

# Lithostratos/Gabbatha



## Description

The Aramaic appellation of a place in Jerusalem, designated also under the Greek name of Lithostrotos. It occurs only in John 19:13, where the Pontius Pilate brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat, in the place that is called Lithostrotos, and in Hebrew Gabbatha. Efforts have been made by commentators to identify «Gabbatha» either with the outer court of the Temple, which is known to have been paved, or with the meeting-place of the Great Sanhedrin, which was half within, half without that Temple's outer court, or again with the ridge at the back of the House of the Lord; but these efforts cannot be considered as successful.

## Etymology

**Lithostrotos** - a paved or mosaic-laid floor. From Greek: Lithos is stone, and stratos/strotos means army(?). In the case of the judgment seat, the area in front of Pilate's chair was probably paved by mosaics or slabs.

**Gabbatha (Gabtha)** - Probably an Aramaic word meaning "raised seat". It may also be based on the Hebrew root word Gav (Gab) which means "back" or "raised".

## Scripture

**John 18:28**

*Jesus is brought to the hall of judgment, in front of Pontius Pilate, the governor of the Roman province of Judaea (26-36AD):*

"Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment".

**John 19:13**

*The place of the hall of judgment is described in the following verse:*

"When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in **THE JUDGMENT SEAT IN A PLACE THAT IS CALLED THE PAVEMENT, BUT IN THE HEBREW, GABBATHA**".

**John 19:16**

*Jesus is condemned to death by Pontius Pilate:*

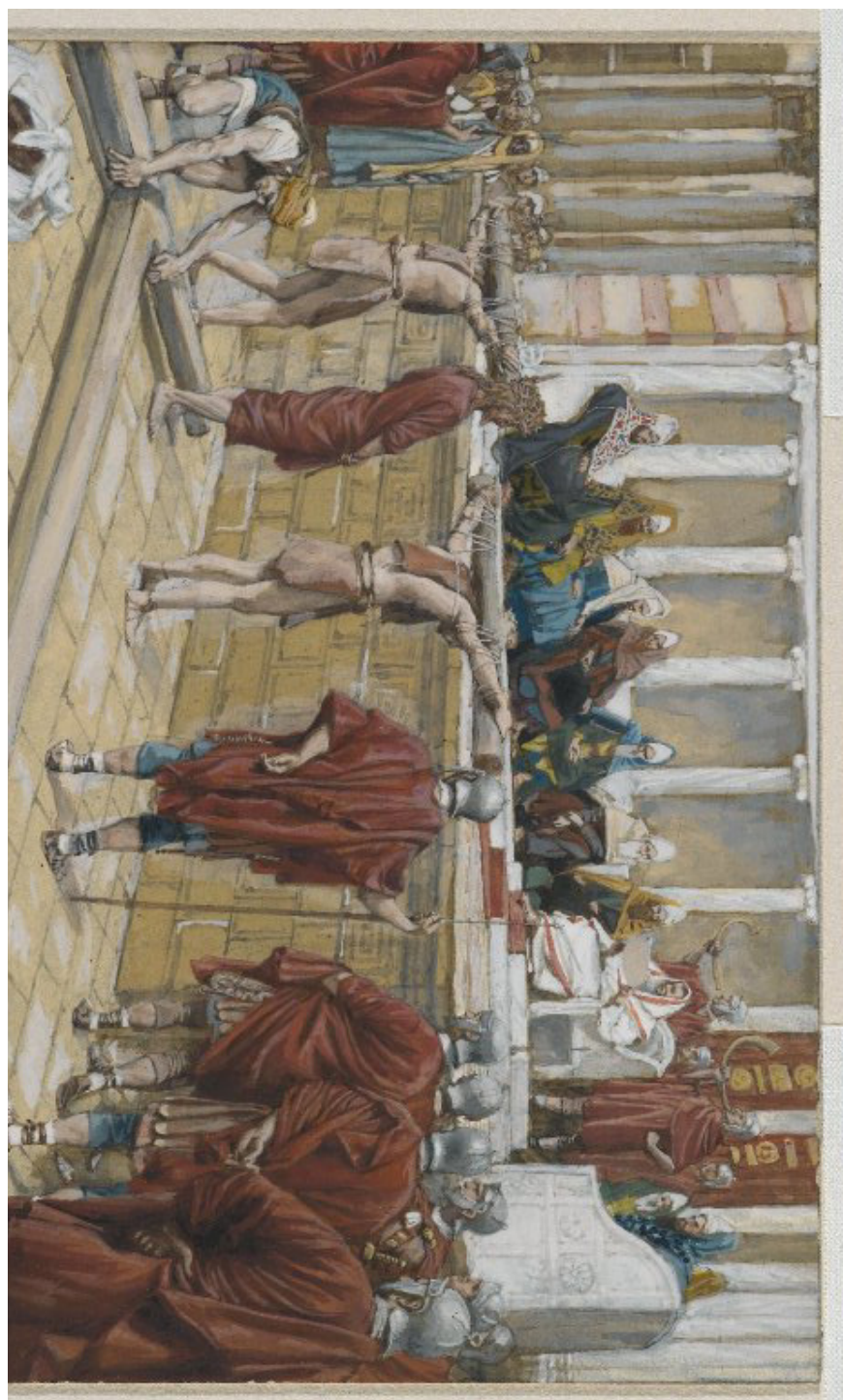
"Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified".

## Lithostratos Continued...



### **Dice Game Carved into the Stone**

The Lithostratos stone slab has grooves carved in it, which are variously interpreted as channels for rainwater or traction for horses. What is clear, though, is that the squares and triangles on the slabs were made by game-playing Roman soldiers. The floor has been dated to the time of Hadrian (AD 117-138) and therefore, postdates Jesus, but it is still fascinating and serves to bring to life the Gospel account of soldiers gambling for Jesus' clothes.





## Ecce Homo Covenant



Ecce Homo Church is a Roman Catholic church on Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem, along the path that according to tradition Jesus walked, carrying his cross, on the way to his crucifixion. The church is now part of the Convent of the Sisters of Zion.

The Latin words *Ecce Homo* (i.e. Behold the Man) are attributed to Pontius Pilate in the Gospel of John 19:5, when he presented a scourged Jesus Christ, bound and crowned with thorns, to a hostile crowd. The New Testament also says that Jesus was dressed in fake royal attire, to mock the claim that he was “King of the Jews.”

The church contains one arch of a Roman gateway, which has a further arch crossing the Via Dolorosa outside. There was originally a third arch to the gateway, on the other side of the street; in the sixteenth century, it was incorporated into a monastery for Uzbek dervishes in the Order of the Golden Chain, but this was later demolished, taking the arch with it.

Traditionally, the arch was said to have been part of the gate of Herod's Antonia Fortress, which itself was alleged to be the location of Jesus' trial by Pontius Pilate; the traditional conclusion was that the arch was the location of Pontius Pilate's *Ecce Homo* speech, reported by the Bible. However, due to archaeological investigation, it is now known that the arch is a triple-arched gateway, built by Hadrian, as an entrance to the eastern Forum of Aelia Capitolina; the site of the forum was previously a large open-air pool of water (the Strouthion Pool).