorations, now at the Louvre, in a scene of sacrifice before her, accompanied by the Latin inscription *genio colonia(e)*. Three other scenes on the cup portray the mythical foundation of Straton Tower - the Hellenistic city that preceded Caesarea.⁷³ This depiction of Tyche indicates her close association with the foundation of the colony. The commemoration of this event might have been the actual celebration in the feast mentioned by Eusebius. If so, a date ca. March 5-7 would be the date of the re-foundation of Caesarea as a Roman colony by Vespasian in about 70 CE.⁷⁴ This date remained unnoticed so far.

It would be reasonable to assume that the feast of the local Tyche was celebrated in Caesarea annually. Did this feast regularly include fatal spectacles in the arena? One would assume that gladiatorial combats (*mu-*

70. *MP Gr.* XI.30 - Bardy p. 168, Syr. 48 - Cureton, p. 45. The wild beasts, namely lions, and the local feast of Tyche are mentioned only in the Gr. recension.

71. L. Kadman, *The Coins of Caesarea Maritima* [*Corpus Nummorum Palaestinensium* 2], Tel Aviv - Jerusalem 1957.

72. R. Gerst, "The Tyche of Caesarea Maritima," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 116 (1984): 110-114; R. Wenning, "Die Stadtgöttin von Caesarea Maritima," *Boreas* 9 (1986), 113-29; K. G. Holum et al., *King Herod's Dream*, New York and London 1988: 10-16, and Ann Guida description of item 1 (Tyche statue), in the Catalogue of the Exhibition appended (without page numbering) at the end of this book.

73. E. Will, "La coupe de Césarée de Palestine au Musée de Louvre," *Monuments et mémoires* 65 (1983): 1-24. The inscription *agones ieroi* in Latin characters on the rim of the cup above the Tyche scene indicates that her feast included games, as is also indicated by Eusebius. These games must have been different than the "isactian games" established by Herod (see next note).

74. The inauguration of the Herodian city was in September - a different date, with a festival in honor of Augustus, after whom the city and its harbour were called. The games, established as "isactian games" celebrated every four years, were related to the victory of Augustus in the battle of Actium. For the date see: D. R. Schwartz, "Caesarea and its 'Isactium': Epigraphy, Numismatics and Herodian Chronology," in idem, *Studies of the Jewish Background of Christianity*, Tübingen 1992: 167-81. I intend to examine elsewhere, in more detail, the possible association of the feast under discussion with the foundation of the Roman colony by Vespasian.

nera) and hunting spectacles (*venationes*), including execution of criminals (see below), were indeed an integral part of this yearly feast, although it is only for the year 310 that we are told that Christians underwent martyrdom in the arena at that occasion. The *dies imperii*, celebrated annually on Nov. 20th (see below), was another occasion when such spectacles took place.

Agapius in the stadium

Agapius⁷⁵ and Thecla, citizens of Gaza, were condemned there by governor Urbanus in the second year of the persecution (304) to be devoured by wild beasts. They were dispatched to Caesarea and imprisoned there, waiting for their future execution. On the occasion of a pagan public feast celebrated in all the cities,⁷⁶ there were horse races in the circus, a show was performed in the theatre, and it was also customary to give a barbarous spectacle in the stadium (Syriac recension). According to the Greek recension, governor Urbanus staged a hunting spectacle (κυνηγέσιον).⁷⁷ The rumor was that Agapius and Thecla, together with a group of Phrygians, were to be sent to the combat, so that they might be devoured by the wild beasts, as a gift of governor Urbanus to the spectators. Six young Christians had voluntarily addressed the governor on his way to the theatre, asking to be thrown to the wild beasts in the theatre⁷⁸ together with

75. The Agapius under discussion should not be confused with another Agapius, a Gazaeen as well, brother of one of the six youngsters who was beheaded with them in the second year of the persecutions (see below).

76. *MP Gr.* III.2 - p. 126; *Syr.* 11 - p. 10. The feast seems to be the *dies imperii* of year 304, celebrated on Nov. 20. See also *HE VIII.13.9* - LCL pp. 298-99. The *Vicennalia* of Diocletian's reign was celebrated already in Nov. 20, 303, marking the beginning of the 20th regnal year, rather than its end. It is mentioned in a Latin inscription from the *limes* fortress of Yotvata in southern Palestine. See I. Roll, "A Latin Imperial Inscription from the Time of Diocletian Found at Yotvata," *Israel Exploration Journal* 39 (1989): 239-60 (I owe this reference to Dr. Leah Di Segni). Agapius was martyred only in Nov. 20 306 (see below), without Thecla. Her feast is on August 19, as is that of Timotheus, a martyr of Gaza. See Bardy, *ibid.*, p. 126 note 6.

77. *MP Gr.* III.3 - p. 127; *Syr.* 11 - p. 10. The term κυνηγέσιον may cover every kind of show involving wild animals: combats of animals with one another, armed men (*venatores*) fighting and killing animals, men performing feints and tricks with the animals, and animals attacking and killing convicts. See Roueché, *Performers*, 64. From the context it is clear that the last category was included in the show under discussion.

78. The text says that the show of persecution was to be staged in the theatre, but it is clear from the context that the arena of the κυνηγέσιον - presumably the amphitheatre - is meant, since the theatre of Caesarea was never equipped with installations required to hold *munera* or *venationes*. See Golvin, *supra* n. 60: 246-47.

Agapius and the others. They were put in prison for many days, until being beheaded on March 24, 305.⁷⁹

Kenygion is known in the Rabbinic sources as the place for hunting performances (*venationes*).⁸⁰ This was the name of the great amphitheatre of Byzantium / Constantinople, erected by Septimius Severus. Such might have been also the name of the Roman amphitheatre of Caesarea, though there is no explicit indication of this. It is logical to assume that the hunting spectacle given by Urbanus in 304, in which Agapius, in the end did not take part, was staged in the oval amphitheatre of Caesarea,⁸¹ the usual arena for such a show.

The martyrdom of Agapius finally occurred only in the fourth year of the persecution, on the occasion of Maximinus's birthday (Nov. 20, 306), celebrated by him personally in Caesarea.⁸² The event took place in the stadium of Caesarea,⁸³ not in the amphitheatre! Was the amphitheatre one of the structures damaged seven months earlier, during the earthquake of April 2, 306, its vaults being disintegrated? Only when this monument is excavated might we be able to answer this question definitively.

On the occasion of the feast, celebrated in Maximinus's presence, the people expected, according to Eusebius, that some extraordinary spectacle

⁷⁹ *MP* Gr. III.1-3 - pp. 126-27, *Syr.* 11 - pp. 10-11.

⁸⁰ See, for example, *BT Avodah Zarah* 18b; *Yalkut Shimoni*, *Psalms*, 613, and M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature* [reprint 1971], 1392.

⁸¹ A. Reifenberg, "Caesarea: A Study in the Decline of a Town," *Israel Exploration Journal* 1 (1950-51) 20-32; D. W. Roller, "The Wilfrid Laurier University Survey of Northern Caesarea Maritima," *Levant* 14 (1982) 90-103. In a survey and in a sounding of a limited scale excavated by Negev, few architectural fragments were found. See: A. Negev, "Caesarea in the Roman Period," *Mada* 11 (1966) 144 [Hebrew]. The estimated size of the arena is: 62 x 95 m.

⁸² The exact date of Maximinus's birthday is not known from any other source. It could have been ca. Nov. 20, the *dies imperii*, rather than exactly on this date. See *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (ed. A. Kazhdan and A.M. Talbot, New York and Oxford 1991), p. 1322, although it cannot be excluded that Eusebius have misunderstood when saying that Maximinus's birthday rather than a *dies imperii*, was the reason of the feast. In any case, the presence of the Caesar have augmented the scale and splendor of the celebration, as is clear from Eusebius's narrative.

⁸³ Similarly Polycarp was threatened by a Pagan and Jewish mob to be cast to a lion in the stadium of Smyrna, escaping this fate only because the kynegesaic show was already concluded - *HE* IV.15.16 and 25 - *LCL* pp. 346-47 and 350-51. He was martyred ca. 155. The stadium of Smyrna disappeared. It is conjectured to have been located in its western part. See E. Akurgal, *Ancient Civilizations and Ruins of Turkey*, Istanbul 1978, p. 122; Golvin, *supra*, n. 60, p. 263.

be given, namely a Christian be cast into the theatre⁸⁴ to be devoured by the wild beasts. It had long been the practice that on the arrival of the emperor new and foreign presentations should be given, such as recitations, remarkable shows of acrobatics, singing and music, display of exotic beasts from India, Ethiopia, and other places, performances with wild beasts, and gladiatorial shows.⁸⁵

Roman spectacles were generally comprised of hunting shows (*venationes*) in the morning, gladiatorial combats (*munera gladiatorum*) in the afternoon, and various other amusements, including the execution of criminals, in between. Hence their name - *meridiani*. The executions constituted a component separate from the hunting shows in the day-long program.⁸⁶

Agapius was dragged round about in the midst of the stadium (*astdyn*), and a placard with his accusation - his being a Christian, was carried before him. A slave who had killed his master, who was also to be executed in a similar manner in the stadium won clemency from the emperor, to the applause of the entire audience, but not the martyr. While being led round about in the stadium Agapius was asked to renounce his faith, but he replied boldly and loudly, standing in the center of the stadium, that he adhered firmly to his beliefs. Maximinus, enraged, gave orders for the wild beasts to be released. A fierce she-bear rushed upon him and tore him with her teeth. Still alive he was led back to prison for another day; then stones were tied about him, and he was thrown into the sea.⁸⁷ Silvanus, a veteran soldier, priest, and later bishop of the Church of Gaza, also underwent his first confession in the stadium of Caesarea, before being sent to the copper mines (8th year- 310 CE).⁸⁸

In the period under discussion Caesarea had four entertainment facilities: the theatre, Herod's U-shaped 'amphitheatre' nearby on the seashore, the Roman circus on the eastern fringes of the city, and the oval amphitheatre to its north. Which of these was the stadium mentioned in the Acts

84. Sic. But the arena of his martyrdom was actually the stadium. See also n. 78 above.

85. *MP Gr.* VI.1-2 - Bardy p. 138, *Syr.* 21 - Cureton p. 19. According to the *Gr.* (VI.3, p. 139) Agapius was already led to the beasts in the second year, together with Thecla, and to the stadium, with criminals, on more than three other occasions, but each time he was sent back to the prison, after various threats from the judge, being reserved for later combats. It is clear that the stadium was a regular place of execution for criminals.

86. Golvin and Landes, *Supra*, n. 68: 189-92.

87. *MP Gr.* VI.1-7 - Bardy: 138-40; *Syr.* 21-23 - Cureton: 19-21. For a placard with the accusation being carried before the martyr in the arena cf. *HE V.1.44* - LCL p. 427, pertaining to Attalus in the amphitheatre of Lyons.

88. *MP Syr.* 51 - p. 47 (*astdyn*).

of Agapius and Silvanus? Without doubt, it was a landmark on the urban landscape, known to all. The theatre and the circus might be excluded, since they are mentioned by Eusebius as the venues of other shows. The U-shaped amphitheatre of Herod and with the oval structure are left.

As mentioned, the oval amphitheatre has not yet been properly explored. It is reasonable to assume that it was constructed in the second or third century.⁸⁹ On the other hand, Herod's 'amphitheatre' (*Antiquities* 15.341; *War* 1.415) is quite well known, having been uncovered on the seashore during the 1992-98 excavations (mostly by the IAA expedition headed by Yosef Porath).⁹⁰ Attached to the palace of Herod, which became the *praetorium* of the Roman governors, it was a U-shaped structure, comprising an arena surrounded by seats on the east, south, and west. The estimated capacity was 10.000 spectators. A southern gate under the *sphendone* gave direct access from the *praetorium* to the arena. In its final phase, perhaps in the mid-third century, the arena was truncated, and the southern third of the structure was converted into a small amphitheatre. On that occasion the *loggia* or *pulvinar*, occupied by the dignitaries, was removed from its original location facing the center of the arena, and placed in the new center of the *cavea*. The *sacellum*, the tiny shrine of this arena, was underneath. Frescoes on the podium wall, depicting hunting scenes, are attributed by Porath to this phase. Identifiable here are the deer, fox, wild boar, tiger, and a right leg of a hunter.⁹¹ A subterranean system of tunnels was also installed in the reduced amphitheatre.⁹²

In that early period the term amphitheatre as used by Josephus indicated a multifunctional arena surrounded by seats for spectacles. There

89. A. Reifenberg, "Archaeological Discoveries by Air Photographs in Israel," *Archaeology* 3 (1950), 40-46; idem, "Caesarea: A Study in the Decline of a Town," *IEJ* 1 (1951) 20-32.

90. Y. Porath, "Herod's 'amphitheatre' at Caesarea: a multipurpose entertainment building," in J. H. Humphrey (ed.), *The Roman and Byzantine Near East: some recent archaeological research* [Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplement Series 14] (Ann Arbor, MI 1995): 15-27, 269-72 (color pls.); idem., "Herod's amphitheatre at Caesarea (preliminary notice)," *Atiqot* 25 (1994): 11*-19* (Hebrew); idem., *ESI* 17 (1998) 40-41; idem., "Herod's 'Amphitheatre' at Caesarea," *Qadmoniot* XXIX, No. 112 (1996): 93-99 (Hebrew); J. Patrich, "The Carceres of the Herodian Hippodrome/Stadium at Caesarea Maritima, Israel," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 14 (2001): 269-283.

91. Y. Porath, "The Wall Paintings on the Podium of Herod's *amphitheatron*, Caesarea," *Michmanim* 14 (2000) 42-48, and color pl. 7 (Hebrew with an English summary on pp. 17*-18*). The suggested dark-skinned elephant is actually a boar with a typical twisted tail.

92. The tunnel was never a part of a *spina*, as was suggested by Porath. See Patrich, *supra* n. 92.

are other instances where Josephus confused the terms amphitheatre and hippodrome. It had not yet assume the definitive meaning it acquired in the later empire, as an arena intended just for Roman spectacles.⁹³ In the days of Pontius Pilate it was known as the “Great Stadium” of the city.⁹⁴ I maintain that from those early times it was a familiar landmark in the urban landscape, known by this name - the city stadium - to all inhabitants. These included Eusebius and his fellow Christians, the addressees of his long recension of *The Martyrs of Palestine*.

Since its inauguration, the performances staged therein, being a part of the emperor’s cult, included gymnastic contests, horse and chariot races, and Roman spectacles, namely *munera* and *venationes*. These shows, celebrated every four years, were known as “isactian games,” following their institution by Herod in 10 BCE. A Greek inscription from Laudicea dated to 221 CE indicates that these games continued to be celebrated in Caesarea at least until that time. These contests presumably continued to be held in that same arena due to their association with the emperor’s cult.⁹⁵

A stadium is mentioned in many Greek epigrams from the eastern provinces as the arena of gladiatorial combats. Robert recognized that this was a result of the metric difficulty of inserting *amphitheatron* in pentametric or hexametric verses, yet he noted that this fact alone does not prove that the combats actually took place in a stadium.⁹⁶ On the other hand, Golvin indicated the paucity of oval amphitheatres in the eastern provinces,⁹⁷ where *mu-*

93. On the ambiguity in applying technical terms to spectacle structures that existed in the Late Hellenistic / Late Republican and Early Imperial periods see: J. Jeremias, “Der Taraxippos im Hippodrom von Caesarea Palaestinae,” *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 54 (1931) 279-89, pls. XII-XIII; J. Humphrey, “‘Amphitheatrical’ Hippo-Stadia,” in: A. Raban and K. G. Holum (edd.), *Caesarea Maritima. A Retrospective after Two Millennia* (Leiden-New York-Köln 1996): 121-129, and Y. Porath, “Herod’s ‘amphitheatre’ at Caesarea: a multipurpose entertainment building,” *supra*, n. 92: 23-27.

94. *War* 2.9, 3, 172; in *Ant.* 18.3, 1, 57, simply a stadium is mentioned. The context suggests that the event took place near the Roman *praetorium* at the site of Herod’s palace, namely in the Herodian entertainment structure under discussion.

95. J. Patrich, “Herod’s Hippodrome/Stadium at Caesarea and the Games Conducted Therein,” in L.V. Rutgers (ed.), *What has Athens to Do with Jerusalem? Essays in Honor of Gideon Foerster*, P. Peeters, Louvain.

96. Robert, *op. cit.*: 21, 35.

97. They are somewhat more numerous in the provinces of Syria and Palestine, yet with comparison to the western part of the empire the numbers are very small. Oval amphitheatres existed only at Pergamon and Cysicus in Asia Minor. In Syria and Palestine such structures were erected in Antioch, Caesarea and Bostra, all provincial capitals. The case of Eleutheropolis is exceptional. A small amphitheatre was constructed in Dura Europos,

1 *nera* and *venationes* were staged mainly in elongated stadiums⁹⁸ with one or
 2 two *sphendone* at the short ends, or in mixed edifices.⁹⁹ These were former
 3 theatres converted into amphitheatres by raising the stage and erecting a po-
 4 dium wall under the *cavea*, delineating the orchestra, or by the construction
 5 of a low barrier wall with poles for a protective net around the orchestra.
 6 Stadiums were used in the East also as arenas for chariot races.¹⁰⁰

7 Porath dated the shortening of the arena to the second century, and
 8 related it to the construction of the eastern circus at that time.¹⁰¹ But my
 9 excavation indicated that the arena was still functioning at its full length
 10 in the early third century, when according to Porath the shortened complex
 11 was already out of use.¹⁰²

12 Moreover, there are good grounds to believe that the old stadium
 13 of Caesarea was the arena of the Acts of Agapius and Silvanus, since
 14 its *sacellum* was converted into a martyrs' chapel; this would have been
 15 possible only following the persecutions.¹⁰³ Three foundation stones for
 16

17 _____
 18 an important Roman garrison. Those of Scythopolis and Neapolis were truncated hippodro-
 19 mes. No remains of the amphitheatre erected by Herod Agrippa in Berytus (*Ant.* XIX.7.5,
 20 335–37) were found. This might have been a wooden structure, as was common at that early
 21 period in Rome. See: J. Patrich, "Herod's Theater in Jerusalem - A New Proposal," *Israel*
Exploration Journal (forthcoming).

22 98. J. H. Humphrey, "Roman Games," in: M. Grant and R. Kitzinger (eds.), *Civilization*
 23 *of the Ancient Mediterranean, Greece and Rome*, II, New York 1988: 1153–65; P. Aupert,
 24 "Evolution et avatars d'une forme architecturale," in: C. Landes et al. (eds.), *Catalogue*
 25 *de l'exposition: Le stade romain et ses spectacles*, Lattes, Cedex 1994: 95–105; K. Welch,
 26 "Greek stadia and Roman spectacles: Asia, Athens, and the tomb of Herodes Atticus," *Journal*
 27 *of Roman archaeology* 11 (1998): 117–27; idem, "The Stadium at Aphrodisias," *AJA*
 28 102 (1998): 547–69. The reality of hunting scenes staged in a stadium, is also familiar in
 29 the Rabbinic sources. See: M Bava Qamma 4, 4; cf. M 'Avodah Zarah 1, 7.

30 99. These were 'édifices mixtes', 'théâtres transformés', according to Golvin (*supra*, n.
 31 60) 237–49, 317; Golvin and Landes (*supra*, n. 68) 8–10, 204–6; K. Welch, "Negotiating
 32 Roman Spectacle Architecture in the Greek world: Athens and Corinth," *The Art of Ancient*
Spectacles, Studies in the history of art, National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C. 1999):
 125–145.

33 100. J. H. Humphrey, *Roman Circuses: Arenas for Chariot Racing*, London 1985: 438ff;
 34 idem, *supra*, n. 95.

35 101. Porath, "Herod's 'amphitheater'" [*Qadmoniot*] (*supra* n. 91), p. 99; idem, "Herod's
 36 'amphitheatre' at Caesarea: a multipurpose entertainment building," 23.

37 102. For a presentation of the archaeological data see Patrich, *supra*, n. 92. Porath seems
 38 therefore to be wrong in the chronology he gave in his preliminary reports. We'll have to
 39 wait for the final report to be able to evaluate his claim on the basis of the archaeological
 40 small finds and stratigraphy, which have not been presented so far.

103. Also the *sacellum* in the amphitheatre of Salonae was converted into a Christian chapel
 in the 4th c. See: E. Dyggve, *Recherches à Salone*, II, Beograd 1933: 102–7.

altar legs were found *in situ*, a common find in chapels and churches. At least some of the niches carved in the rock wall are apparently from this phase. In any event, the large niche in the middle room, the aedicule of the pagan *sacellum*, certainly functioned in this phase as an apsidal niche, and the elongated niches in the side room to the north seem to be *loculi* for the emplacement of martyrs' remains, as was the case in the Christian catacombs in Rome.¹⁰⁴

There is no reason at all to assume that the oval amphitheatre, constructed solely for Roman spectacles, was also known locally as the city stadium, when an earlier structure in the city, Herod's 'amphitheatre', still functioning simultaneously with it,¹⁰⁵ was already known by this name.

Thus we may conclude that Eusebius's stadium is the same structure mentioned by Josephus by that name. This was the arena of the Acts of Agapius, and the *pulvinar* exposed above the *sacellum* was the *loggia* where Caesar Maximinus and governor Urbanus sat watching Agapius' martyrdom in the arena.

The stadium, together with the adjacent *praetorium* with its prison and law court, constitute the venue where many of the Acts of the Martyrs of Caesarea took place.¹⁰⁶

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104. See, for example: V. F. Nicolai, F. Bisconti, and D. Mazzoleni, *The Christian catacombs of Rome* (Regensburg 1999); L. Rutgers, *Subterranean Rome. In Search of the Origins of Christianity in the Catacombs of the Eternal City* (Peeters, 2000).

105. If the Roman oval amphitheatre was constructed already in the 2nd c., as is assumed, Porath also would agree that at least during that century both structures had functioned simultaneously.

106. Thanks are due to Prof. I.L. Levine of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for his useful comments to this article.