

SAMONAS THE CHARIOTEER: A GRAFFITO DRAWING OF A VICTORIOUS CHARIOTEER AT HAGIA SOPHIA, CONSTANTINOPLE (ISTANBUL)*

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For centuries carved graffiti writings and drawings in Hagia Sophia's Cathedral at Constantinople lay largely unnoticed. In fact, most people would not aware that the church contain many clusters of graffiti dating back a hundreds years¹. Plenty of them have never been studied, documented, or even acknowledged. Thus there's nothing strange that they were subject to destruction, either deliberately or accidentally, and their conservation is neglected and poor. So I started a thorough survey to gather the best examples. Today it is an undeniable fact that graffiti can provide valuable information for different fields of study (e.g., shipbuilding, paleography, history, social culture, visual culture) offering a glimpse into the past people's minds. In this article

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¹ Thematically, they may be divided into memoranda, inscribed mainly on the occasion of attendance at the church, various inscriptions of an invocative nature, the beginning of the alphabet, human, magical and animal figures, ships, coats-of-arms, weapons, crosses, game board, monograms and mason's marks. For this, see T. ТОМОВ, Един графит-рисунок на лестница от „Св. София“, Константинопол, в *Стоп кадър. Юбилеен сборник в чест на проф. Людмил Христов*, София 2017, 106–113; T. ТОМОВ, Един графит-рисунок на благославяща десница от „Св. София“, Константинопол, в *Сборник в чест на XX години програми по египтология в Нов български университет*, София 2017, 90–101; K. САВОВА, Модата според един графит на жена от храма „Св. София“ в Константинопол, *онлайн Списание за текстил, облекло, кожи и технологии* 5 (2018) 134–137; Сн. SAVOVA–Тн. ТНОМОВ, Two Graffiti Drawings in the Church of Hagia Sophia, Constantinople, *BM* 9 (2018) 27–52; Сн. SAVOVA–Тн. ТНОМОВ, A woman's graffito drawing from Hagia Sophia, Constantinople, *ЗПВИ* 56 (2019) 233–241; Тн. ТНОМОВ, A Dragon Slayer Graffito Drawing in Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (modern Istanbul), *BSI* 77/1–2 (2019) 291–303; Тн. ТНОМОВ, Гербове-графити от храма „Св. София“ в Константинопол, в *Българско царство. Сборник в чест на 60-годишнината на доц. д-р Георги Н. Николов*, София 2018, 679–693. I discovered 16 coat-of-arms and decided to share them with my Italian colleague Maurizio Carlo Alberto Gorra who is more competent in the fields of medieval heraldry than I am. He published them on Academia.edu under the title of 'Observations and reflections on some coats of arms graffiti in Santa Sofia in Constantinople'. 07.07.2020 г. https://www.academia.edu/35771277/Observations_and_reflections_on_some_coats_of_arms_graffiti_in_Santa_Sofia_in_Constantinople; T. ТОМОВ, Графит на „разцъфнал“ патриаршески кръст от „Св. София“, Константинопол, в *Сборник в чест на 85 години от рождението на проф. Александър Фол, д.н.*, София 2018, 133–145; Тн. ТНОМОВ, Mark the Monk From Thebes and His Graffito of a Cross at Hagia Sophia, Constantinople, *EB* 55/2 (2019) 334–351; T. ТОМОВ, Игра на „Дама“ в храма „Св. София“, Константинопол, в *Българско средновековие: общество, власт, история. Сборник в чест на проф. Милана Каймакамова*, ред. Г. НИКОЛОВ–А. НИКОЛОВ, София 2013, 437–452. A total of 35 ship graffiti drawings were recorded between 2007 and 2014. Many of the drawings are highly detailed and accurate, indicating that they have been sketched by skilled artist. Recently I have published four ship graffiti which are connected to Viking sailing vessels: Four Scandinavian ship graffiti from Hagia Sophia, *BMGS* 38/2 (2014) 168–184, as well as an ex-voto scene with three vessels and full scale figure of St. Nicholas: Maritime ex-voto graffito from the Church of Hagia Sophia, Constantinople, *BSI* 73/1–2 (2015) 57–74. So far, about 94 Old Slavonic inscriptions have been published: T. ТОМОВ, *Непознатият храм „Св. София“. I. Надписи-графити на кирилица и глаголица*, София 2019 [in press].

I publishes for the first time an unique in content and form graffito drawing of victorious charioteer on his quadriga. I discovered it during a fieldwork conducted at Istanbul in the beginning of year 2010. In the autumn of the same year, I was able to take new photographs under better light and to decipher the complete scene² (Plate I. Photo 1–2 & Fig. 1). It is engraved lightly into the marble plate on the left side of the last, southwest, door to the inner narthex at about 140 cm. from the floor. However, some details of the scene are legible only under strong light beamed from various angles; the area of the drawing is 50 cm. in width and 27.5 cm. in height. The sure lines and fine details in the graffito indicate that it was carried out by a skilled person using tools.

The charioteer stands upright, with both feet within the chariot, and is sustained, while it is in rapid motion, only by the strong hold he has upon the reins. He is depicted bareheaded in three-quarter view, an angle that adds volume to him. He wears a knee-length garb decorated with a hatched pattern. The driver has bands round his thighs, as well as oval protection plates to protect the shoulders. He holds the wreath with his right hand and a palm branch with his left one.

The chariot below the driver is turned to the right and in a three-quarters view toward the viewer. The two-wheeled chariot with four spokes is open behind, being enclosed only in front and at the sides and came hardly higher than the knees. The protective rail is an oval row of X-shaped motifs. The height of the sides decreased progressively to floor level. It is clear that a team of four horses galloping forward pulls the chariot but only the body of the outside one is shown. A line marks the backs and the legs of the others. Unfortunately, the pictorial evidence in our disposal in the drawing does not include every strap on the harness. The charioteer is depicted with the reins wrapped around his waist to allow his hands to remain free. One can also find a hint of the noseband – the band that goes around the horse's nose. Next, comes the rest of the harness over the animal's back – a pad or back pad. It is usually used to refer to the smaller lightweight 'saddle' of a pair harness. The girth (a strap encircling the animal's body in order to secure the saddle) can be easily recognized. Another detail is a broad collar over the horse's breast.

Next comes a strange element consisting of a hatched cone, crowned by a small object resembling an egg, stood on a slightly inclined podium or pedestal. It is just under the right arm of the charioteer. The graffito is highly detailed but when it is looked upon more closely, one can notice a rectangular building with tall pole with flying rectangular banner just behind the driver. At the upper right of the drawing, a second man, salutes him with a raised right arm. A smaller oval seat lies behind the figure. A Greek inscription below the right arm of the charioteer, in single-stroke (9.7 cm. at length), reads: 'NH(K)A CAMΩNA'. (Plate I. Photo 1)

² In 2011, S. Ivanov describes sketchily a graffito in his book (*В поисках Константинополя. Путеводитель по византийскому Стамбулу и окрестностям*, Москва 2011, 48–49) as follow: 'On the same pillar, but to the south (that is, further from the entrance) and slightly lower, we distinguish a figure. A man is depicted with something like a spear in his left hand and something like a ball in his right one. The name 'Samona' is read. Above and to the right is drawn another little man. Of course, these barely visible graffiti are not at all like those deeply carved...'

Before we proceed any further, we should note that in the life of Constantinople and even of the Empire as a whole, the Hippodrome played a very important part³. It was the setting of a myriad of sportive, social and political events. These range from exciting races and other entertainments⁴ in first place to a main public location for the citizens to interact with the emperors⁵ or for receptions of foreign embassies (often accompanied by horse races)⁶, celebrations of military triumphs⁷, and performance of public executions⁸. Its role in the public and political life of the city was not eclipsed by any other structure or space, throughout centuries. Byzantine chariot racing thrived and reached its height ca. 500–540 due to the popularity of top drivers, but after that time declined, and at some unspecifiable time, they ceased to be a popular spectator sport and became a ceremonial parade until their ultimate disap-

³ The main literary evidence for the Hippodrome comes from the 8th century *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* and its 10th century derivative, the *Patria Konstantinopoleos II*. On them, see TH. PREGER, *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanum*, Leipzig 1902–1907, and A. CAMERON and J. HERRIN, *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*, Leiden 1984. To this should be added the epigrams from the Greek Anthology (*The Greek anthology*, with an English translation by W. R. PATON, London & New York 1918), as well as Nicetas Choniates' 13th-century text (*Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* 11, ed. J. L. van DIETEN, Berlin, New York 1975, 647–655). For the Hippodrome, see S. CASSON, Les fouilles de l'Hippodrome de Constantinople, *GBA* (April 1930), 213–242; R. GUILLAND, The Hippodrome at Byzantium, *Speculum* 23/4 (1948) 681–682; C. MANGO, A. KAZHDAN & A. CUTLER, Hippodromes, in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A. KAZHDAN and A.-MARY TALBOT, Oxford 1991, II, 934; A. CAMERON, *Circus Factions: Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium*, Oxford 1976, 235; G. DAGRON, *Naissance d'une capitale. Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451*, Paris 1974, 320–347; R. GUILLAND, *Études de topographie de Constantinople byzantine*, Berlin 1969, I, 369ff.; W. MÜLLER-WIENER, *Bildlexicon zur Topographie Istanbul*, Tübingen 1977, 64–71; G. DAGRON, *Constantinople Imaginaire*, Paris 1984, 161–190; J. HERRIN, *Byzance: Le palais et la ville*, *Byz* 61 (1991) 214; G. DAGRON, *L'hippodrome de Constantinople. Jeux, peuple et politique*, Paris 2011.

⁴ They offering a popular form of spectacle and converted the hippodrome in favorite gathering place of the inhabitants of the capital, who were very fond of chariot races. The public adored the top drivers among various factions, their favorite 'stars' who were quite literally comparable to modern day sports stars. For discussion of various types of spectacle staged in the hippodrome, see R. GUILLAND, *Études sur l'Hippodrome de Byzance. Les Courses de l'Hippodrome*, *BSI* 27 (1966) 26–40; and IDEM, *Étude sur l'Hippodrome de Byzance. VI. Les spectacles de l'Hippodrome*, *BSI* 27 (1966) 289–307.

⁵ It was at the Hippodrome where the emperors showed himself before a populace assembled in vast numbers, and where the citizens could manifest their affection or anger. For this, see *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, 119, 235, 290; Constantine Porphyrogenetos, *De ceremoniis*, ed. A. VOGT, Paris 1967, II, 116, chap. 77 (68), line 28; see also chap. 78 (69)–82 (73). See, also C. HEUCKE, *Circus und Hippodrom als politischer Raum: Untersuchungen zum grossen Hippodrom von Konstantinopel und zu Entsprechenden Anlagen in spätantiken Kaiserresidenzen*, Hildesheim 1994.

⁶ *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, 119.55–56; C. HEUCKE, *Circus und Hippodrom*, 134–135.

⁷ See M. MCCORMICK, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rules ship in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West*, Cambridge 1986, 131ff.

⁸ *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, 310.70, 350.36–38; GUILLAND, *Étude sur l'Hippodrome de Byzance*, 302–305.

pearance in the twelfth century⁹.

The depiction of games in the arena was a popular subject in all of Roman art, but especially in floor mosaic¹⁰. For the sake of brevity, I shall not trouble the reader with their detailed description, which he can make for himself, but I should like only to remind that some mosaics show more complex scenes of races, while the focus of others is a single victorious charioteer and his team of horses¹¹. Depictions of the latter were introduced by second century AD and remained popular until the fourth century¹². (Plate II. Figs. 1–3) They were subject of contorniates and metalwork, as well as on glass cups, gems, reliefs, and more mass-produced ceramic¹³. Another thing, scenes from Hippodrome are typical on the monuments located within its area because they usually depicted victory scenes of the emperor or the charioteers to which the monuments were dedicated¹⁴. In other words, the winner of the races

⁹ C. MANGO, *Daily Life in Byzantium*, *JÖB* 31/1 (1981) 349. The same author comes to the conclusion that according to the sources of the tenth through the twelfth centuries the number of chariot races was drastically reduced. See, also, A. CAMERON, *Circus Factions*, 182; A. KAZHDAN & A. EPSTEIN, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1985, 82; C. MANGO, A. KAZHDAN, A. CUTLER, *Hippodromes*, *ODB*, II, 934; J. W. BARKER, *Hippodrome*, in *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World*, ed. G. BOWERSOCK, P. BROWN, O. GRABAR, Cambridge, Massachusetts & London 2000, 493. In the twelfth century, the Byzantine Emperors do not seem to have taken much interest in chariot-racing, and they are presented purely as an amusement of foreign potentates: *Anna Comnena, The Alexiad*, translated by E. DAWES, In parentheses Publications Byzantine Series, Cambridge Ontario 2000, 112, VI.10; A. DUCCELLIER, *Hippodrome et idéologie à Byzance*, in *Le cirque et les courses de chars Rome-Byzance*, ed. C. LANDES, Paris 1990, 178; S. GIATIS, *The organization of Chariot-racing in the Great Hippodrome of Byzantine Constantinople*, *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 17/1 (2000) 53, 58. The last recorded race took place on 11 February 1199, Shrove Sunday: *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, 508. 83–89 (1200).

¹⁰ On circus mosaics, see K. DUNBABIN, *The mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage*, Oxford 1978, 88–108. K. DUNBABIN, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, Cambridge 1999, 116, 122–123, 133, 136.

¹¹ According to K. Dunbabin (*The Victorious Charioteer on Mosaics and Related Monuments*, *AJA* 86 (1978) 66) the popularity of scenes from the circus in Roman art led to the emergence of a number of standard schemata for representing the victor.

¹² K. DUNBABIN, *The Victorious Charioteer*, 65, 74–75. She also states that the frontal pose becomes the preferred scheme for depictions of the victorious charioteer from the late fourth century onwards. A. EASTMOND, *Byzantine Olyphants?*, in *ΦΛΑΟΙΛΙΤΙΟΝ. Spaziergang im kaiserlichen garten schriften über byzanz und seinen nachbarn. Festschrift für Arne Effenberg zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. N. ASUTAY-EFFENBERGER–F. DAIM (Hrsg.), Mainz 2012, 102 emphasizes that the frontal depiction of the charioteer behind his horses also gained imperial overtones. For mosaics, see K. DUNBABIN, *The Victorious Charioteer*, 69, n. 34, 72, n. 60, 73, n. 63 and 64, 74, n. 67, 69 and 71, 75, n. 74 and 75, 84, n. 125 (with cited sources and literature); J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses: Arenas for Chariot Racing*, London 1986, 208–240.

¹³ See, for example, K. DUNBABIN, *The Victorious Charioteer*, 67, n. 16 and 18 (lamps), 68, n. 22, 76, n. 80 and 83, n. 117 (paintings), 76, n. 78, 79, n. 94 (reliefs); J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 179–180 (metalwork); 180–186 (terracotta); 186–188 (lamps); 188–193 (glas sports cups); 193–196 (early sculptural reliefs); 196–203 (sarcophagi); 204–207 (gems).

¹⁴ On the monuments located in the Hippodrome of Constantinople, depicting chariot races, such as the Obelisk of Emperor Teodosios (ca. 390 AD), see S. BASSETT, *The Antiquities in the Hip-*

becomes triumph incarnate in Roman art and lives on in Byzantine art. After the sixth century onwards, however, visual evidence of the chariot races and the winner-driver, along with other hippodrome activities, becomes too scarce¹⁵ and stems largely from sporadic data, which range from wall painting¹⁶, Byzantine silk textiles¹⁷, an illustration in manuscript¹⁸ to ivory¹⁹ and stone relief²⁰. It should be noted that the

podrome of Constantinople, *DOP* 45 (1991) 93–95; L. SAFRAN, Points of View: The Teodosian Obelisk Base in Context, *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 34/4 (1993) 409–435; B. KILLERICH, *The Obelisk Base in Constantinople: Court Art and Imperial Ideology*, (Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia 10), Rome 1998, 20–31. A number of statues of then great charioteer Porphyrius, for example, have been found in Istanbul. For them, see A. VASILIEV, The Monument of Porphyrius in the Hippodrome at Constantinople, *DOP* 4 (1948) 29–49; A. CAMERON, *Porphyrius the Charioteer*, Oxford 1973, pls. 2–5, 12–28. The portraits of the champions adorned the Kathisma and their renown is recorded in the province's floor mosaics sometimes bearing a driver's name. For this, see M. MCCORMIK, A. CUTLAR, Charioteers, *ODB*, I, 411.

¹⁵ By the sixth century, as S. Bassett (The Antiquities, 88) has pointed out the donations of monuments by emperors already came to an end, although all of monuments remained standing on the Hippodrome until the thirteenth century.

¹⁶ We know of the existence of a schematic representation of the games that has survived among the frescoes of St. Sophia at Kiev, dating from the mid-eleventh century: E. BOECK, Simulating the Hippodrome: The Performance of Power in Kiev's St. Sophia, *Art Bulletin* 91/3 (2009) 284.

¹⁷ Two fragments of the eighth to ninth century Byzantine silk represents a single charioteer holding onto four graceful, standing horses. The first one of single charioteer silk comes from the shrine of Charlemagne at Aachen Munster (M29, Pl. 23A), while the second one is the charioteer silk from the shrine of St. Landrade (d. 680 or 690) and St. Amour (d. in the ninth century) at Münsterbilsen, now in the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels (M30, Pl. 22A). For this, see A. MUTHESIUS, *Byzantine Silk Weaving AD 400 to AD 1200*, edited by E. KISLINGER, J. KODER, Vienna 1997, M29, Pl. 23A and M30, Pl. 22A, 72–73, 120, who has pointed out that on stylistic grounds, the Aachen Charioteer silk and the Brussels Charioteer silk may be best dated to eighth to ninth centuries, as well as that this type of subject, along with a hunter, was strongly in favor in Byzantium by the first period of Iconoclasm (ca. 726–787).

¹⁸ An illustration in the twelfth century Madrid Skylitzes manuscript where the Emperor Michael III himself even appeared on a chariot in the arena: Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, *Matritensis graecus* Vitr. fol. 77r. Cf. also S. GIATIS, The organization of Chariot-racing, 50; DAGRON, *L'hippodrome*, 249; T. WOLINSKA, Constantinopolitan Charioteers and Their Supporters, *Studia Ceranea* 1 (2011) 135. In other illustration from the Madrid Skylitzes manuscript one can find an imperial box and a figure performing for the pleasure of the emperor and his subjects, or as a cross section of a stepped structure where the large-scale emperor and his smaller-size subjects are entertained: fols. 55a, 55va and 141r. See the color edition of the manuscript in *Joannis Scylitzae, Synopsis historiarum incipiens a Nicephori imperatoris a genicis obitu ad Isacii Comneni imperium*, Athens 2000.

¹⁹ The so-called 'oliphants' dated to the eleventh or twelfth century. For this, see O. M. DALTON, The Clephane Horn, *Archaeologica* 65 (1913–1914) 213–222; *Byzantium: Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture*, D. Buckton (ed.), London 1994, cat. no. 158; A. CUTLER, *The Hand of the Master: Craftsmanship, Ivory, and Society in Byzantium (9th–11th Centuries)*, Princeton 1994, 78; E. DAUTERMAN MAGUIRE and H. MAGUIRE, *Other Icons: Art and Power in Byzantine Secular Culture*, Princeton 2007, 84; A. EASTMOND, Byzantine Olyphants, 96–104, Figs. 3–4, 7–8 who considered them as objects that sought to evoke images of the spectacles of Constantinople (more as a sport than as a means of displaying power), probably for export to northern Europe among pilgrims, crusaders and travelers to the Mediterranean.

²⁰ A façade plaque at Makrinita: M. KONTOGIANNOPOULOU, Chariot Racing and Animal Scenes in

most informative are the fifteenth-century drawing by Onofrio Panvinio who probably made it shortly after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, as well as the sketches from the notebook of an anonymous sixteenth century traveller recording reliefs of the Hippodrome on the lost column of Arcadius ²¹. (Plate V. Fig. 1) Therefore, when all known sources visual and literary are vague, with few technical details, and they offer no traces that might to suggest for reasonable reconstruction possible, then the gap may be filled with other appropriate and newly discovered data as the graffito in question.

First and foremost, the observer is confronted with the question: what scene does the graffito drawing depict? In view of the above description, I must note that the composition is focused on the figure of a triumphant charioteer, standing in his quadriga and brandishing the emblems of victory. An identifying inscription in the scene facilitates the possibility of proposing interpretations. It is a curious inscription, the end of which had been finished in the waist of the driver. Letters vary in size, from 0.5 cm. (Ω) to 1.2 cm. (A, M) and their contours are imprecise. In the beginning of the inscription, a ligature NH (or NI) may be observed ²². It should also be noted that the author replaces I with H, which suggested that he aimed the vernacular orthography ²³. It was often shown at the encolpions as a sign of illiteracy ²⁴. The letter 'Ω' is minuscule, others majuscule. Unfortunately, the palaeographical information that can be gleaned from the inscription is too scanty. With meagre palaeographical data at our disposal, it would be unwise to attempt a dating of the inscription.

The letters along with NH may stand for N (k)a (l̥ ka ori 'conquer'). The name is in the vocative case, Σαμῶνα²⁵, and is preceded by the wish for victory, νικα

Late Byzantine Sculpture: the Case of Two Marble Plaques at Makrinitisa, Mount Pelion (Greece), *Atti Accademia Roveretana degli agiati* ser. IX/VIII/A (2018) 156 (dated to the 11th century).

²¹ S. BASSETT, *The Antiquities*, 87, note 1.

²² It is not unusual to find such a ligature. See, for example, the crosses-encolpions in the catalogue of Л. ДОНЧЕВА-ПЕТКОВА, *Средновековни кръстове-енколпиони от България (IX–XIV в.)*, София 2011, 56, 314

²³ For this replacement, see А. ЕВДОКИМОВА, Итализм в византийских граффити, на стыке орфографии и семантики, в *Индоевропейское языкознание и классическая филология – XXIII (чтения памяти И. М. Тронского). Материалы Международной конференции, проходившей 24–26 июня 2019 г.*, Отв. редактор Н. Н. КАЗАНСКИЙ, СПб 2019, 308–314.

²⁴ Л. ДОНЧЕВА-ПЕТКОВА, *Средновековни кръстове-енколпиони*, 312–313.

²⁵ In Syriac, the name Samonas was rendered as Š'mûnâ, thus representing the masculine form of the female name Š'mûnî (a simple variant of Ašmûnith, 'the Hasmonean woman'), from which the mothers of the Maccabees name Salomone emerged. For this, see *Dying for the Faith, Killing for the Faith: Old-Testament Faith-Warriors (1 and 2 Maccabees) in Historical Perspective*, (ed.) G. SIGNO-RI, Leiden–Boston 2012, 114–115. In the *Synaxar of Constantinople* (H. DELEHAYE, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e codice Sirmondiano nunc Berolinensi*, Brussels 1902, 225.1–22) are mentioned Gourias, Samonas, and Abibos or the names of three Syrian martyrs who are said to have met their deaths in Edessa in 306. Finally, one can find that a man called Samonas (Greek: Σαμῶνας, c. 875–after 908) was an Arab-born eunuch, who was captured by the Byzantines and became one of the most influential officials of the Byzantine Empire during the first decade of the 10th century. For this, see A. KAZHDAN, A. CUTLER, Samonas, in *ODB*, III, 1835–1836.

(imperative)²⁶. (Plate IV. Figs. 1–3) This verbal component accompanies each man's name and often indicates his fate in the race visualized by the figure in the drawing. It is an attribute to the charioteer who typically bears victor's prize and formed an acclamation that could be voiced from the spectators in recognition of the winner. In this context, the drawing from Hagia Sophia, indicate an individual victor by announcing that 'Νικα Σαμόνα' ('Conquer Samona'). It looks like a command that echoed the emphatic chants of the crowd. The etymology of the name from the inscription gives us clear idea that charioteers enjoyed geographical mobility within the Empire to participate to races in different cities. To sum up: when name is added to the image of a victor, it strengthen the efficacy of the image by identifying it as that of a real charioteer famous for his victories or the element of compliment to a real 'star' is present in such cases²⁷. In a word, the intention of the anonymous author is to honour the popular favorite of the day, identified by name for his individual successes, but sadly unknown from other sources. The inscription opens with a sign of the cross, which symbolically calls God for help (as opposed to the verbal invocation). This is an essential detail. Placing the writing under the protection of God from a very start establishes the act in the name of God. Doing so both increases its power and affirms its legitimacy. According to T. Rozhdestvenskaya the cross is symbol of 'a speech act, turning to God, the saints, the patron of the church, a short exclamation during prayer'²⁸. In other words, the author has attempted to show his gratitude

²⁶ For a survey of νικα acclamations, see A. CAMERON, *Porphyrius the Charioteer*, 45–46 (mosaics), 78 (contorniates), 79 (glasses). We could add other examples to them: 'nika Glaphyrine' (the first century graffito acclamation to gladiator at Pompeii): *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Consilio et Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Regiae Borussicae Editum*, vol. IV: *Inscriptiones parietariae Pompeianae Herculaneenses Stabianae*, C. ZANGEMEISTER, R. SCHOENE (eds.), Berlin 1871, 106, № 1664; 'Gordianus | Isapeodoros | nika': P. KEGAN, *Graffiti in Antiquity*, London and New York 2014, 212; 'Vincenti nika!' (Bottom of bowl, second half of fourth century): *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century. Catalogue of the exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, November 19, 1977, through February 12, 1978*, ed. K. WEITZMANN (ed.), New York 1979, 104, № 95; J. NELIS-CLÉMENT, *Le cirque romain et son paysage sonore*, in J. NELIS-CLÉMENT and J.-M. RODDAZ (eds.), *Le cirque romain et son image*, Bordeaux 2008, 449 and Fig. 11; 'Marcianus nica sic!' and 'Paulus nica!' (second half of the fourth century mosaic): K. DUNBABIN, *The Victorious Charioteer*, 74, 82 and pl. 8, figs. 15, 16; J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 375, J. M. BLÁZQUES MARTINEZ, *Criadores hispanos de caballos de carreras en el Bajo Imperio en las cartas de Símaco, Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, serie II, *Historia Antigua* 23 (2010) 425, Figs. 2 & 3; 'νικα Βέβετ!': *Constantine VII Porphyrogeniti imperatoris, De Ceremoniis aulae byzantinae, libri duo*, a cura di J. J. REISKE, I, Bonn 1829–1830, 348. 12; 'Demeter nica!' (Bronze statue, about 500): *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art*, 105, № 97. For acclamations in general, see E. PETERSON, *ΕΙΣ ΘΕΟΣ, epigraphische, formgeschichtliche und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, Göttingen 1926, 152–163 (Die Νικα-Akklation).

²⁷ K. DUNBABIN, *Theater and Spectacle in the Art of the Roman Empire. (Townsend lectures/Cornell studies in classical philology, Ithaca)*, London 2016, 158–160 pointed out that 'some drivers and horses are identified by name suggesting the representation of individual persons, animals or events though in many cases the names may be conventional, or even allegorical'.

²⁸ Т. РОЖДЕСТВЕНСКАЯ, *Древнерусские надписи на стенах храмов: Новые источники XI–XV вв.*, Санкт-Петербург 1992, 18. Ст. СМЯДОВСКИ, *Българска кирилска епиграфика IX–XV в.*, София 1993, 50–51.

to God with whose help his favourite was victorious as well as the expectations for further success²⁹.

The most specific details belong to the charioteer's costume, racing chariot, as well as elements to show generic circus setting.

One may observe that the driver is bareheaded, because in order to receive the wreath or palm from the mandator (herald for the Emperor) in the Emperor's name before the Emperor's throne in his imperial box, the victorious charioteer had to lay aside his helmet, or cap, and whip. (Plate I. Photo 1, Fig. 1) Our charioteer, highly trained professional, wears a sleeveless tunic, typical of charioteers reaching not quite to the knees, which are left free³⁰. (Plate VI. Fig. 3; Plate VII. Figs. 1–4 & 8–11) Another detail is worth mentioning: he also wore a shoulder pad³¹. (Plate IV. Fig. 3 & VII. Figs. 5 & 9) The tunic is bound around his waist with girdle³². Over the tunic round the torso is a sort of corset of leather-padded bands (*fasciae*) to protect him in the event of an accident³³. (Plate VII. Figs. 1–5 & 8, 11, 12) Most probably, his

²⁹ We happen to know that the successful charioteers believed that they owed their success to God and before racing, they prayed and attended a Mass. For this, see *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De ceremoniis*, I.69, 334.4–7. Cf also, R. GUILLAND, *Études de topographie*, 570; G. DAGRON, *L'hippodrome*, 305; T. WOLINSKA, *Constantinopolitan Charioteers*, 141.

³⁰ Constantine Porphyrogenitus names the cloth as γυμναστικιον or αὐρηγάριον (*Constantini Porphyrogeniti imperatoris, De ceremoniis*, I.69, 330.24 and II.15, 589.20). The first one was a short tunic in the colour of the faction worn by charioteers and well known from the mosaics, while the second one was public or state tunic, bestowed by the emperor and to be worn by a victor at a victory celebration. Cf. also G. DAGRON, *L'organisation et le déroulement des courses d'après le livre des cérémonies*, in *Travaux et Mémoires*, 13 (Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et de Civilisation de Byzance), Paris 2000, 48, n. 145; F. MEIJER, *Chariot Racing in the Roman Empire*, Baltimore 2010, 64 ('truly professional-looking clothing').

³¹ For visual representations, see J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 227, Pl. 114 (mosaic); K. DUNBABIN, *The Victorious Charioteer*, Pl. 5, Fig. 1 and J. CHAMAY, M. GUGGISBERG, K. CHAMAN, *Charioteer and the hunters: a masterpiece of ancient silversmithing*, Neuchâtel (Suisse) 2007, 27, Cat. 11 (mosaic, Roman Villa del Casale, near Piazza Armerina, Sicily, ca. 310–320); Pl. 8, Fig. 17 (mosaic, Dougga, second half of 4th century, Musée du Bardo, Tunis).

³² A. VASILIEV, *The Monument of Porphyrius*, 38.

³³ For charioteer's outfit, see J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 217, 426, 434, 517; J.-P. THUILIER, *Le cocher romain, son habit et son couteau, Nikephoros 12* (1999) 205–211; G. DAGRON, *L'hippodrome*, 115–119. For visual representations, see J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 146, Pl. 65 (relief), 147, Pl. 68 (mosaic), 197, Pl. 98 (relief), 203, Pls. 102 & 103 (reliefs), 227, Pl. 114 (mosaic), 229, Pl. 116 (mosaic), 239, Pl. 120 (mosaic), 247, Pl. 121 (relief), 252, Pl. 127 (glass vessel), 375, Pl. 176 (mosaic); A. VASILIEV, *The Monument of Porphyrius*, 38; *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art*, 102, № 93; 105, № 97, and K. DUNBABIN, *The Victorious Charioteer*, Pls. 1–9; J. CHAMAY, M. GUGGISBERG, K. CHAMAN, *Charioteer and the hunters*, 32, Cat. 14 (terracotta wall plaque), 41, Cat. 20 (Ivory Diptych). Cf. also S. BELL, *The Face of Victory? A Misidentified Head in Rome and the "Problem" of Charioteer Portraits*, in J. NELIS-CLÉMENT & J.-M. RODDZ (eds.), *Le cirque romain et son image*, Bordeaux 2008, 398; M. GOLDEN, *Sport in the Ancient World from A to Z*, London & New York 2004, 109; S. GIATIS, *The Organization of Chariot-Racing*, 49–50; J.-P. DECKER & W. THUILLIER, *Le sport dans l'antiquité. Égypte, Grèce, Rome*, Paris 2004, 187–195; F. FAUQUET, *Le cirque romain. Essai de théorisation de sa forme et de ses fonctions. Archéologie et Préhistoire*, Université de Bordeaux Montaigne, 2002 34–35, 16.06.2020 r. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/46810483.pdf>; F. MEIJER, *Chariot Racing*, 64.

legs are covered with a kind of leggings, which leaves the kneecap free and continues up the thighs³⁴. (Plate VII. Figs. 2, 3, 8–11, 13) It is impossible to make out what he wears on his feet. He stood upright in chariot, wrapped the horse reins around his waist, so he could use body movement to control the horses³⁵. In this way his hands were free to use a whip, or, as in our case, to hold the emblems of victory. It is in the pose of the driver that we do have an example of the use of an intermediate three-quarter view or following the so-called WZ schema according the classification of K. Dunbabin³⁶. The figure of the victorious charioteer in three-quarter view takes pride of place among the various motifs used on painting³⁷ and commemorative mosaics³⁸, as well as on minor arts: lamps³⁹, glass vessels⁴⁰ and contornia-

³⁴ For protective puttees, for example, see J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 197, Pl. 98, 220, Pl. 109, 229, Pl. 116, 437, Pl. 204; A. VASILIEV, *The Monument of Porphyrius*, Pl. 6; C. GIROIRE, D. ROGER, *Roman Art from the Louvre*, New York 2007, 208, № 139 (Bronze inlaid plaque, late 4th–early 5th century AD); *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art*, 105, № 97, 103, № 94 (Diptych leaf with charioteer, Rome?, late 4th–early 5th century); J. CHAMAY, M. GUGGISBERG, K. CHAMAN, *Charioteer and the hunters*, 32, Cat. 14 (terracotta wall plaque, 4th century AD), 27, Cat. 11 (mosaic, Roman Villa del Casale, near Piazza Armerina, Sicily, ca. 310–320), 41, Cat. 20 (Ivory Diptych of the Lampadi, 5th century AD). Cf. also F. MEIJER, *Chariot Racing*, 64.

³⁵ The charioteers tied reins around their waists, increasing not only his maneuverability but also their risk of dragging, injury, and death in the event of a crash. See S. BELL, *The Face of Victory*, 498; F. MEIJER, *Chariot Racing*, 62, 64.

³⁶ The schema classified as WZ consists of a single figure: a victorious charioteer in frontal or in three-quarter view standing in his chariot, pulled by a team of four horses in profile. He frequently neglects the reins tied around his waist, as he holds up the emblems of victory. It appears to be confined to the late second century or after. By the late fourth century, however, the WZ schema with frontal charioteer becomes predominate due to the general Late Antique taste for frontality. For all this, see K. DUNBABIN, *The Victorious Charioteer*, 66–68 and note 20. In their study M. Darder & G. Ripoll (Cálmorfus (est) Patininius. La cuadriga vencedora del mosaico circense de Bell-lloc (Girona), in *Romanité et cité chrétienne. Permanences et inmutacions, intégration et exclusión du au vif siècle. Mélanges en l'honneur d'Yvette Duval*, Paris 2000, 136) remarks that often in the circus mosaics, the victorious charioteer is shown in a semi-frontal position or in three-quarter view, in other cases practically in profile.

³⁷ See, for example, K. DUNBABIN, *The Victorious Charioteer*, 68, Pl. 5, Fig. 5 (a painting from the Caseggiato degli Aurighi at Ostia, the middle of the second century)

³⁸ See, for example, K. DUNBABIN, *The Victorious Charioteer*, 84, 87, pl. 9, Fig. 24 (mosaic at Conimbriga, Portugal, probably third century). See, also mosaic of a quadriga and victorious charioteer of the factio prassina, dated to the 3rd century AD, Museo Arqueológico Nacional – Madrid, Spain, 15. 06. 2020 r. <http://roamintheempire.com/index.php/2017/04/05/madridmuseum/>.

³⁹ See, for example, H. WALTERS, *Catalogue of the Greek and Roman Lamps in the British Museum*, London 1914, 172, № 1139, Pl. XXX (late second–early third century). Cf. also K. DUNBABIN, *The Victorious Charioteer*, 67, Pl. 5, Fig. 4.

⁴⁰ See, for example, *Transition to Christianity. An of Late Antiquity, 3rd–7th Century AD*, A. LAZARIDOU (ed.), New York 2011, 107, № 54 (glass vessel from the 4th century AD, Athens, Benaki Museum, 3467); Gold glass beaker depicting a victorious charioteer from the 3rd century AD, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 28.57.24: 15. 06. 2020 r. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/252974?searchField=All&sortBy=Relevance&ft=victorious+charioteer&offset=0&rpp=20&pos=5> and J. STONER, *The Cultural Lives of Domestic Objects in Late Antiquity*, Leiden 2019, 58–59; Glass beaker with victorious charioteer from the

tes⁴¹. (Plate II. Figs. 1–3) The author of our drawing has attempted to follow compositional conventions of the fourth century AD, particularly in the disproportionate size of the charioteer and his four horses, and of the charioteer's own head and body.

If we move to the chariot, it visually fully corresponds to what is known about the Roman racing chariots⁴². (Plate VII. Figs. 3, 6, 7, 9, 10) They were made from wood and leather, making them light to handle, and aiding speed and manoeuvrability but easily smashed in a collision⁴³. They were low-bodied with animal skin sides stretched over a (wooden) D-shaped frame reinforced with leather strapping, rounded at the front with semicircular guard about 70 cm. high, open at the back and mounted on small wheels (no more than 60 cm. in diameter) with six or eight spokes. In the Roman racing chariot, the rear bar of D-frame was set in one line with respect to the rear edges of the wheels makes it good for manoeuvring in tight spaces, reducing also the chances of a collision⁴⁴. In this way the driver stand essentially over the axle or the Romans thus stayed with the Etruscan arrangement⁴⁵. In our case, however, the rear bar of D-frame is set on the axle of wheels. This arrangement is not unusual, as it can be found in various visual representations⁴⁶. Another detail is worth of mentioning. It should be noted that the manner in which the chariot angles away in a

4th century AD, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 59.11.14: 15. 06. 2020 r. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/255008?searchField=All&sortBy=Relevance&offset=0&rpp=20&pos=10>.

⁴¹ See, for example J. CHAMAY, M. GUGGISBERG, K. CHAMAN, *Charioteer and the hunters*, 43, Cat. 23.

⁴² No Roman racing chariots have survived because of the perishable wood and leather components used for their construction. According to B. SANDOR (The genesis and performance characteristics of Roman chariots, *JRA* 25 (2012) 480), however, who takes the bronze-toy model from the Tiber dated to the 1st–2nd c. AD (now in the British Museum, GR 1894.10–30.1, Bronze 2694) as a guide, the typical Roman chariot had a gauge of ca.155 cm, a wheel diameter of ca.65 cm, and a pole of ca.230 cm, with a mass of 25–30 kg. Cf. also J. CHAMAY, M. GUGGISBERG, K. CHAMAN, *Charioteer and the hunters*, 18, Cat. 11 (bronze racing chariot).

⁴³ B. SANDOR, The genesis and performance, 475 classifies it as 'a light, fast and manoeuvrable vehicle with two spoked wheels, on which the driver stands' and points further (485) that their main construction materials are 'wood, rawhide and glue'. Cf. also S. BELL, Roman Chariot Racing, Charioteers, factions, Spectators, in *A Companion to Sport and Spectacle in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, P. CHRISTESEN & D. KYLE (eds.), Chichester 2014, 495; T. WOLINSKA, Constantinopolitan Charioteers, 131; S. GIATIS, The organization of Chariot-racing, 50 (called in Byzantium *arma* or *skevos*); F. MEIJER, *Chariot Racing*, 62.

⁴⁴ B. SANDOR, The genesis and performance, 480.

⁴⁵ B. SANDOR, The genesis and performance, 482.

⁴⁶ See, for example, J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 86, Fig. 36 (The Lyon circus mosaic), 212, Fig. 107 (Silin mosaic), 220, Fig. 109 (Carthage bird-circus mosaic), 229, Fig. 116 (Piazza Armerina mosaic), 236, Fig. 119 (Barcelona mosaic), 247, Fig. 121 (Foligno relief), 253, Pls. 128 (Pesaro glass) & 129 (Cologne glass); K. DUNBABIN, The Victorious Charioteer, Pl. 5, Fig. 2; Pl. 6, Fig. 7; Pl. 8, Figs. 15 & 16, Pl. 9, Fig. 23; J. CHAMAY, M. GUGGISBERG, K. CHAMAN, *Charioteer and the hunters*, 26, Cat. 11; J.-P. THUILLIER, Les jeux romains: Des origines sacrées au sport-business, in Th. HUFSCHMIED (éd.) *Theaterbauten als Teil monumentaler Heiligtümer in den nordwestlichen Provinzen des Imperium Romanum: Architektur-Organisation-Nutzung*, Forschungen in August 50 (August 2016), 19, Fig. 5.

three-quarter rear view and showing the stretching of the skin on the wooden frame recall similar poses on mosaics⁴⁷. (Plate VII. Figs. 3, 9) In this context, the anonymous author portrays the stretching of the skin on the wooden frame of the chariot as an X-shaped element⁴⁸. (Plate VII. Fig. 15) The four-spoke wheel is also found in glassware, mosaics and reliefs⁴⁹.

Typically, the racing chariot was the quadriga and was drawn by four horses, harnessed abreast⁵⁰. (Plate VII. Figs. 15) The central two horses (*iugales*) were harnessed to the drawbar of the car and the outer two next to them, attached to the central pair by traces (*funes*), not yoked (*funales* or trace horses)⁵¹. The lead horse (*equus funalis*) was always the one on the extreme left, since it guided the team around the sharp, treacherous turns of the metae⁵². The value of lead horses in chariot racing was recognised and celebrated in the Roman world. In our case, however, the horse in the foreground is the only figure that is clearly depicted. The second, third and fourth horse are indicated only by the presence of their front and hind legs. The chariot team is on full gallop, since the artist was unable to analyse the leg movements correctly, he depicted the gallop as a leap at full stretch. One would suggest that the hatch pattern added to some of the drawing's objects and the shape of horse heads links the artist's inspiration with examples on glass vessels⁵³. (Plate VII. Fig. 1–2)

⁴⁷ See, for example, J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 220, Fig. 109 (Carthage bird-onus mosaic), 229, Fig. 116 (Piazza Armerina); J. CHAMAY, M. GUGGISBERG, K. CHAMAN, *Charioteer and the hunters*, 26, Cat. 11.

⁴⁸ A similar case can be seen on glassware and reliefs. See, for example, J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 145, Fig. 65 & 247, Fig. 121 (Relief from Foligno), 197, Fig. 98 (Sarcophagus, Aquino); 253, Pls. 128 (Pesaro glass) & 129 (Cologne glass).

⁴⁹ See, for example, J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 178, Pl. 78 (Ex-Lateran relief), 197, Fig. 97 (Sarcophagus, Vatican); 199, Fig. 100 (Sarcophagus, Mainz Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum), 203, Fig. 103 (Sarcophagus, the British Museum), 205, Fig. 106 (gem, Ashmolean Museum), 437, Fig. 204 (Colchester beaker, the British Museum); K. DUNBABIN, The Victorious Charioteer, Pl. 5, Fig. 5, Pl. 8, Fig. 16; K. CASSIBRY, Spectacular Translucence: The Games in Glass, *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal* 1/1 (2018) 6, Figs. 4A (the Colchester Cup), 4B (the Mainz Cup), 4C (the Trouville Cup) and 4D (the Couvin Cup).

⁵⁰ W. SMITH, *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, Boston 1859, 378; T. WOLINSKA, Constantinopolitan Charioteers, 131–132 pointed out that 'in the past, the number of horses harnessed to the chariot would sometimes vary, but in the Byzantine Empire exclusively quadrigae participated in races'. According to S. Giatis ('The organization of Chariot-racing, 50) the horse was '...an important part of chariot-racing but we have no satisfactory information about its breeding, feeding and training'. S. Bell (Chapter 33, 495) pointed out that the chariot races with *quadriga* (four-horse team) were standart.

⁵¹ F. FAUQUET, *Le cirque romain*, 371–373; F. MEIJER, *Chariot Racing*, 62; T. WOLINSKA, Constantinopolitan Charioteers, 133; S. BELL and C. WILLEKES, Chapter 27: Horse Racing and Chariot Racing, in G. Campbell (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Animals in Classical Thought and Life*, Oxford 2014, 486.

⁵² G. DAGRON, *L'hippodrome*, 90, 129–130; F. FAUQUET, *Le cirque romain*, 376; S. BELL and C. WILLEKES, Chapter 27, 486.

⁵³ See, for example, J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 252, Pl. 127 (Trier glass fragment, mainly the shape of *meta*) and 253, Pl. 129 (A Cologne glass bowl, mainly the shape of horse heads).

When we look at hatched cylindrical structure under the right arm of the charioteer, we realize that the most likely solution leads us toward the turning point or *meta*⁵⁴. (Plate I. Photo 1, Fig. 1) The chariot races were held in a well-defined race-track called a circus with median strip or an elongated oval island called the *spina* (backbone) dividing it and leaving enough room for turning at either end⁵⁵. (Plate VI. Figs. 5) At either end of the *spina* were a *metae* (turning points) in the form of three long gilded bronze conical pole on pedestal⁵⁶. They have flutes at the bottom, three horizontal decorated bands in relief around the middle and eggs on top⁵⁷. In our case, the *spina* is missing. We can decipher its existence because of the schematic turning post (at the left end of an imagine backbone), which is being at angles of 104 degrees to the grounds. We witness also only one of the three tall cones of the *meta* that appear to be decorated and stand on top of high-detached base. On top is the customary egg. In all probability, the X-shaped ornament on the cone in our drawing portrays namely the decorated bands in relief above its base. The *meta prima* is not nearest to the start, but that near the semicircular end of the circus, round which the chariots made their first turn⁵⁸. Therefore, the *meta secunda* was that at the entrance of the course. (Plate V. Fig. 2) The tight, high-speed treacherous turns of *metae* were the most exciting and dangerous moment in the race and often produced dramatic spills and collisions⁵⁹. During the race, the skilled charioteer would corner as tightly

⁵⁴ J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 67; G. DAGRON, *L'hippodrome*, 30, 83; MEIJER, *Chariot Racing*, 43.

⁵⁵ Usually the *spina* was featured ornate columns, statues and commemorative obelisks. See, for example, J. Parish, *Studies in the Archaeology and History of Caesarea Maritima: Caput Judaeae, Metropolis Palaestinae*, Leiden: Brill, 2011, 187. For the *Spina*, see *Constantine Porphyrogenetus, De ceremoniis*, 141; S. CASSON, *Preliminary Report Upon the Excavations Carried out in the Hippodrome of Constantinople in 1927*, London 1928, 3–11; Constantinople Byzantine (Paris, 1974) 186–187; A. CAMERON, *Porphyrius the Charioteer*, 70, 184 and 181, fig. 2 states that the shape of *Spina* was the same as in Rome; for a different view, see S. GIATSI, *The Organization of Chariot-Racing*, 47–52; MAJESKA, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, Washington DC 1984, 253; G. DAGRON, *L'hippodrome*, 86 (280–300 m.); F. FAUQUET, *Le cirque romain*, 471–478.

⁵⁶ J. MIDDLETON, *The Remains of Ancient Rome*, London, Edinburgh 1892, II, 51 (from the time of Emperor Claudius the *metae* were of gilt bronze decorated with bands in relief); J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 257; A. CAMERON, *Porphyrius the Charioteer*, 182–184. From the early first century AD the *metae* consisted of three solid cones on a firm base, as marking the turns: MEIJER, *Chariot Racing*, 43.

⁵⁷ J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 180, 181 (for example, terracotta plaques, №№ 80–81), 190 (glass cup, № 92b), 194 (relief, № 95), 203 (sarcophagi, №№ 102–103), 205 (gems, №№ 104–105c), 212 (mosaics, №№ 107, 108, 110, 112, 114, 115, 119, 120). See, also a terracotta relief in the British Museum: H. WALTERS, *Catalogue of the Terracotta in the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, British Museum, London 1903, 407, № D627, pl. 44. Cf. F. FAUQUET, *Le cirque romain*, 478.

⁵⁸ F. FAUQUET, *Le cirque romain*, 345, 437–438; J. MIDDLETON, *The Remains of Ancient Rome*, 51.

⁵⁹ F. FAUQUET, *Le cirque romain*, 399–400; T. WOLINSKA, *Constantinopolitan Charioteers*, 135; Z. WEISS, *Public Spectacles in Roman and Late Antique Palestine*, Cambridge 2014, 153.

to the metae as possible so as not to lose ground. The danger was that the chariot would then touch the turning post and break the inside wheel on its base. The graffito drawing showed the chariot at full speed in the moment of making the tight turn at the norther end (or *meta secunda*; the turning post of the Blue team⁶⁰) of the *spina*. Moreover, it is worth of mentioning that the victorious charioteer 'never appears in a full arena setting with barrier and its monuments'⁶¹.

The problem now is to identify two elements of the graffito that are of special importance: a high rectangular structure in the upper right-hand of the drawing, which is shown from frontal viewpoint and at right angles to the arena, as well as a tall flagpole with an enormous rectangular banner flying on the right backside of the same structure. With what we know so far about the Hippodrome, the only possible identification for this structure seems to be the tower next to the starting gates (*carceres*). It is undeniable fact that they were a separate two-storey structure used for various purposes and constituted the northernmost limit of the Hippodrome⁶². (Plate V. Fig. 2)

Unfortunately, the *carceres* mentioned in the primary sources are destroyed and they are one of the challenges of urban archaeology. For the sake of brevity, I shall not trouble the reader with a detailed discussion of the case with the tower of the *carceres*⁶³, but I should like only to remind that according to the latest scholarly research the Hippodrome has only one *porta pompae* or 'great/first' gate i.e. the door with tower over it, located at the north-western end of the starting gates⁶⁴. (Plate V. Figs. 5 & 6) The height of the single tower above the surrounding ground was 72 feet (22.76 meters)⁶⁵ and thus it could be seen from all parts of the Hippodrome⁶⁶. It was

⁶⁰ The North end of the *spina* was called after the Blues, or one of two major circus factions' colors. For this, see A. CAMERON, *Porphyrius the Charioteer*, 182. Cf. also G. DAGRON, *L'hippodrome*, 83.

⁶¹ J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 222.

⁶² G. DAGRON, *L'hippodrome*, 80.

⁶³ The reader will be directed to R. GUILLAND, *Études de topographie*, 385–386; J.-Cl. GOLVIN, F. FAUQUET, *Les carceres de l'hippodrome de Constantinople, essai de restitution de leurs caractéristiques architecturales*, Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France 2001 (2006) 145–147; J.-Cl. GOLVIN, F. FAUQUET, *L'Hippodrome de Constantinople. Essai de restitution architecturale du dernier état du monument*, *An Tard* 15 (2007) 213–214; G. DAGRON, *L'hippodrome*, 30; F. FAUQUET, *Le cirque romain*, 283–285; 508–510.

⁶⁴ Niketas Choniates, writing in the early 13th century, states that 'in the Hippodrome there was a tower which stood opposite the spectators; beneath it were the starting posts... and above were fixed four gilt-bronze horses...': *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, 119.58–63. Cf. also J.-Cl. GOLVIN, F. FAUQUET, *L'Hippodrome de Constantinople*, 209 ('On ne peut pas confondre la 'première porte' (ou *porta pompae*) et la porte 1 des *carceres*'), 210 ('...par où arrivaient les cortèges et les processions triomphales... elle était donc placée du côté ouest du cirque...'); F. FAUQUET, *Le cirque romain*, 499–504.

⁶⁵ It was measured by Hero of Byzantium (or sometimes Hero the Younger).

⁶⁶ Onofrio Panvinio's depiction of the circus in *De ludis circensibus*, Venice, 1600 confirms the existence of a single tower above the 'great gate'. Cf. F. FAUQUET, *Le cirque romain*, Pl. LXXXIII, Fig. 1.

surmounted by a bronze quadriga, supposedly wrought by Lysippos⁶⁷. What we can see clearly is that the tower in our drawing is roughly square, like one of the towers in the circus of Maxentius⁶⁸. (Plate V. Figs. 3 & 4) Another analogy comes from the circus mosaic from Nîmes, which shows a tower at the western end of the *carceres*⁶⁹. (Plate V. Fig. 4) Next we must note that the walls of the tower not protected on the outside with plaster or brick facing, but were left exposed. All this goes to show that the author has attempted not simply to show the starting gates as usual but to include an important element of the circus setting. In other words, that drawing is likely to owe much to the personal observation of the local circus and has nothing to do with the models, which go back to the Roman past.

As for the second element of the drawing, one can find a very curious ritual of the hanging of huge banner⁷⁰ over the starting gates as advance notice of a race day in the so-called Book of Ceremonies compiled by Emperor Constantine VII in the tenth century⁷¹. It was duty of a member of the order of the hippodrome, called *thesarios* (Latin *tesserarius*), to whom the *praipositos* handed the permit to organize this ceremony⁷². The text does not say so explicitly⁷³, where exactly the banner was raised, but it has generally been assumed that it was at the summit of the above-mentioned tower⁷⁴. Yet the drawing suggests the possibility that the banner was hung not atop the tower itself, but on a separate flagpole next to it. (Plate V. Fig. 7) I do not know how credence should be given to this detail, but the accuracy of our author tends to

⁶⁷ F. FAUQUET, *Le cirque romain*, 283.

⁶⁸ For the Circus Maxentius, built in 311, where still has the remains of the towers on the west side, see J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 618; F. FAUQUET, *Le cirque romain*, Pl. LII, Fig. 2.

⁶⁹ For this, see F. FAUQUET, *Le cirque romain*, Pl. LXXII, Fig. 2: Détail des carceres (mosaïque de Nîmes).

⁷⁰ The term used by Constantine Porphyrogenetus (*De ceremoniis*, 310.19) to denote the banner is 'βῆλον'. For R. Guiland (*Études de topographie*, 372) both 'βῆλον' and 'βῆλαριον' were synonymous and used in meaning of '...rideau, portère, tenure et dans celui de drapeau'.

⁷¹ Constantine Porphyrogenetus, *De ceremoniis*, 310.11–19. However, this same author (330.18–20) states that if the banner is removed the program and the arrangements are cancelled. A. Cameron (*Porphyrius the Charioteer*, 37) states that hanging of the flag was 'a Roman custom' while J.-Cl. Govin and F. Fouquet (*L'Hippodrome de Constantinople*, 183) argued that it was a 'pratique inconne ailleurs et avant'. According to the literary sources three solemn performance were maintained as a permanent reason for hippodrome games: to celebrate a military triumph, an imperial wedding, the birth of an imperial child or the visit of a foreign potentate. For this, see C. MANGO, *Daily Life*, 345; G. DAGRON, *L'hippodrome*, 119–126.

⁷² Constantine Porphyrogenetus, *De ceremoniis*, 310.11–13. Cf. also G. DAGRON, *L'organisation*, 148; A. CAMERON, *Porphyrius the Charioteer*, 36–37.

⁷³ Constantine Porphyrogenetus, *De ceremoniis*, 310.18–19 ('...καὶ εὐθὺς ὁ κουστωδιάριος κρεμᾷ τὸ βῆλον'). It is simply say that it was hung over the starting gates and that is all.

⁷⁴ R. GUILLAND, *Études de topographie*, 386 ('au centre... s'élevait une haute tour'); G. DAGRON, *L'organisation*, 148; J.-Cl. GOLVIN, F. FAUQUET, *L'Hippodrome de Constantinople*, 183; G. DAGRON, *L'hippodrome*, 80 ('...la tour, centrale ou latérale'); Fauquet, *Le cirque romain*, 283, 509. According to A. Cameron (*Porphyrius the Charioteer*, 36) the flag was hung 'above the Kathisma'.

support such a view. The fact that the drawing demonstrate surprising details attests to a very detailed knowledge of the structure of a Hippodrome, which must be based upon person observation. These architectural elements create simply, in words of J. Humphrey, a 'generic circus setting'⁷⁵. Combining motifs from a variety of sources our artist has an intention to give a backdrop of realistic circus architecture to the theme of the victorious charioteer. Full comprehension of our scene, consequently, demanded a spectator's knowledge of the circus' built environment and how contestant moved around it.^{df}

If we move to the upper right corner, we can find a conventional scene with applauding spectator in the Hippodrome with raised right hand, and one seat behind him⁷⁶. (Plate VI. Fig. 4) I do not think that the figures depicted as the backdrop to him points to the imperial box or Kathisma in the Hippodrome. Rather, this is a spectator placed below the arcades, as it is known from mosaics. Seats surrounded the Hippodrome except above the carceres. The original seats were made of brick and wood, but gradually were replaced by marble benches that rested on vaulted chambers used by concessionaires⁷⁷. Since they were hard and uncomfortable, spectators rented chairs or brought cushions or rugs to sit on.

On the basis of the above considerations I have come to the conclusion that the focus of the drawing is the victorious charioteer standing upright in a chariot pulled by a team of four horses. He is represented with great care and in great detail. Dressed in the distinctive grab of his profession, the charioteer and his team of horses have clearly finished and won the race, as he is holding the palm branch of victory⁷⁸, and brandishes the victory's wreath⁷⁹. From this calm and formal pose, we may infer that the artist chooses to depict the culmination moment when the winner makes a lap of honour around the arena, receiving a standing ovations from each section

⁷⁵ J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 223.

⁷⁶ M. RAUTMAN, *Daily Life in the Byzantine Empire*, 112. A stone seat has been unearth in the garden of Sultanahmet (Blue) Mosque. However, the first literary evidence about stone seats comes from Leo the Grammarian in the tenth century, who referred to the seats as *τα μαρμαρα*. For this, see *Leonis Grammatici Chronographia*, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1842, 325.19.

⁷⁷ M. RAUTMAN, *Daily Life in the Byzantine Empire*, 111.

⁷⁸ D. RADIĆ, J. GRAŠAR, E. NIKOLIĆ, Wreath – Its Use and Meaning in Ancient Visual Culture, Religion and Tolerance, *Journal of the Centre for Empirical Researches on Religion*, Novi Sad, 10/18 (2012) 346 (palm motif relates to rise and victory, both athletic and spiritual).

⁷⁹ The victorious charioteer goes to the Stama, a pi-shaped area marked at the track below the imperial box (Kathisma), where he was awarded a palm leaf as a symbol of his victory, and then he completed a lap of honour. For this, see *Constantine Porphyrogennetos, De ceremoniis*, 345.14–17; R. GUILAND, *Études de topographie*, 570; G. DAGRON, *L'hippodrome*, 90, 133–134, 325; F. FAUQUET, *Le cirque romain*, 487. For the wreath, see K. DUNBABIN, The Prize Table: Crowns, Wreaths, and Moneybags in Roman Art, in B. Le GUEN (ed.) *In L'argent dans les concours du monde grec: actes du colloque international, Saint-Denis et Paris, 5–6 decembre 2008*, Saint-Denis 2010, 306, 309, 316–318; R. KOLARIK, Wreath, *ODB*, III, 2205; D. RADIĆ, J. GRAŠAR, E. NIKOLIĆ, Wreath, 341–342, 346, 351.

of the Hippodrome (in our case a spectator who raises his right hand)⁸⁰. The presence of essential architectural elements of the circus setting served as the backdrop to localize more securely the victor himself within a context of a Hippodrome⁸¹. These details recall similar figures on Roman mosaics⁸². In this scheme of things, the image might recall a real-life triumph. But all the same, the anonymous artist felt the need to note the name of the winner and a victory acclamation⁸³. In this way, his intention as devotee of the circus is to honour his hero of the day, identified by name, for his individual successes like modern idols in the most popular sports. One might say this drawing has echoed the actual races, which the artist was saw his own eyes. The whole scene belongs to one of the common iconographic versions of the victorious charioteer in Roman and Late Antiquity art.

It remains to solve the question why the anonymous author decided to draw such an image in the south aisle of the Church of Hagia Sophia. Perhaps, there is no satisfactory answer to this question. In particular, the author of the drawing has to be sought among the painters or miniaturists at Constantinople. It is possible that after gaining access to the south aisle he will have succumbed to the temptation of scratching a graffito, following his own emotion as great supporter of the winner. Alternatively, it is a thanksgiving to God, because of the successful bet on the correct and victorious chariot's driver in the race and the cash received thereafter. According to K. Dunbabin the charioteer's image functions 'principally as a bringer of success and good luck'⁸⁴. I think that the figure of victorious charioteer in our drawing is far from an interpretation as bearing any allusion to the complex philosophical or ceremonial associations, which linked the circus with the Emperor. All I can accentuate in order to support the above presumption is that the depiction of some the most significant elements of the circus setting⁸⁵ (carceres, flagpole, turning point and seat) along with the charioteer himself holding up the emblems of victory clearly show the sporting

⁸⁰ The winner makes a full circuit of the arena or victory lap in the anticlockwise direction. The artist reverses his direction of movement with an intention not to be confused with the image of a team in a race. For this, see J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 88; F. FAUQUET, *Le cirque romain*, 383; J. CHAMAY, M. GUGGISBERG, K. CHAMAN, *Charioteer and the hunters*, 42, Terracotta oil lamp Cat. 21; K. DUNBABIN, *The Victorious Charioteer*, 66; F. MEIJER, *Chariot Racing*, 81.

⁸¹ The victorious charioteer never appears in a full arena setting with barrier and its monuments. For this, see J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 222.

⁸² J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 208 argued that the mosaics, which vary considerably in date from perhaps the late second to the sixth centuries, do not all provide equal detail: the barrier is always present, often shown too are the carceres but only occasionally other parts of the circus like the curved end, the tavea, or even the facade.

⁸³ K. Dunbabin (*Mosaics*, 320) states that 'the original impetus for the use of names must have come from a desire to allude to real figures'. More recently she concludes that the names suggests the representation of 'the individual persons, animals, or events though in many cases the names may be conventional, or even allegorical'. For this, see K. DUNBABIN, *Theater and Spectacle*, 158–160.

⁸⁴ K. DUNBABIN, *The Victorious Charioteer*, 83, 86.

⁸⁵ J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses*, 208.

character of the whole scene. What does seem certain is that our drawing served as visible sign of compliment to real 'star', identified by name, from the Hippodrome but sadly unknown from other sources⁸⁶.

In interpreting this drawing, one should consider it as the product of a classical, but not of a classicizing and imitative age. Attention may now be drawn to a few parallels, which seem to render this conclusion probable. The costume of the charioteer is that of Roman and Early Byzantine times or a short tunic, apparently universal down to the sixth century. The same kind of triumphal schema with calm and formal pose, the careful treatment of the circus setting in a similar style, are equally to be found in works of art dating from the Roman and Late Antiquity period. In this drawing, then we witness the work of a skilled artist who must have been familiar with and guided by the classical patterns⁸⁷. Had he been eager to imitate classical art, there would have been no shortage of models within his reach because Constantinople itself was a museum of ancient statuary assembled for purposes of urban decoration between the fourth and the sixth centuries⁸⁸. However, the graffiti on the walls shows only what for those who made them it was real and immediate. For this reason, the anonymous artist has attempted to portray the realities surrounding him i.e. the tower of the Hippodrome, as well as the flogpole with the banner.

The problem is now to date the drawing. It was virtually impossible to determine date from the palaeography of the inscription thus the only remain possibility to rely on the style and iconography of the drawing. As has already been said, the motif, focused on a single or victorious charioteer and his team of horses, goes back to the second century both on mosaics and in the minor arts, and remained popular until the fourth century. We have no notice, in any of the sources, that it survives in the Byzantine art of the hippodrome until a much later date. Moreover, as one can easily verify, the frontal pose becomes the preferred scheme for depictions of the victorious charioteer from the late fourth century onwards. (Plate VII. Fig. 12) We could easily hypothesize, that the reign of the Iconoclast Emperor Constantine (741–775) is most appropriate for the appearance of our drawing. What we see abundantly clearly is that while objecting to the use of human figures in religious art, the Iconoclasts are known to have tolerated and even encouraged secular representations such as those of hunts and hippodrome scenes⁸⁹. As far as I know, they have been favored as appropriate secular imagery that promoted imperial ideology⁹⁰. In this context,

⁸⁶ We happen to know the names of several charioteers. For this, see C. MANGO, *Daily Life*, 347–348; G. DAGRON, *L'hippodrome*, 118.

⁸⁷ Cf. O. DALTON, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology*, Oxford 1911, 14, 16.

⁸⁸ C. MANGO, *Byzantium. The Empire of New Rome*, New York 1980, 273–274.

⁸⁹ C. MANGO, *Byzantium*, 265–266; В. ЛИХАЧЕВА, Изобразительное искусство, в *Культура Византии, вторая половина VII–XII века*, Отв. ред. З. УДАЛЬЦОВА, Г. ЛИТАВРИН, Москва: Наука 1989, 480; R. CORMACK, *Byzantine Art*, Oxford 2000, 108; L. JAMES, *Mosaics in the Medieval World. From Late Antiquity to the Fifteenth Century*, New York 2107, 315.

⁹⁰ See, for example, A. MUTHESIUS, *Byzantine Silk Wearing*, 68–72, 146.

two passages from the Life of Stephen the Younger are valuable for understanding of the charioteer as a symbol of imperial triumph⁹¹. These explain why holy images were removed from churches and replaced with 'satanic horse races' as well as the 'demon' charioteer Ouranikos⁹².

Here we may suspect, although we cannot prove, that we would expect to find in these images a representation of the frontal scheme (a single victor in full-face, in a frontal quadriga, with horses arranged to left and right) which survives in Byzantine art of the hippodrome until a much later date⁹³. Some support for this comes from the observation of the charioteer theme in the eighth- and the ninth century silks⁹⁴. (Plate II. Figs. 4 & 5) And there is nothing strange to find once again a frontal pose similar to that which occurs on Byzantine works of art datable to the period from the fourth century onwards. Moreover, one must bear in mind that, unlike the discussed scene, in early Byzantine images, representation of the games shifted, underscoring the ceremonial staging of a spectacle that was intimately connected with the expression of power⁹⁵. Thus, it would be only a pure hypothesize on very shaky ground to connect Iconoclasm with the appearance of our drawing.

Another thing unavoidably comes to mind: in the period followed the death (842) of the last emperor to support iconoclasm there was a revival of interest in classical Greco-Roman heritage themes⁹⁶. This so-called 'Renaissance' (sometimes called the 'Macedonian Renaissance', after the ninth and tenth century imperial dynasty that fostered it) has been interpreted as a conscious use of classical style, a deliberate

⁹¹ J. BECKWITH, *The Art of Constantinople an Introduction to Byzantine Art, 330–1453*, New York 1961, 57.

⁹² The Life of Stephen the Younger, written in 808 in the period before the latter outbreak of Iconoclasm. See, *Vita S. Stephani iunioris* in PG 100, cols. 1113A, 1172A–B. Cf. also G. DAGRON, *L'hippodrome*, 255–257, 280.

⁹³ For example, see the charioteer silks during the Iconoclasm. A. MUTHESIUS, *Byzantine Silk Wearing*, 58, 72, 146; A. MUTHESIUS, 'Being' in Constantinople (4th–15th centuries) witnessed through the testimony of precious textiles, *DChAE* 38 (2017) 339. See, also *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca. 680–850): The Sources*, (Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs, vol. 7), L. BRUBAKER, J. HALDON (eds.), London 2001, 93.

⁹⁴ A. MUTHESIUS, *Byzantine Silk Wearing*, 72 (the Aachen Munster Charioteer silk, M29, Pl. 23a, 8th century; the London Charioteer silk, M45, Pl. 16b, 8th to 9th centuries and the Brussels Charioteer silk, M30, Pl. 22a, 8th to 9th centuries). Cf. also Beckwith, *The Art of Constantinople*, 58; Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, 81, 93. According to K. Dunbabin (*The Victorious Charioteer*, 78) 'there is no doubt that it is the charioteer of the circus, not the emperor or a divine figure, who is shown on two textiles [from Aachen and Cluny]... And that the motif is directly descended from the Roman version of the theme'. Cf. also Alicia Walker (*The Emperor and the World: Exotic Elements and the Imaging of Middle Byzantine Imperial Power, Ninth to Thirteenth Centuries C.E.*, Cambridge 2012, 25) who also states that the charioteer silks represents 'an exclusively Roman-Byzantine visual tradition' and as a group they indirectly implies 'that all victories achieved in the hippodrome ultimately glorify the emperor'.

⁹⁵ E. ВОЕСК, *Simulating the Hippodrome*, 290.

⁹⁶ В. ЛИХАЧЕВА, *Изобразительное искусство*, 480; R. CORMACK, *Byzantine Art*, 141.

looking-back to classicism and it has always seemed natural to Byzantium and whose traditions have never been interrupted⁹⁷. It seems to me that the anonymous artist rendered the tower next to the carceres in a perspective that, although imperfect, recalls once more the Greco-Roman roots of Byzantine art⁹⁸. I do not know whether the classical elements in the drawing are to be explained as the result of a never ceasing classical tradition which never been lost, or whether the ninth and the tenth centuries, under Macedonian emperors, harked back directly to a good models of the Late Classical period. It is true that the drawing follows more or less carefully models from prior centuries. Apparently, the artist had seen a work from Late Classical period or perhaps earlier and partly connected it with what surrounding him. Thus, he follows a Roman consistent typology of the circus setting and focused on the victor holding up the emblems of victory. However, the influence of the new movement looks like very marked only in the manuscripts. Unfortunately, we can find only a far away analogy between the depiction of our chariot (in a three-quarter rear view) and that of St. Elijah in the Homilies of St. Gregory Nazianzus (Bibliothèque Nationale, gr. 510), an illuminated manuscript made for the Emperor of Basil I between 879 and 882⁹⁹. (Plate VII. Fig. 14)

To sum up: the most conspicuous characteristics of our drawing (a chariot turned to the right and containing the standing charioteer, both in a three-quarters view; the symbols of victory: wreath and palm branch, as well as the acclamation with driver's name) are in close connection with circus schema which goes back to an earlier period and prevents us to assuming a later date for its creation. All of the above cited parallel examples ranging in date from the second through the fourth century. Of course, the implication of the wreath and palm branch here concerns glorification, triumph and apotheosis. The drawing in fact repeat the older schema for the victorious charioteer on floor mosaic (clearly survived in Constantinople) which nourished from the fourth to sixth century but apparently not practiced in Byzantium after the seventh century¹⁰⁰. It is complemented by the author's personal observations to con-

⁹⁷ J. BECKWITH, *The Art of Constantinople*, 65; C. MANGO, *Byzantium*, 272–273; R. CORMACK, *Byzantine Art*, 130. For the idea of the Macedonian Renaissance, see K. WEITZMANN, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex. A Study in the Origin and Method of Text Illustration*, Princeton 1947; K. WEITZMANN, *Greek Mythology in Byzantine Art*, Princeton 1951; and for a critique, J. HANSON, *The Rise and Fall of the Macedonian Renaissance*, in L. JAMES (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantium*, Oxford 2010, 338–350.

⁹⁸ The two earliest illustrated copies of the Homilies (sermons) of Gregory of Nazianzus both belong to the ninth century. В. ЛИХАЧЕВА, *Искусство на Византия, 4–15 век*, Софи 1987, 99.

⁹⁹ For this manuscript and its classical reminiscences, see K. WEITZMANN, *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscripts Illumination*, Leipzig 1971, 176–223; В. ЛИХАЧЕВА, *Искусство на Византия*, 99; J. BECKWITH, *The Art of Constantinople*, 67; *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era*, 27, 43.

¹⁰⁰ R. KOLARIK, *Floor Mosaic, ODB*, I, 791. Some scholars assumes that the the first part of the sixth century may be taken as the most likely date for the mosaic floor of the Great Palace of the Byzantine emperors. For this, see K. DUNBABIN, *Mosaic*, 255 and S. BASSET, *The Great Palace Mosaic and the Image of Imperial Power*, in G. SÖZEN, *Mosaics of Anatolian*, Istanbul 2011, 99. Others, as J. Trilling and K. Dark have advocated the late date or the first half of the seventh century, specifi-

vey some of the emblematic structures of the circus and the charioteer's costume. Finally, pictures of the races in the Hippodrome had occurred since the Roman period, either on official monuments, or in houses and objects belonging to private individuals. After all, we are not wrong if we assume that the drawing was made perhaps in a time span within the sixth (the year 537, constitutes a sure *terminus post quem*)¹⁰¹ and seventh century¹⁰². The suggestion, however, remains a pure hypothesis until further evidence becomes available. Certainly, the date cannot be solved with any degree of finality. Apart from being a valuable source regarding the church, this graffito certainly, help us understand and interpret much better the thoughts of the medieval people and the way they expressed them through art.

Finally, a word must be said about the present day condition of the medieval graffiti in Hagia Sophia. Most of them disappeared slowly due to various factors, but very often, the reason is the human hand. Alas, it is the most destructive thing discernible even by the naked eye. I say that with bitterness, because most of the graffiti that reveal an unknown part from the history of Hagia Sophia will disappear definitely. Converting the Hagia Sophia back into a mosque has very challenging consequences but remains the hope that the case of Zeyrek Mosque or Monastery of the Pantocrator with its painted marble walls should not be repeated here. Only time will tell that.

cally the reign of Heraclius (AD 610–641). For this, see J. TRILLING, *The Soul of the Empire: Style and Meaning in the Mosaic Pavement of the Byzantine Imperial Palace in Constantinople*, *DOP* 43 (1989) 27–72 and K. DARK, *Roman Architecture in the Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors at Constantinople During the Sixth to Ninth Centuries*, *Byz* 77 (2007) 100.

¹⁰¹ M. McCORMIK, A. CUTLER, Charioteers, *ODB*, I, 411 states that 'in the sixth century, the heyday of the circus, statues to champions were raised in the Hippodrome and their portraits adorned the Kathisma; in the provinces their renown is recorded in floor mosaics something bearing a driver's names'. Cf. also B. Schrodt, Sports of the Byzantine Empire, *Journal of Sport History* 8/31 (1981) 50; F. MEIJER, *Chariot Racing*, 142 ('the years 500–540... could confidently be called the highpoint of the history of chariot racing in Constantinople'), 150 ('the chariot races flourished around 500') and 151 ('the chariot racing thrived in the years 500 to 540').

¹⁰² M. McCORMIK, A. CUTLER, Chariot races, *ODB*, I, 412 (after the seventh century, chariot races disappeared except in Constantinople); F. MEIJER, *Chariot Racing*, 151 (after the mid-sixth century, silence falls over Byzantine chariot racing).

Plate I. The graffito drawing of a victorious charioteer.



Photo. 1.



Photo. 2.

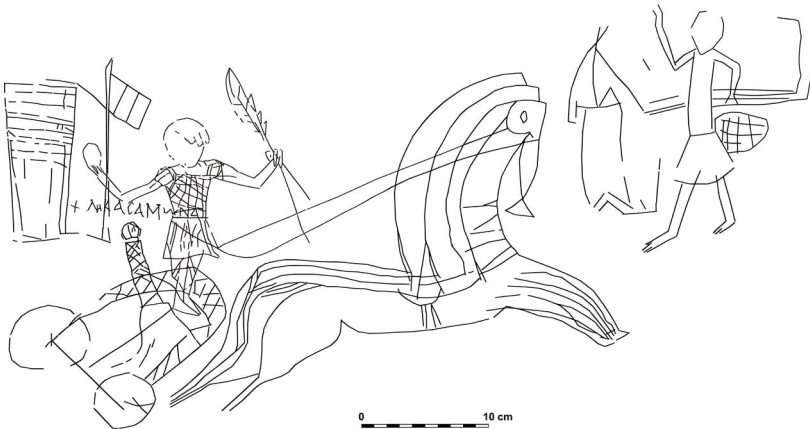


Figure 1.

Plate II. The schema of a victorious charioteer.

Figure 1. Lamp with victorious charioteer, British Museum Q 1366. After Dunbabin, Plate 5, Fig. 4.



Figure 2. Lamp with victorious charioteer, Ostia, Caseggiato degli Aurighi, charioteer painting, After Dunbabin, Plate 5, Fig. 5.



Figure 3. Conimbriga, mosaic with celestial (?) charioteer. After Dunbabin, Plate 9, Fig. 24.

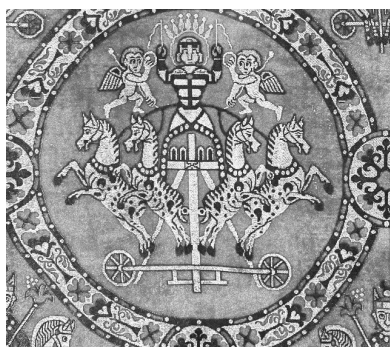


Figure 4. Victorious charioteer and his winning horses. Byzantium, 8th–9th century, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels. After Muthesius, Silk Wearing, M30, Pl. 22a.

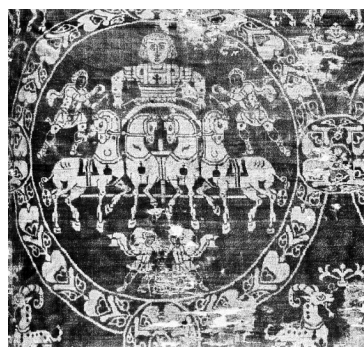


Figure 5. Victorious charioteer and his winning horses. From Charlemagne's tomb Aachen, Germany. Byzantium, 8th century, Aachen Cathedral treasure. After Muthesius, Silk Wearing, M29, Pl. 23a.

Plate III. The victorious charioteer performed a victory lap in the anticlockwise direction



Figure 1. Lamp with victorious schema WY. British Museum Q 920. After Dunbabin, Plate 5, Fig. 3.

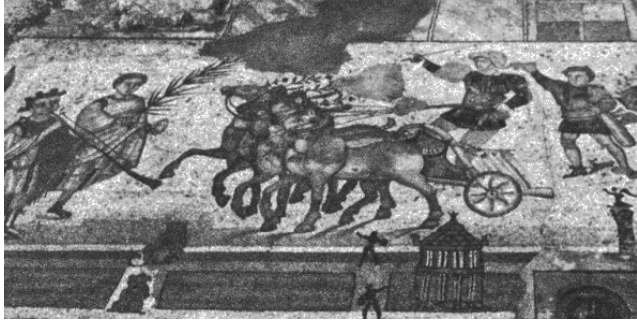


Figure 2. Piazza Armerina, Great Circus, detail of victor. After Dunbabin, Plate 5, Fig. 1.



Figure 3. The 'Kugelspiel' of Hippodrome, 4th century, Constantinople: Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin. After Cameron, Porphirius the Charioteer, № 16a.



Figure 4. Mosaic from villa at Silin, 15 km west of Leptis Magna. After Humphrey, Roman Circuses, 212.

Plate IV. The victorious charioteer's name and acclamation.



Figure 1. Triumphant charioteer with an acclamation for victory. Rome, 2nd half of the 4th century. After Jocelyne Neus-Clément, *Le cirque romain*, 449, Fig. 11.



Figure 2. Triumphant charioteer with an acclamation for victory. Rome, 2nd half of the 4th century. After Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, 104, № 96.



Figure 3. Triumphant charioteer with an acclamation for victory. Merida, Spain. After Dunbabin, Plate 8, Figs. 15 & 16.

Plate V. The Northern End of the Hippodrome, the Carceres and the



Figure 1. Fifteenth-century view of the hippodrome of Constantinople published by Onufrio Panvinio. Published at 1600, according to a document dated 1541, Iversen, *Obelisks in exile*, Pl. 21.

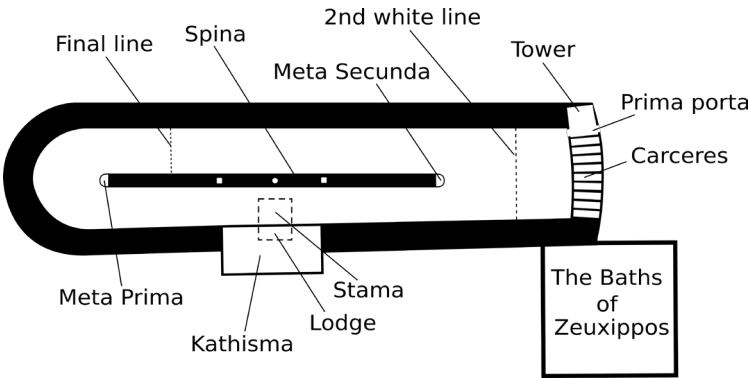


Figure 2. Plan of the Hippodrome of Constantinople. After Dagron, *L'organisation*, 114. Drawing by Thomas Thomov after Dagron, *L'organisation*, 114.

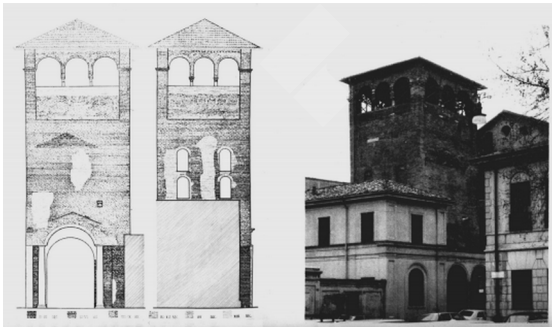


Figure 3. The Tower of Circus of Maxentius, Milan. After Humprey, *Roman Circuses*, 618.



Figure 4. Tower next to the carceres, Hippodrome of Nîmes. After Fauquet, *Le cirque romain*, Planche LXXII, Fig. 2.

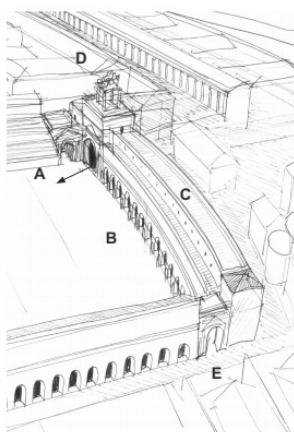


Figure 5. Reconstruction drawing of the Northern Side of the Hippodrome, Carceres according to O. Panvinio's drawing. A – 'prima porta'; B – carceres; C – floor; D – tower. After Fauquet, *Le cirque romain*, Planche CV.

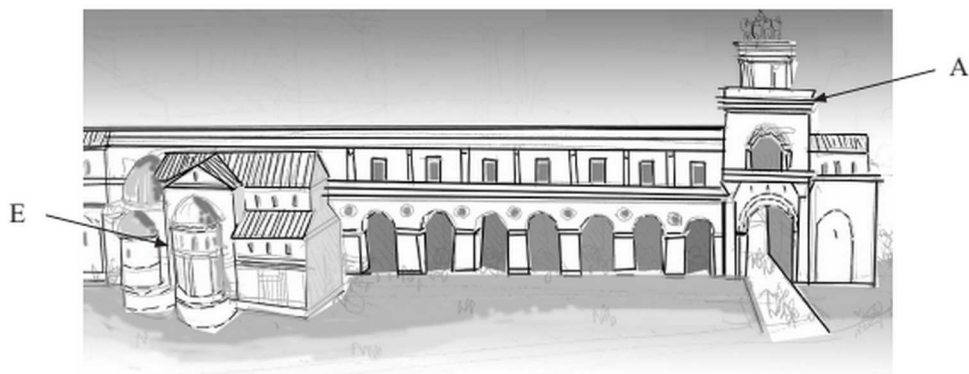


Figure 6. Reconstruction drawing of the tower (A) with 'prima porta' next to the carceres, View from North. After Fauquet, *Le cirque romain*, Planche CVI, Fig. 2.

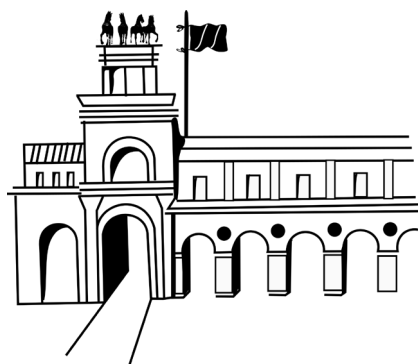


Figure 7. Reconstruction drawing of the flagpole next to the Tower (by Thomas Thomov).

Plate VI. The setting of Hippodrome, the spina and its attributes.



Figure 1. Trier glass fragment. Landesmuseum Trier. After Humphrey, *Roman Circuses*, 252.



Figure 2. Etched Glass Bowl from Cologne-Bransfeld, Römisch-Germanisches Museum, Cologne, AD 320–340. After B. Bergmann, *Pictorial Narratives of the Roman Circus*, in *Le cirque romaine et son image*, eds. Jocelyne Nelis-Clément and Jean-Michel Roddaz, 361–391. Bordeaux: Ausonius, 2008, 384, Fig. 22.



Figure 3. Meta or turning post. British Museum, 1st century CE. After Humphrey, *Roman Circuses*, 252.



Figure 4. Seat from Hippodrome in the garden of Sultanahmet Mosque (Blue Mosque), Istanbul. Photo: Thomas Thomov.



Figure 5. The spina of Hippodrome, Constantinople, 4th century. Photo: Thomas Thomov.

Plate VII. The charioteer's grab and the chariot.



Figure 1. Miniature of charioteers. Egypt (?), ca. 500. After Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, 102, № 93.



Figure 3. Roman Charioteer on quadriga with the name of the horses and his own name, probably 4th century, Barcelona.



Figure 2. Diptych leaf with charioteer. Rome (?), late 4th–early 5th century. After Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, 103, № 94.



Figure 4. Roman Charioteer on a funerary relief. Vatican City, Vatican Museum, Inv. № 9556.



Figure 5. Roman Charioteer on quadriga with the name of the horses and his own name, 4th century, Dougga, Tunisia, The Bardo Museum.



Figure 6. Roman Charioteer in chariot. Mainz Landesmuseum, http://www.vroma.org/images/mcmanus_images/chariotstatuette.jpg

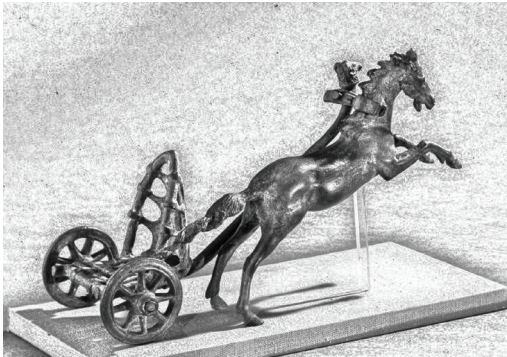


Figure 7. 1st–2nd century CE, British Museum, Museum number 1894,1030.1; Bronze model of a two-horse racing chariot (biga). https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1894-1030-1



Figure 8. Ivory charioteer with palm, British Museum, 1st–2nd century CE http://www.vroma.org/images/mcmanus_images/charioteerivory.jpg

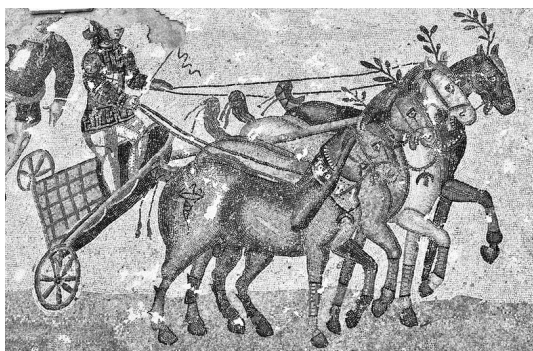


Figure 9. Quadriga (four-horse chariot) in the Circus Maximus, in palaestra of fourth century Roman Villa del Casale, near Piazza Armerina, Sicily, Italy <http://www.soniahalliday.com/category-view3.php?pri=IT5579-09JT.jpg>



Figure 10. Quadriga, detail from the mosaic floor depicting the Quadriga race (chariot) in the Circus maximus from the palaestra, Villa Romana del Casale, Piazza Armerina, Sicily, 4th century AD. <https://antik-mosaik.livejournal.com/65476.html>



Figure 11. Quadriga, detail from the Sarcophagus, Aquino, the late 2nd to 3rd century AD After Humphrey, Roman Circus, 197, № 98.



Figure 12. The Monument of Porphirius the charioteer, Constantinople, 6th century. Photo: Thomas Thomov.



Figure 13. Charioteer on chariot.
A relief from the base of the Obelisk at the Hippodrome, Constantinople, 4th century.
Photo: Thomas Thomov.



Figure 14. Elijah Ascends to Heaven,
The Homilies of St. Gregory Nazianzus,
Paris BN, cod. grec. 510, fol. 264v.
<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84522082/f542.item>

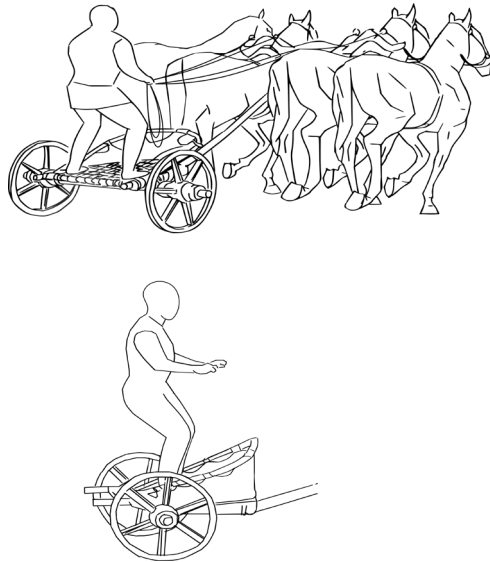


Figure 15. Reconstruction drawing of the Chariot and Charioteer (by Thomas Thomov).