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The Imperial Palace Glittering with Light: The Material and Immaterial in the Sacrum Palatium

In the fourth century, Libanius wrote of the beauty of Nicomedia and described the imperial palace as a bright vision of light appearing from afar:

"But the form of the city was much more fascinating, and tyrannizing over the eyes for its beauty, it attracted the whole attention on itself. Similar were the feelings of him who saw it for the first time and of him who grew old within its walls. One showed to its companion the palace, glittering over the bay..."[1]

Although brief, this remark about the radiance of the imperial palace holds greater significance. Indeed, it was a recognizable *topos* of late-antique literature that, in the Byzantine period, became a typical attribute of all descriptions of the Great Palace of Constantinople, real and imaginary.[2]

In literary descriptions, the imperial palace was described as an image of bright light that seemingly dematerialized before the viewer as if a fantastic vision. This was not an imaginary fiction. Rather, what made the palace a shining vision of light that appeared almost unreal in its luminosity was based upon the reality of the material of its architecture. The shining light emanating from the imperial palace was not only a literary *topos* and, later, an accepted convention, but a real effect produced by the sunrays reflecting off the polished surfaces of the palace's metal roof tiles and the precious materials decorating the interior.

This paper explores the materiality and value of light in the Great Palace of Constantinople. After the fifth century, the Great Palace became the only residence of the Eastern Roman emperor; it is the only one for which the written evidence is conspicuous. Destructions and robberies perpetuated over the centuries have left ruins that cannot give an exhaustive picture of the original splendour and monumentality of the imperial palace. Thus, an understanding of the architectural appearance of the palace is bound to texts, which were not, however, attentive to the description of the palace as a whole and only mention details related to its buildings in passing. I will first concentrate on the luminosity of the exterior of the palace, namely, the metal roof tiles that were utilized for their ability to reflect and diffuse light. In order to understand the significance of the use of metal roof tiles on the palace — an architectural component that has never received adequate attention in the past scholarship — it is first necessary to analyse illustrious antecedents in Roman imperial architecture that share this feature. This will be followed by an

exploration of the use and meaning of light in the interior spaces of the imperial residence. The goal, to provide insight into these brilliant architectural features and elucidate the symbolic meaning of light in the great complex of the imperial palace and in imperial ideology.

Effects of Light on the Exterior

Unfortunately, due to the intrinsic economic value of metal, metal tiles were subject to melting and reuse. Thus, no archaeological evidence that can univocally be recognised as once part of a metal-tiled roof has survived the centuries. However, at least for the palace of Constantinople, there is enough textual evidence to suggest that the Great Palace was clad in metal roof tiles. The first reference to the palace's metal roof tiles can be found in an epigram about the *Chalkē*, the great entrance located in the *Augusteon.* Written shortly after 498 and celebrating the *Chalkē* of the Emperor Anastasius (491-518), the epigram compares the gilded roofs of the palace entrance to those of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome.[3] Since antiquity, the latter was well known for its shining golden roofs, made of bronze and clad in a thick golden plate.[4] The *Chalkē* of Anastasius was burned during the great fire that destroyed the surroundings of the *Augusteon* on the occasion of the Nika riot in 532.[5] Around 540, a new monumental entrance to the Great Palace was built by Emperor Justinian I (527-565); during the rule of Basil I (867-886) the *Chalkē* again underwent major restorations.[6] In the twelfth century, George Kedrenos mentions the bronze roof clad in gold of the *Chalkē*,[7] suggesting that the technical features of the *Chalkē*'s roofs did not significantly change between the sixth and twelfth centuries.

Although not certain, it seems likely that the *Chalkē* as it was rebuilt by Justinian also had gilded bronze tiles. Our sources, however, are not straightforward. Procopius describes Justinian's great entrance as he was seeing it from the inside, including details of the decoration in the dome and on the arches.[8] Since the author gives no details about its exterior it cannot be claimed either way if the *Chalkē* had gilded bronze tiles.[9] According to the *Vita Basilii*, three centuries later, the emperor Basil spent a great sum of money to restore the *Chalkē*, several parts of which were in bad condition, particularly its old leaky roofs.[10] Repairing the *Chalkē* seems a small effort compared to the enormous building activity of Basil in the Great Palace, whose construction of new buildings and restoration of several old structures, we are told, were decorated in gold and precious stones.[11] While it is true that Basil added a court of justice to the *Chalkē*, the expense might be better explained as the cost of restoring the gilded bronze roofs.[12] Furthermore, in the twelve century, the historians Kedrenos and John Zonaras both explained that the name *Chalkē* derived from the bronze roof tiles of the building.[13] Although it is more likely that the word *Chalkē*, which means "bronzed" or "brazen," derives from the building's bronze doors rather than from its roof,[14] it is worth noticing that this is remarked upon as a distinctive

feature of the building, one that had likely been established for centuries, as opposed to one that evoked its appearance during the brief period from around 498 until the great fire of 532. If the roofs of the *Chalkē* were not refurbished with bronze tiles by Justinian, they were almost certainly restored in bronze or gilt bronze by Basil I.

An overview of Roman constructions roofed in gilded bronze tiles will help us to understand the visual and symbolic import that the *Chalkē*'s golden roof expressed, especially when we consider that very few buildings were roofed in metal tiles, and almost none in gilded bronze. In the epigram from the *Greek Anthology* cited above, the reference to the roof of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus is very significant since it associates the *Chalkē* with a renowned building that symbolized to Romans the very notion of *romanitas*. The Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus was the most important temple of Rome. Rebuilt under the patronage Quintus Lutatius Catulus in 69BCE after a fire, it was dedicated to the deities who had protected Rome and who had aided its ascendancy. The temple housed the great treasures of civic identity collected since the founding of Rome. It was also the only temple built during the Republican Era that had a golden bronze roof. According to Pliny the Elder, one of Catulus's most impressive achievements was to have it roofed in gold.[15] Over the next century and a half, the temple was destroyed and rebuilt several more times. The Emperor Domitian (81-96CE) spent an enormous sum gilding its roofs,[16] restoring the radiant temple that so impressed Roman writers throughout Late Antiquity.[17] Despite its pagan history, it remained in the collective memory of the Christian Roman Empire as a source of pride; in the sixth century, for example, Procopius deprecated Genseric who, in 455, had dared to plunder its gilt bronze tiles.[18]

Successive centuries witnessed the construction of other gilded monuments built under imperial auspices. Golden-roofed buildings were brightly visible symbols of Rome's splendour, each a testament to the imperial patron's religiosity and philanthropy. Under Trajan (98-117), the Basilica Ulpia, a central monument of the forum, was roofed in gilded plates.[19] Later on, the Pantheon and likely the Temple of Venus and Rome, both built under Hadrian (117-138), had their roofs made of gilded bronze.[20] Constantine funded the construction of a few structures roofed with gilded tiles.[21] Eusebius mentions only one of these: the first *martyrion* of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople, which Constantine had planned as his mausoleum.[22] According to Eusebius, the bronze roof functioned to protect the building against rain. Even to Constantine's panegyrist, a churchman and not an engineer, the material benefit of a metal roof was well known. Eusebius goes on to explain that the gilding on the bronze roof reflected the sunrays, its light making the building visible to those looking from afar. Thus, Constantine's *martyrion* of the Holy Apostles, indeed one of the major architectural achievements of the emperor in Constantinople, must have been conspicuous in the cityscape for its brilliantly shining roofs. Considering that the *martyrion* of the Holy Apostles was intended for Constantine's burial from the start, the light reflecting from its roofs

became the visible manifestation of the imperial glory of Constantine and the allusion to the emperor as Sun-Helios.[23] In the city of Constantine, the imperial mausoleum with its glittering roofs created a landmark that was visibly and conceptually connected to the emperor's other constructions. This path was marked by bright spots in the city, from the conspicuous edifices of the hippodrome and the palace[24] that were joined by Constantinople's main road (the *Mese*) to the Forum of Constantine with the radiant statue atop his honorific column, and then on to the bright imperial mausoleum, the *martyrion* of the Holy Apostles.[25]

The Great Church of Antioch was probably embellished with gilded roof tiles, as well. Its construction was begun in 327 under Constantine and was completed under Constantius II (337-361) in 341. In modern scholarship the Great Church of Antioch is commonly called the Golden Octagon because of its golden dome.[26] Eusebius's vague mention of the use of gold and bronze is perhaps more fitting for a description of the outside roofing of the church rather that the decoration of the dome's interior.[27] The fifth-century mosaic of the Megalopsychia, found in a villa near Antioch, almost certainly reproduces the bright metal roof of the Great Church's dome.[28] (Fig. 1) Forming part of the border of the mosaic, the representation of the architectural complex includes the octagonal building depicted next to the palace. The octagon's dome is composed of whitish stone tesserae, undoubtedly in order to convey the brightness of its roof. By contrast, the roofed portico that is shown encircling the church, as well as the lower roofs of the palace, relies on reddish tesserae, the colour of terra cotta roof tiles.

Although the accuracy of late-antique texts and visual sources is often questionable, in this case, the mosaic from the Megalopsychia follows what we know of Antioch's complex of buildings. The palace, with its outer loggia, and the circus are next to one another — just as in Libanius's description of the "new city" on the Orontes island.[29] These, in turn, are placed next to the octagonal church, which was probably located in the same area.[30] The representation of the Golden Octagon next to the palace and the hippodrome — indeed the major structures of imperial display — in the context of the representation of city of Antioch on the mosaic border affirms the status of the church as one of the major manifestations of imperial authority in the minds of the fifth-century viewers.[31] The golden dome of the octagon enriched and illuminated the architecture of the cathedral, whose cosmic significance and reflective power did not go unnoticed in Constantius's dedicatory inscription where he lauds the buildings as "dwellings in all ways like the vaults of heaven, brightly gleaming."[32] The golden dome of the cathedral emphasized the monumentality of the church and, in the great Roman tradition of imperial patronage, declared the religiosity and good will of the emperor towards the Antiochene Church.[33] Thus, the church was once again a major achievement of the emperor, a glory of the city and, with its resplendent dome, visibly marked the building activity of Constantine and Constantius in the cityscape.

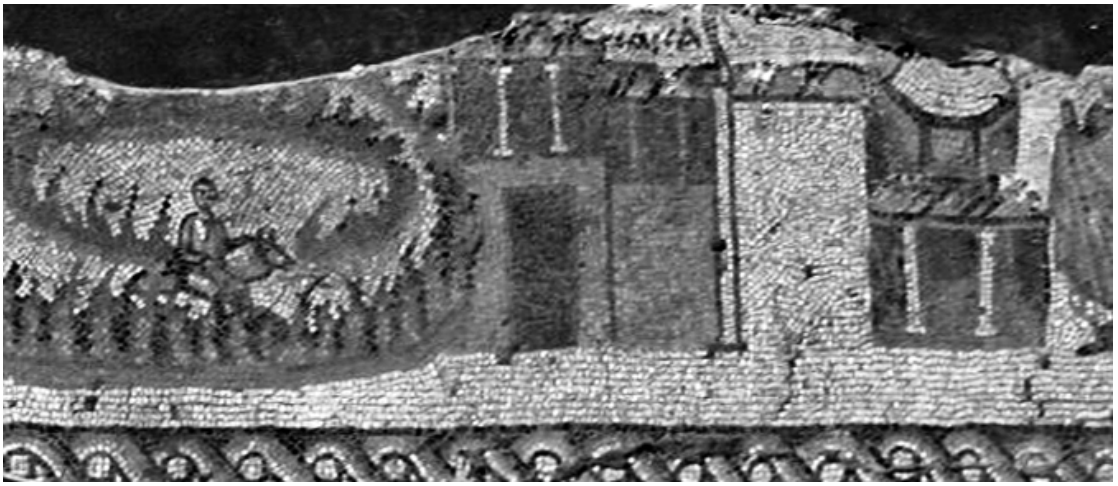

Fig. 1: Antakya, Archaeological Museum: so-called fifth-century mosaic of the Megalopsychia (inv. 1016), detail of the border (photo of the author)

In the sixth century, the major churches patronised by Emperor Justinian (527-565) at Constantinople, such as Hagia Sophia, Hagioi Sergios and Bacchos, and, possibly Hagia Eirene, as well, were all roofed in metal, but in lead — which, as far as we can tell, was never gilded — rather than in gold or gilded bronze.[34] Lead-tiles roofs were particularly suitable to Justinian's architecture, as a metal roof could better protect domes and semi-domes — indeed, the typical features of the architecture of the time of Justinian — thereby preventing water leaks into the brick masonry. Further, lead was much less expensive than gold or bronze and it could meet the need to cover the extensive roofs of Justinian's Constantinopolitan churches.[35] The lead could be polished to reflect light and thus served as an alternative to gilding, though the effect produced was somewhat different, as will be discussed below. When hit by sunrays at the right angle, lead roofs reflect white light, as it is still visible in the case of Hagia Sophia. (Fig. 2) Unfortunately there is very little information on the roofs of Justinian's buildings: written texts do not mention them and, although the lead tiles were repaired across the centuries, there is no detailed publication about their roofing systems.

Still, it can be argued that the roofs of Justinian's greatest achievement, the Hagia Sophia, were covered in lead at the time of its construction. The famous tenth-century mosaic above the southern door of Hagia Sophia depicting Justinian offering the model of the Great Church has golden tesserae used to represent the dome of the church. (Fig. 3) The model in the mosaic is not absolutely accurate, showing only the major elements of the church building — the central dome, the apse, and the stair-towers. Despite the fact that a model of a church is not meant to be a precise replication of the architecture, it is nonetheless reasonable to conclude that, in this case, the representation of the Hagia Sophia as it appears in the mosaic cannot serve as evidence for the roofing materials.[36] For, although the roof of the Hagia Sophia was repaired and restored over the centuries, and never properly published,[37] the very few surveys of the roof have found no trace of gilding on the lead tiles. Nor are there any early textual sources with descriptions of the roof to challenge this observation.[38]

Fig. 2: Istanbul, Hagia Sophia: the roofs over the main dome

Moreover, after the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks, when the Hagia Sophia served as the inspiration for the new architecture promoted by the Sultan and designed by Sinan in the sixteenth century, lead became the roofing of choice; but none of the new roofs was gilded.[39]

Justinian's Church of San Vitale in Ravenna (inaugurated in 548/549) also had its dome covered in metal, most likely lead, further attesting to the new roofing practice that was employed for church architecture under Justinian.[40] (Fig. 4) A metal roof is depicted in the church model held by Bishop Ecclesius in the apse mosaic in which the dome of the church is made of green-bluish tesserae that likely represent the lead cover of the roof, in this case, probably a testament to the actual appearance. As in the Megalopsychia mosaic, the colour of the dome contrasts with the reddish tesserae used for the lower roof, which accurately capture the terracotta tiles that were used to roof the church's ambulatory (Fig. 4). Even today, after centuries of restorations, the central roof of San Vitale is still covered in metal.[41]

In summarizing the argument thus far, two important aspects about metal roofs become clear. First, the buildings of imperial Rome, Constantinople, and Antioch that had gold roofs also invariably had imperial patrons. This is not necessarily due only to the exceptional cost of the great quantities of gold needed to roof a building, rather to the importance of the particular structure clad in precious metal roof tiles in the context of the building activity of their patrons.[42] Second, there was a shift in the age of Justinian that introduced the widespread use of lead for the roofs of the ecclesiastical buildings patronised by the emperor. Metal roofs, in general, have great bearing on the issue of the Great Palace, in determining which, if any, of its many roofs were metal, in understanding the significance of the material, and in formulating the concept of the Byzantine emperor and his sacred domain.

I have already proposed that the roofs of the *Chalkē* were gilded, and that this was the case from the end of the fifth century throughout its following history and restorations. This building marked the transition to the private imperial space which only could be crossed by selected dignitaries and which prohibited access by the common people.[43] If we accept that the roofs of the *Chalkē* were indeed clad in bronze or gilded bronze, reflecting the sunrays, they would have illuminated the palace entrance with golden light.[44] The brightness of the palace's main gate would have made it quite visible at one side of the *Augusteon.* Dominating the other side of the *Augusteon* since 536, and competing for visual attention, was Justinian's Hagia Sophia.[45] Though much smaller than Hagia Sophia, the *Chalkē's* bright roofs would have drawn the attention of visitors.[46] In fact, the golden roofs would have complemented the lead roof of the Hagia Sophia visually and conceptually. While the lead roofs of the Hagia Sophia reflected a white light — the colour of purity and of the divine [47] — suitable to the patriarchal church of Constantinople, the gilded bronze roof tiles of the *Chalkē* radiated the golden light that had long been associated with royalty. (FIG. 5) White and gold light can furthermore be associated with the moon and sun, the latter being cosmic metaphors associated with the notion of power, as is described in a *chelidynisma*. Though recorded in the twelfth century, it undoubtedly reflects earlier concepts about imperial power (*imperium*) and sacred power (*sacerdotium*). This *chelidynisma* was chanted not far from the *Augusteon*, in the hippodrome, the privileged space of the public manifestation of the imperial power and the place of the ritual communication between the citizens and the emperor, further attesting for the great political import of the hymn. A passage of the chant states: "the sun and the moon bow in proskynesis before God" (*Ηλιος και σελήνη θεόν προσκυνούσιν*); and is then followed by the responsory, "The Roman Empire shall be victorious" *('Ρωμαν…α νικ)*.[48] In this cosmic metaphor, the sun and the moon stand for imperial power (*imperium*) and religious authority (*sacerdotium*), two aspects that together govern the Christian Roman Empire and preside over God's Church. These ideas are architecturally manifested by the palace and the Great Church on either side of the *Augusteon*, and *imperium* and *sacerdotium* are made visible in the symbolic coloured radiance of the golden-clad *Chalkē* and the white-roofed Hagia Sophia. The accordance and complement of Empire and Church in Byzantium are embodied in architecture and in the urban topography.

Fig. 3: Istanbul, Hagia Sophia, south-west vestibule: lunette above the door leading to the church narthex, detail of the tenth-century mosaic

Fig. 4: Ravenna, San Vitale: sixth-century apse mosaic showing Bishop Ecclesius holding the church model (photo of the author)

The *Chalkē* was the visible part of the palace complex, the façade that any viewer could perceive, and has therefore been singled out here for its visual and ideological significance. However, this is not to suggest that the rest of the palace was without radiant embellishment, or that the meaning of use of precious metals did not permeate the complex, inside the walls and on the exterior of the buildings. In a poem by Corippus written in praise of Emperor Justin II (565-578), Corippus describes the hall where the meeting between the emperor and the Avar embassy was to take place. In his verses, the lofty hall and its large roofs are resplendent with the sun's rays glittering on the various metals.[49] In all likelihood, the audience hall described in Corippus' poem was the Great Consistory of *Daphne*, which was used for meeting with foreign embassies.[50] The description of the hall is inserted into a larger passage of text describing the brightness that surrounded the imperial reception and the luminous appearance of the emperor. In this text, the large roofs of the palace express through their radiance the sacredness of the event taking place inside the building. Thus, the shining roof of the hall, likely based on the material reality of its exterior gilded or bronze revetment, was interpreted as a supernatural, immaterial manifestation reflecting the sacredness of the imperial ceremony within the building. The architecture itself "worked" to express the holy character of the event and together, emperor and glittering architecture transformed the building into a sacred space. The light which emanated from the empire

and the emperor, as so many court poets and eulogizers explained, was the sacredness of the imperial power made visible.[51]

The words of Corippus draw special attention to the roofs of the lofty hall as well as how these were associated with the light of the imperial appearance, revealing the function of the metal roof tiles as an expression of the *basileia* of the emperor. We can then understand and contextualize the symbolism of metal roofs covering other imperial spaces, analyzing the few records of the palace roofs. The paucity of written evidence about the roofs of the palace can be justified by the fact that the palace is rarely described in Byzantine literature at all. When an author does mention the appearance of the palace or its decoration, it is from the perspective of one inside the building. These views served an important purpose; writers consciously emphasized the grandeur of imperial spaces in order to laud the greatness of their emperor and make his magnificence known to all people, most of who would never access the palace.[52]

Fig. 5: Istanbul, Hagia Sophia: eastern view from the Marmara sea

The *Nea Ekklesia*, the new church built by Basil I within the palace walls and consecrated in 880, had five domes clad in brass roof tiles, "which resembled gold" on the outside and were glittering with beautiful images like stars in the inside.[53] The new church of Basil set an example in Byzantine church architecture. Although nothing remains of the building, it is widely accepted that it became a model for the development of the architecture of the capital.[54]

From textual descriptions and references, the *Chrysotriklinos*, the throne room built under Justin II and decorated by Tiberius (578-582) that later became a central location for imperial receptions, can be safe-

ly reconstructed as an octagonal hall similar to sixth-century churches such as Hagioi Sergios and Bacchos in Constantinople and San Vitale in Ravenna.[55] Although written sources never mention its roof, it was probably covered in metal, just as the centrally planned buildings mentioned above, in order protect the precious decorations of its interiors.

If the entirety of the Great Palace was not covered in metal, we can assume that those buildings that did have metal roofs were all highly significant places expressing the concept of imperial power. As we have seen, the *Chalkŭ* was the major gate of the Great Palace, a monumental boundary over which only a few selected dignitaries were admitted. It was also where the emperor exited and entered the palace during the imperial processions through Constantinople. The Great Consistory was a major throne room reserved for imperial audiences with foreign embassies. The *Nea Ekklesia* was a repository of rare Old-Testament and Christological relics, central to the expression of the imperial *basileia* of Basil I. Furthermore, due to its ambiguous status of a palatine church that was also included in the religious life of the city, it came to be central in imperial and urban rituals in the following centuries.[56] The *Chrysotriklinos* was a major hall of imperial display, used as a throne room and, occasionally, a banquet hall. Within its walls various imperial ceremonies took place following a strict ceremonial, replete with deep religious content.[57] As an anonymous ninth-century epigram tells us, its wall decoration represented the heavenly court in hierarchical order, underneath which the earthly imperial court gathered, making the comparison between the heavenly court of God and the earthly court of the emperor clear.[58] Thus, all the imperial rooms where metal roof tiles may have been used were central to the expression of court ceremonial and to the display of the *basileia* as the power legitimised in the name of God. By reflecting the sunrays, these bright roofs emanated light and made visible the sacredness of the palace from afar. The reflecting power of the metal tiles — of which, as we have seen, Eusebius was aware already in the fourth century — was instrumental to convey the splendour of the imperial residence. What is more, the notion of the imperial power as a divine power endowed by God was best captured in the brilliant effects of the reflected light.

Diverse metals were used on the roofs of the most important buildings of the palace: bronze or gilded bronze for the *Chalkē* and bronze alloys, most likely brass, for the *Nea Ekklesia*. While it is still possible that the rest of the palace also had metal roofs, perhaps also in lead,[59] the use of gold, bronze, and bronze alloys coloured the most representative structures of the palace in a golden light. If we consider that in antiquity important state monuments were regularly maintained, which included the polishing of their roofs, their reflective power would have been indeed great.[60] In the summer, the Great Palace shined in the sun, reflecting the most dazzling light, and making the palace a prominent beacon in the cityscape of Constantinople. During the gloomy days of winter, the palace would have glowed, its golden roofs capturing the feeble sunrays and reflecting them. Furthermore, the shi-

ning palace roofs would have been visible even at night: at least from the eighth century, the light of the Pharos[61] surely reflected off the metal-roofed structures of the Great Palace, such as the nearby *Chrysotriklinos*, making the palace visible from a distance and bright even in the darkness.[62]

Finally, the numerous water fountains in the expansive gardens of the imperial palace complex contributed to the glittering effect.[63] Sunlight played on the water poured from the fountains, creating brilliant pools and sparkling falls. The fountain themselves were often made with reflective material that could add to the lighting effects — sculptures, basins, and canopies made of marble and precious metals. As described by an anonymous chronographer, the bronze fountain built in the imperial palace during the reign of Theophilos (829-842) — the so-called Mystic Fountain of the Triconch — had a "rim crowned with silver and a gilded cone," while not far from it, on the long side of the Sigma, there were two bronze lions spouting water.[64] In the *Vita Basilii*, we are told that the northern fountain of the atrium of the *Nea Ekklesia* was decorated with bronze statues representing cocks, goats, and rams, all spouting water onto the floor underneath.[65]

The glittering produced by water in the various fountains extended also to the walls of the palace. As a seventh-century anonymous Chinese writer tells us, in the summer, the walls of the palace buildings were transformed into waterfalls.[66] With the use of ingenious devices, the water poured from the gutters and covered the walls themselves, refreshing the court dignitaries and creating a marvellous show. The text gives precious information on the walls of the palace buildings covered in a white revetment that made the walls as bright as jade — indeed, in the Chinese culture, the most precious stone. The light multiplied on the marble revetments of the walls and on the columns of porticoes and courtyards, expressing once again the tangible but immaterial light emanated from the palace and, thus, from the empire. Therefore, in the Great Palace the materiality of architecture made real the luminosity and brightness of the palace itself, an element seemingly rhetorical in the context of written sources that, in fact, was tangible and real.

Light in the interior of the palace

The reflection of light on the exterior of the palace is just one aspect deserving address; light-also played a fundamental role in the interior of the Great Palace, where it was instrumental in framing court ceremonial and especially the emperor. The text of Corippus cited above is perhaps the most significant evidence for the great symbolism of light in the palace. In this text, the reception of the Avar embassy before Justin II and his court occurs along with a dazzling radiance of light.[67] The architecture of the palace plays an important role in setting the stage for ceremonies and the appearance of the emperor, multiplying the effects of light with its golden and polished surfaces. According to Corippus, the splendid hall where the emperor met the Avar ambassadors had an apse called the *locum sanctum* (the holy place), and it was

there that the emperor appeared seated on the throne under a canopy. The golden throne was clad in jewels and purple fabric signifying imperial might. The hall was beautifully adorned for the event with carpets and hangings and was shining with light; but, according to the author, only when the curtain that hid the emperor was drawn aside and the enthroned emperor appeared in the apse did the golden hall begin to glitter. The light emanated from the emperor and the insignia of his power — such as the diadem — filling the whole palace with imperial radiance. The passage abounds in cosmic metaphors that indicate the sacredness of the event and the significance of the light that infused the space. In this scene, the emperor is the supreme light: indeed, he is like a fire, according to Corippus.[68] Surrounding the emperor, the imperial guard and the court are like the stars.[69] Everything within the room is shining with bright light, from the military apparel of the guards to the architectural decoration of the palace.[70] The light is perceived as a manifestation of sacredness of the imperial power and functions to convey the otherworldly nature of the scene. In the words of Corippus, the pervading bright light and the carefully arranged ceremonial transform the palace into "another heaven"; the appearance of the emperor on his throne is described in the explicit terms of a heavenly epiphany.[71] Thus, in these verses the light is first a divine element that anticipates the imperial appearance, but also an emanation from the emperor and a substantial and visible manifestation of God's protection on the empire.[72]

Corippus's poem mixes the description of the imperial space with propaganda and ideology of the empire, providing us with a rare and privileged source for understanding the symbolic importance of light. Other sources help us to contextualize the instrumental role of the palace's luminous architectural embellishment in late-antique and then Byzantine aesthetics. Procopius, for example, clarifies that the use of precious materials in the decoration of the palace played a part in the celebration of the emperor and his power. In the mosaic in the *Chalkē* as it was rebuilt by Justinian, Procopius anthropomorphizes the *tesserae*, stating that their bright colours "rejoice and smile as they bestow on the Emperor honours equal to those of God".[73] Colourful decorations were used to glorify the emperor as to celebrate God; even the materials were happy to play their part in adoring the imperial person.

Ninth and tenth century sources provide the most abundant information about the gold, silver, and jewels that were used to decorate the interior of the palace. These materials stood as testament to the great wealth of the emperor — and thus of the empire — and the luxury of the imperial residence. These texts also hint at the impact of reflected light on architectural elements adorned with precious metals and jewels. For instance, in 864, Patriarch Photios' *ekphrasis* on the inauguration of the Theotokos of Pharos, as it was rebuilt by Michael III, not only tells us of the visual beauty of such decoration, but also suggests the significance of the various shining surfaces as part of the church's illumination.[74] In this text, the patriarch of Constantinople describes the

large shining marble slabs cladding the atrium and the abundance of gold and silver adorning the church that could be seen in the mosaics and walls, columns and capitals. In the *ekphrasis* the church decoration leads the spectator to think that when he enters the building, he enters heaven itself.[75] The concept that the church represented heaven on earth is an old one, rooted in patristic literature about the church serving as God's earthly house.[76] Yet, we should not underestimate the importance of the material splendour and abundance of immaterial light in associating the church with heaven.[77] It is precisely the brightness of the materials that made visible the immanent sacredness of the church and the presence of God within its walls. At the same time, being a palatine church and a depository for relics, the brilliance of its decoration also showed both the religiosity of its imperial patron in the aftermath of the return to Orthodoxy, and the holy power of relics in protecting the empire.[78] The bright ornamentation of the church transformed the building into heaven by reflecting light, itself an intangible but visible demonstration of the holiness of the space.

The *Vita Basilii* mentions a number of buildings built by Basil I in the Great Palace, several of which were churches. The most important one was the *Nea Ekklesia*, whose features remind us of Michael's Theotokos of Pharos.[79] The anonymous author of the *Vita Basilii*, whose language is much less elegant and subtle than Photios's, describes the gleaming silver of the wall surfaces, the mosaics, the colourful marbles, and the golden domes, comparing the church to a beautifully adorned bride that the emperor presented as a gift to Christ.[80] Thus, in this case as well as for the other churches built by Basil in the palace, the resplendent surfaces and their radiance helped create a building that was considered a suitable gift for God. Furthermore, just as in the Theotokos of the Pharos, Basil's *Nea Ekklesia* and the Church of God the Saviour had their sanctuaries covered in silver with gold finishing and encrusted jewels.[81] Indeed this most holy place was, in these churches, the most resplendent of all, conveying the sanctity of the space with the reflective surfaces of silver, gold, and jewels. The light that would have permeated the area of the altar would have infused the liturgy in transcendent, heavenly light.

As the *Vita Basilii* suggests with its description of the abundant marbles and precious materials in the secular spaces of the imperial palace, reflected and glittering light had a profound role in the glorification of the emperor, as well. The text describes the new private rooms of the emperor, located next to the *Kainourgion*, as resplendent with marbles, colourful glass, and mosaics with golden backgrounds.[82] Since antiquity, the private imperial apartments were considered as the most secret, inaccessible, and sacred in the palace. Within the chamber, a central cross could be seen at the centre of a gilded ceiling. In a more direct statement about imperial luminosity, the *Vita* tells us that around the cross, the emperor Basil, his wife Eudokia, and their children were represented, clad with the imperial insignia and ceremonial dress, shining "like stars in the heaven".[83] An inscription referred to the heavenly kingdom

that would be granted to Basil's children by virtue of God's benevolence towards the emperor.[84] In this context, the brightness of the room's architectural adornment and its luminous decoration echoed the message expressed by the portraits of the imperial family gathered under the image of the cross and the accompanying inscription. The light reflecting on the surfaces of the private imperial apartments demonstrated the glory of the emperor, the honours rendered to God who protected the *basileia*, and the splendour of the Empire.

Other sources that include descriptions of the precious features of palatine architecture are often more concerned with the number of buildings erected by the emperor and with the kinds of expensive materials used; they remark upon the brightness of the buildings and the effects of light only in passing. Nevertheless, the frequent references to gilded ceilings and polished marbles offer glimpses of the brilliant displays of light reflecting on the reflective surfaces within the rooms of the palace. For instance, according to the chronicles under the name of Theophanes Continuatus, several of the structures built by Theophilos in the Great Palace had gilded ceilings: the *Triconchos*, the imperial bedchamber adjoining the *Margarites*, the *Kamilas* and two of its annexes, and two rooms of another hall.[85] The *Vita Basilii* records that the *Kainourgion*, built by Basil I, had the upper part of the walls gilded and decorated with images of the emperor and his generals, while on the gilded ceiling, the emperor was represented as Hercules carrying out his labours, an iconography presenting Basil's accomplishments in a mythical fashion.[86] In the tenth century, Constantine VII (913-959) restored the roof of the *Dekanneaccubita* — a banquet hall in the upper palace in the area of the *Daphne* that by that time was used only in particular ceremonial occasions — covering the ceiling with golden mosaics.[87] Together with golden vessels and precious furnishings, these resplendent ceilings were intended to amaze the emperor's guests during imperial banquets, such as the one that Liutprand of Cremona attended in 949, about which he records his appropriate awe.[88] Indeed, the imperial banquet was one of the most important arenas for displaying imperial power.[89] Light reflected off of golden mosaics and precious furniture had enriched imperial ceremonies with mystical traits and immaterial brilliance. Romanos Lekapenos (920-944) had the "Tetraconch of the Apostle Paul", possibly Basil's *Pentacubiculum*, decorated with golden figures and images.[90] According to Niketas Choniates, Manuel I (1143-1180) built long columned halls in the Great Palace, covering the interior with golden mosaics depicting the emperor's victories, as an example of his magnificence and glorious achievements.[91] At the turn of the thirteenth century, Nikolaos Mesarites described the *Mouchroutas*, a building located near the *Chysotriklinos* and built in a "Persian" way, as having domes clad in gold and creating the amazing spectacle of a colourful rainbow,[92] a telling passage about the plays of light reflecting over the golden and round surfaces of the domes.

Apart from the golden decoration of ceilings, the various marbles used for columns and for covering floors and the precious metals of doors and furniture also had strongly reflective qualities.[93] Furthermore,

other precious objects, such as crowns, enamels, and textiles decorated the walls and arches, hanging by means of silver and golden chains, especially during special receptions.[94] The sunrays entering from the windows and the doors of the palace reflected over these shining surfaces. However, candles and lamps were also used during imperial ceremonies, and not just at night, but during the day, as well.[95] In the testamentary tradition, fire and light were considered manifestations of God. Likewise, during imperial ceremonies, the light emanated by candles and lamps was a visible sign of divine presence in the palace. Furthermore, the smoke produced by the burning flame made visible, though intangible, the manifestation of the divine.[96] Just as the emperor emanated light — as we have seen in Corippus — his appearance was accompanied by the impalpability and immateriality of perfumes.[97] Thus, in the palace, the earthly *basileia* of the Christian Roman emperor was displayed through intangible but perceivable and sensual elements. Above all, there was the light of the sun and candlelight reflecting over the varied shining and precious surfaces.

Due to their reuse and their intrinsic economic value, nothing survives of the metals, marbles, and precious stones that adorned the architecture of the Great Palace; very little of what was once an expansive palatine complex is visible at all in the modern capital that has superseded the old Constantinople. However, written evidence allows us to reconstruct, if only partially, the architectural adornment and precious furnishings of the palace with materials that contributed to the visualization of the imperial residence as a glittering image. It is precisely the widespread use of materials that by their physical characteristics could reflect light, which allowed the palace to be transformed into luminous architecture and become a visible landmark shining in the cityscape of Constantinople.

Since antiquity, light and fire were among of the major manifestations of the divine.[98] In the residence of the emperor, whose sacred character was claimed by court authors and declared by law in the Theodosian Code,[99] the architecture played an instrumental role in manifesting the sacredness of the emperor and of his imperial power. On the exterior and throughout the interior, the palace — its architecture, decoration, and furnishings — used concrete material to illuminate its spaces in insubstantial light. However, it was light that was made manifest due to the presence of the emperor, for, according to descriptions by court writers, it was when he appeared that the architecture became radiant, reflecting his light. Certainly hyperbolic rhetoric, such descriptions nevertheless evidence the importance of architecture in such a setting, as if the emperor's illumination was augmented by the reflective materials that decorated the palace itself.

Through the effects of light and the performative character of precious materials, the architecture of the palace became the visible sign of the immaterial axioms rooted in the ideology of imperial power in Byzantium. In the Great Palace the material and the immaterial were interwoven, continuously referring to one another: the imperial palace,

its architecture and decoration, was the material reflection on earth of an intangible and immaterial power exercised by the emperor in the name of God. The palace was conceptualized within an ideology that viewed the imperial court as a reflection of the heavenly court; with shining gold surfaces and light glittering on walls, the palace became the luminous reflection of the heavenly kingdom of God.

Мария Кристина Кариле (Ravenna)

Императорский дворец сверкающего света: материальное и нематериальное в Sacrum Palatium

В литературных источниках Большой дворец представал в качестве образа, пронизанного ярким светом, который, казалось бы, дематериализовался перед зрителем, словно фантастическое видение. Тем не менее, описания не были пустой выдумкой. То, что превращало дворец в светлое мерцающее и почти нереальное видение, объяснялось материалами, из которых было возведено это архитектурное сооружение. Яркий свет, исходивший от императорского дворца, был не только литературным топосом, который следовал общепринятым литературным условностям, но имел под собой реальную подоплеку: тысячи солнечных лучей отражались от гладкой, полированной поверхности металлических черепиц на крыше дворца, а также от драгоценных материалов, которыми были украшены дворцовые постройки.

В представленной статье рассматривается значение света в восприятии Большого дворца в Константинополе. После пятого века он стал единственной резиденцией правителя Восточной Римской империи, и единственным строением, о котором упоминают многочисленные письменные источники. Вражеские нашествия и грабежи в ходе веков превратили здание в руины, по которым невозможно теперь составить подробную картину первоначального великолепия и величия императорского дворца. Таким образом, понимание архитектурного облика сооружения привязано к оригинальным текстам, которые не были пристальны в своем описании дворца в целом, а лишь мимоходом выхватывали отдельные детали его убранства. Это исследование сосредоточено на описаниях светоносности дворцового экстерьера, а именно – на описаниях металлических черепиц, покрывавших крышу сооружения, роль которых, среди всего прочего, заключалась в том, чтобы отражать и рассеивать солнечный свет. Чтобы осмыслить значение покрывавших крышу дворца металлических черепиц как архитектурного компонента, так и не получившего должного внимания со

стороны исследователей, нам, в первую очередь, потребуется проанализировать схожие образцы архитектуры времен Римской Империи, исполнявшие схожую функцию. Далее мы переходим к анализу роли и смыслового значения света во внутренних покоях императорского дворца. Конечной целью данного исследования является понимание значения архитектурных элементов, задействующих игру света, и выяснение символического значения света в пространстве комплекса Большого дворца, а также в имперской византийской идеологии.

1 *Libanius*. Or. LXI, 10 / Ed. R. Foerster. Stuttgart, 1908, vol. IV, p. 334. In this passage, the protagonists revered the city — the palace, the theatre, and its major monuments — as a "sacred image", before continuing on their way towards Chalcedon.

2 This image survives the centuries and has influenced modern writers, as well. For example, in a tale written in 1909 and set in sixth-century Constantinople, Arthur Conan Doyle describes the splendour of the palace to the eyes of the protagonists approaching the city by boat (*Conan Doyle A.* The Home-Coming // The Last Galley: Impressions and Tales. London, 1911: first edition). The brightness of the imperial palace is sometimes applied to the official imperial palace as well as to private imperial residences. For instance, in the fifth-century the court poet Merobaudes mentions a resplendent palace hall (*aula viret*) in the palace of Valentinian III (425-455) in Ravenna, the roofs of which shine (*tecta nitent*) (*Merobaudes*. Carmen II, 1-2 / Ed. F. Vollmer // MGH. Auct.Ant., vol. XIV, Berlin, 1905, p. 4). Again, a sixth-century epigram by Marianus Scholasticus celebrates the "golden palace" built by Emperor Justin II (565-578) as a gift for his wife Sophia (*Anthologia Graeca*. IX.657 / Eds. P. Waltz, G. Soury. Paris, 1977, vol. VIII, p. 127-128).

3 *Anthologia Graeca*. IX.656 / Ed. cit. (n. 2), p. 127. The epigram uses a poetic and hyperbolic language, as is suitable to its genre. However, by comparing the *Chalkē* with the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, it celebrates the precious and glittering roofs of the building, probably made of gilded bronze. For an analysis and comment of the epigram: *Mango C.* The Brazen House. A study of the vestibule of the imperial palace of Constantinople. Copenhagen, 1959, p. 26-27.

4 *Procopius*. Bell. III.5.4 / Ed. G. Wirth. Lipsia, 1962, vol. I, p. 332.

5 On the *Chalkē* and the changes to its buildings and its decorations across the centuries: *Mango*. The Brazen House. cit. (n. 3), p. 21-35; *Janin R.* Constantinople Byzantine. Developpement urbain et repertoire topographique. Paris, 1964, p. 110-112; *Muller Wiener W.* Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls. Byzantion, Konstantinupolis, Istanbul bis zum Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts. Tübingen, 1977, p. 248-249; *Auzepy M.-F.* La destruction de l'icône du Christ de la Chalcé par Léon III: propagande ou réalité? // *Byzantion*. 60 (1990), p. 445-492; *Zervou Tognazzi I.* Propilei e Chalke, ingresso principale del Palazzo di Costantinopoli // Arte, archeologia, storia. Studi in onore di Fernanda de' Maffei. Roma, 1996, p. 33-59; *Brubaker L.* The Chalke Gate, the Construction of the Past, and the Trier Ivory // Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies. 23 (1999), p. 258-285; *Eadem, Haldon J.* Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (c.680-850). Cambridge, 2011, p. 118-119, 128-135, 178, 310-311, 347-348, 370, 402, 416, 427.

6 For Justinian's *Chalkē*: *Procopius*. De aedificiis [hereafter Aed.]. I.10.10-20 / Ed. H. B. Dewing. London, 1954, p. 82-87. For Basil's restorations: *Vita Basilii* (= *Theophanes Continuatus*. Chronographia, V) [hereafter *VB*], 31.7-13 / Ed.

I. Ševčenko. Berlin — Boston, 2011 // CSHB, p. 120.

7 *Kedrenos*. Historiarum Compendium [hereafter Hist.] / Ed. I. Bekker. Bonn, 1838 // CSHB, vol. I, p. 656-657; trans. "Thus, in proximity of that column, all the bronze tiles that covered the entrance of the palace, called *Chalkē* in our days, were clad in gold".

8 Although Procopius's *ekphrasis* of the *Chalkē* has resulted in a long and often conflicting scholarly debate on the appearance of the building, it should be noted that the author clearly refers to a central spherical (*σφαιρική*) space, thus likely surmounted by a dome or a vault, which it is mentioned later in the passage with explicit reference to the roof (*τέγος*) (*Procopius*. Aed. I.10.14 / Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 84).

9 *Procopius*. Aed. I.10.10-20 / Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 82-87. Procopius' decision to describe the interior suggests the possibility that, under Justinian, the appearance of the interior — and not much of the exterior — had considerably changed as compared to the *Chalkē* of Anastasius.

10 *VB*. 31.7-10 / Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 120.

11 Ibidem, 87-90 / Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 282-298.

12 A prison had been built in the *Chalkē* complex, or in its immediate vicinity, in the seventh century (*Mango*. The Brazen House. cit. (n. 3), p. 34-35). Basil I added a court of justice into the complex of the *Chalkē*: *VB*. 31.7-13 / Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 120; *Kedrenos*. Hist. / Ed. cit. (n. 7), vol. II, p. 204. Furthermore, at a higher location in the proximity of the *Chalkē*, Romanos Lekapenos (920-944) built a chapel dedicated to Christ the Saviour, which was later restored by John Tzimiskes (969-976) and became the repository of important relics (*Engberg S.G.* Romanos Lekapenos and the Mandilion of Edessa // Byzance et les reliques du Christ / Eds. J. Durand, B. Flusin. Paris, 2004, p. 123-139 esp. 129).

13 *Kedrenos*. Hist. / Ed. cit. (n. 7), vol. I, p. 656-657; *Zonaras*. Epitomae Historiarum [hereafter Ep. Hist.]. XIV.6.19 / Ed. T. Büttner-Wobst. Bonn, 1897 // CSHB, vol. III, p. 154. It is worth noting that these two texts are independent of each other: in this case, Zonaras's passage does not rely on Kedrenos's. This demonstrates the diffusion — and perhaps the truthfulness — of the information regarding the *Chalkē*'s bronze roofs. Writing at the beginning of the thirteenth century Niketas Choniates reports a different tradition about the origins of the name *Chalkē*, explaining that it derived from the bronze doors of the entrance to the palace (*Niketas Choniates*. Historia [hereafter Hist.].De Isaacio Angelo. III / Ed. J. L. Van Dieten. Berlin, 1975, p. 443).

14 *Mango*. The Brazen House. cit. (n. 3), p. 21-22.

15 *Pliny the Elder*. Historia Naturalis [hereafter HN]. XXXIII.57 / Ed. and trans. H. Rackham. London, 1968, p. 46-47: *cum varie sua aetas de Catulo existimaverit, quod tegulas aereas Capitoli inaurasset* (trans. "whereas a variety of judgements were passed on Catulus by his contemporaries for having gilded the brass tilings of the Capitol").

16 *Plutarch*. Publicola, 15.3 / Eds. R. Flacelière, E. Chambry, M. Juneaux. Paris, 1968, vol. II, p. 75. For the history of the four temples of Jupiter Capitolinus: *Tagliamonte G*. Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Capitolinus, aedes, templum (fino all'83 a.C.) // Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae / Ed. M. Steinby. Roma, 1996 [hereafter LTUR], vol. III, p. 144-148; *De Angeli S*. Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Capitolinus, aedes, templum (fasi tardorepubblicane e di eta imperiale) // Ibidem, p. 148-153; 156; *Stamper J.W*. The Architecture of Roman Temples. The Republic to the Middle Empire. Cambridge, 2005, p. 6-33, 82; *Cifani G*. Architettura romana arcaica: edilizia e societa tra monarchia e repubblica. Roma, 2008, p. 81-83. For the symbolic significance of the temple, synecdoche of Rome: *Edwards C*. Writing Rome: Textual Approaches to the City. Cambridge, 1997, p. 69-90.

17 For the gilded roofs of Catulus' temple: *Pliny the Elder*. HN. XXXIII.57 / Ed. cit. (n. 15); *Seneca*. Controversiae. I.6.4 (*auro puro fulgens praelucet*

Capitolium), II.1.1 (*aurato Capitolio*) / Ed. M. Winterbottom, Cambridge — London, 1974, vol. I, p. 140-141, 204-205. Again, in the fourth century, the poet Ausonius mentioned the gilded roofs of the temple (*aurea Capitolii culmina*) (*Ausonius*. Ordo urbium nobelium. 123 (Narbo) / Ed. R.P.H. Green. Oxford, 1999, p. 193).

18 See n. 4.

19 In the second century, listing the major monuments built by Trajan, Pausanias mentions the forum with its bright bronze roofs (*Pausanias*. Periegesis. V.12.6 (see also X.5.11) / Ed. F. Spiro. Leipzig, 1903, TLG online: "and the Forum at Rome, worth seeing not only for its general beauty but especially for its roof made of bronze"). This passage refers to the bronze roofs of the Basilica Ulpia, rather than to its ceilings (for discussion: *Packer J.E*. The Forum of Trajan in Rome. A study of the monuments. Portfolio. Berkeley — Oxford, 1997, p. 442-443). Most recently on the forum of Trajan: *Meneghini R., Santangeli Valenzani R.* I fori imperiali. Roma, 2007.

20 Constans II (641-668) stripped off the gilt bronze tiles of the Pantheon — since 609 converted into the church of Santa Maria della Rotonda by Pope Boniface IV, under concession of Emperor Phocas (602-610) — during a short visit to Rome in 663 (*Liber Pontificalis* [hereafter *LP*]. LXIX.1-2, LXXVI-II.3 / Ed. L. Duchesne. Paris, 1955, vol. I, p. 317, 343; *Paul the Deacon*. Historia Langobardorum. IV.36.6-11, V.11.7-14 / Ed. L. Konrad. G. Waitz. Hannover, 1987 (repr. ed. 1878) // MGH.SRG, 48. p. 160-161, 190-191; see also: *Marder T.A.* The Pantheon after Antiquity // The Pantheon in Rome. Contributions to the Conference (Bern, November 9-12, 2006) / Eds. G. Grasshoff, M. Heinzelmann, M. Wдfler. Bern, 2009, p. 145-54). In 735 a new lead roof was constructed to cover the concrete dome (*LP*. XCII.12 / Ed. cit., vol. I, p. 419; see also: *MacDonald W*. The Pantheon: Design, Meaning and Progeny Cambridge, 2002, first published 1976, p. 18). On the technology of the Pantheon roofs: *Ziolkowski A.* Pantheon // LTUR, vol. IV, p. 59-60; on the cosmic significance of its dome: *La Rocca E*. Pantheon // Ibidem, vol. V, p. 280-283. The gold-plated bronze roof tiles of the Temple of Venus and Rome were stripped off by pope Honorius I, under concession of Emperor Heraclius (610-641), to reuse them in St. Peter's Basilica in 625 (*LP*. LXXII.2 / Ed. cit. vol. I, p. 323; see also: *Stamper*. The Architecture. cit. (n. 16), p. 215). The roofs of the temple had already been restored after the fire of 307, during the reconstruction promoted by Maxentius (*Cassatella A.* Venus et Roma, aedes, templum // LTUR, vol. V, p. 121-123). On the Temple of Venus and Rome: *Del Monti C.* (Ed.) Il tempio di Venere e Roma nella storia. Milano, 2010. On the technology of roofs in Roman and late antique architecture, with special reference to trussed roofs: *Ulrich R.B.* Roman Woodworking. New Haven, 2007, p. 123-177; *Valeriani S*. Die Quadratur des Dreieckes. Spatantike und fruhneuzeitliche Dacher zwischen Ikonographie und Baubefunden // Holztragwerke der Antike. Internationale Konferenz, 30. Marz — 1. April 2007 in Munchen / Ed. A. Von Kienlin. Istanbul, 2011 // Byzas 11, p. 287-297.

21 Yet, this was not the case of the church of the Anastasis at Jerusalem, whose nave Constantine wished to be covered by a gilded coffered ceiling rather than by a gilded roof, and which, in the end, was roofed in lead (*Eusebius*. De Vita Constantini [hereafter Vita Const.]. III.32 and 36.2 / Ed. F. Winkelmann. Berlin, 1975, p. 99, 100). Discussing the ceilings and roofs of the building: *Cameron A., Hall S.G.* translation and commentary // *Eusebius*. Life of Constantine. Oxford 1999, p. 284.

22 *Eusebius*. Vita Const. IV.58 / Ed. cit. (n. 21), p. 107. The question if Eusebius describes the church of Holy Apostles or the imperial mausoleum has been the subject of a lively debate among scholars. With a thorough analysis of the sources relating to the Holy Apostles, Mango has rejected the theory that Eusebius refers to the mausoleum itself and concluded that *martyrion* and mausoleum were one and the same, while the basilica was added around 356 (*Mango C*. Constantine's Mausoleum and the Translation of Relics // BZ,

83 (1990), p. 51-61; *Idem.* Constantine's Mausoleum: Addendum // BZ, 83 (1990), p. 434).

23 On the political-ideological implications of Constantine's association with Sun-Helios: *Wallraff M.* Constantine's devotion to the sun after 324 // *Historica, biblica, theologica et philosophica* / Eds. M.F. Wiles, E.J. Yarnolf. Leuven, 2001 // Studia Patristica, 34, p. 256-269; *Idem.* "Christus verus sol". Sonnenverehrung und Christentum in der Spatantike. Munster, 2001, p. 127-139, 141-143 (with references); *Bardill J.* Constantine. Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age. Cambridge, 2012, p. 41-50, 100-107, 150-157, 326-338.

24 The first foundation of the hippodrome and the palace is attributed to Septimius Severus (193-211) and their completion to Constantine: *Mango C.* Septime Severe et Byzance // Comptes-rendus des seances de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 147.2 (2003), p. 593-608; *Pont A.-V.* Septime Severe a Byzance: l'invention d'un fondateur // Antiquite Tardive, 18 (2010), p. 191-198. On the symbolic value of the complex of palace-hippodrome: *Dagron G.* Naissance d'une capitale. Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 a 451. Paris, 1974, p. 307-347, esp. p. 311; *Carile A.* Il circo-ippodromo e la citta // La citta gioiosa / Ed. C. Bertelli. Milano, 1996, p. 109-138; *Idem.* La prossemica del potere: spazi e distanze nei cerimoniali di corte // Uomo e spazio nell'Alto Medioevo, L Settimana di Studio del CISAM (Spoleto, 4-9 aprile 2002). Spoleto, 2003, p. 645-649; *Vespignani G.* ΙΠΠΟΔΡΟΜΟΣ. Il circo di Costantinopoli nuova Roma nella realta e nella storiografia. Spoleto, 2010, p. 137-184; on the long history of the hippodrome between antiquity and the Ottoman period: *Pitarakis B.* Hippodrome — Atmeydani A Stage for Istanbul's History / Hippodrom — Atmeydani Istanbul'un Tarih Sahnesi (2 vols.). Istanbul, 2010.

25 On Constantine's forum: *Janin.* Constantinople. cit. (n. 5), p. 66-69; *Muller-Wiener.* Bildlexikon. cit. (n. 5), p. 255-257; *Bauer F.A.* Stadt, Platz und Denkmal in der Spätantike. Untersuchungen zur Ausstattung des öffentlichen Raums in den spätantiken Städten Rom, Kostantinopel und Ephesos. Mainz, 1996, p. 187; *Idem.* Urban space and ritual: Constantinople in Late Antiquity // Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia, 15 n.s. (2001), p. 31-32. On Constantine's column: *Fowden G.* Constantine's Porphyry Column: The Earliest Literary Allusion // The Journal of Roman Studies, 81 (1991), p. 119-131; proposing an accurate reading of the sources and new hypotheses: *Bardill.* Constantine. cit. (n. 23), p. 106-109; on the ancient statuary of the forum: *Basset S.* The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople. Cambridge, 2004, pp. 68-71. Following the south branch of the *Mese*, the monumental celebration of the emperor culminated in the Golden Gate: thus, the whole city was dotted by the major monuments of imperial authority.

26 *Krautheimer R.* Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture (ed. revised by S. Ćurčić). New Haven — London, 1986, p. 75-77; *Poccardi G.* Antioche de Syrie. Pour un nouveau plan urbain de l'ole de l'Oronte (ville neuve) du IIIe au IVe siecle // MEFRA, 106.2 (1994), p. 993-1023, esp. 1009-1012; *Kleinbauer W.E.* Antioch, Jerusalem, Rome: The Patronage of the Emperor Constantius II and Architectural Invention // Gesta, 45.2 (2006), p. 125-145, esp. 126-128 with ample discussion of the sources regarding the lost monument.

27 Eusebius explains that Constantine enriched the church with abundant gold and bronze and precious decorations. From the description in the *Life of Constantine* it appears that the dome of the octagon was decorated with gold and bronze; while from that in the *Glory of Constantine*, the dome seems decorated with various materials (*Eusebius.* Vita Const. III.50 / Ed. cit. (n. 21), p. 105; *Idem.* De Laudibus Constantini [hereafter Laud. Const.]. IX.15 / Ed. I.A. Heikel. Leipzig, 1902, p. 221).

28 The so-called mosaic of the Megalopsychia, today at the Museum of Antakya

(inv. 1016), decorated the floor of a villa located in the ancient Daphne (modern Yakto), a residential elites area in the suburbs of Antioch. For a recent reading of the meaning of the border of the famous mosaic: *Mattheus J.* The Journey of Theophanes. Travel, Journey and Daily Life in the Roman East. New Haven. 2006, p. 80-88 (with ample references).

29 Consistent with his hostility towards Christianity, Libanius does not mention any of the churches of Antioch and omits any reference to the Octagon (*Libanius*. Or. XI, 204-207, 218 / Ed. cit. (n. 1), pp. 507-508, 512-513); see also: *Downey G.* Libanius' Oration in Praise of Antioch (Oration XI) // Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, 103.5 (1959), p. 652-686; *Saliou C.* Antioche décrite par Libanios. La rhétorique de l'espace urbain et ses enjeux au milieu du quatrième siècle // Approches de la troisième sophistique. Mélanges J. Schamp / Eds. M. Steinruck, E. Amato, A. Roduit. Bruxelles, 2006, p. 273-285). The representation of the circus has been interpreted as the so-called "Byzantine stadium", a private imperial garden for horses. However, the border of the Megalopsychia mosaic is extremely schematic and shows a very rough design that contrasts with the detailed and more sophisticated traits of the central area of the floor mosaic. Therefore, the oval circus could also represent one of the hippodromes of the Orontes island.

30 Although the possible location of the Golden Octagon on the Orontes island is based on this representation, it is almost unanimously accepted by scholars (except for: *Levi D.* Antioch Mosaic Pavements. Princeton — London, 1947, vol. I, p. 326-337; *Saliou C.* A propos de la ταυριαν πύλη. Remarques sur la localisation présumée de la Grande Église d'Antioche de Syrie // Syria, 77 (2000), p. 217-226). Most recently, with new arguments on the possible location of the Great Church on the Orontes island: *Guidetti F.* Urban Continuity and Change in Late Roman Antioch // Urban Decline in the Byzantine Realm. Proceedings of the conference (Helsinki, September 25th, 2009) / Ed. B. Forsen. Helsinki, 2010 // Acta Byzantina Fennica III n.s., p. 81-104.

31 On the urban topography of late-antique Antioch: *Poccardi G.* L'île d'Antioche à la fin de l'Antiquité: histoire et problème de topographie urbaine // Recent Research in Late Antique Urbanism IV / Ed. L. Lavan. Portsmouth, 2000 // Suppl. JRA 42, p. 155-172; *Guidetti.* Urban Continuity. cit. (n. 30).

32 In the sixth-century, John Malalas reports the text of the commemorative inscription set by Constantius at the Octagon. "For Christ Constantine wrought these beautiful dwellings in all ways like the vaults of heaven, brightly gleaming, with Constantius obeying the commands of the ruler; the comes Gorgonios/ carried out the function of cubicularius" (*John Malalas*. Chronographia. XIII.17 / Ed. H. Thurn. Berlin, 2000, p. 250; translation and commentary: *Jeffreys E., Jeffreys M., Scott R.* The Chronicle of John Malalas. Melbourne, 1986, p. 177). Recently Woods has argued against Malalas's attribution of this inscription to the Great Church of Antioch. However, Kleinbauer has readdressed the question, demonstrating that the inscription plausibly refers to that church (*Woods D.* Malalas, 'Constantius', and a Church-Inscription from Antioch // Vigiliae Christianae, 59 (2005), p.54-62; *Kleinbauer.* Antioch, Jerusalem, Rome cit. (n. 26), p. 141 n. 35).

33 For Constantius's stays at Antioch: *Dagron.* Naissance. cit. (n. 24), p. 79-81.

34 *Bardill J.* Building Materials and Techniques // The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies / Eds. E. Jeffreys, J. Haldon, R. Cormack. Oxford, 2008, p. 344-345. According to Gregory of Tours, around 527 Anicia Juliana decorated the church of Hagios Polyeuktos, built next to her palace at Constantinople, with a golden roof (*Gregory of Tours*. In Gloria Martyrum. I.102 / Ed. B. Krusch. Hannover, 1885, vol. I.2, p. 105-107). However, through an accurate historical and textual analysis, Bardill has concluded that the text refers to the gilding of the church's ceilings (*camera*) rather than roofs (*Bardill J.* A New Temple for Byzantium: Anicia Juliana, King Solomon

and the gilded ceiling in the Church of St. Polyeuktos in Constantinople // Social and Political Life in Late Antiquity / Eds. W. Bowden, A. Gutteridge, C. Machado. Leiden, 2006 // Late Antique Archaeology 3.1, p. 339-370). In the church inscriptions preserved in the *Anthologia Palatina*, the golden roofs are described as inside the church, even though the outside of the building conveys the brilliance of the interior (*Whitby M.* The St. Polyeuktos Epigram (*AP*. I.10): A Literary Perspective // Greek Literature in Late Antiquity. Dynamism, Didacticism, Classicism / Ed. S.F. Johnson. Aldershot, 2006, p. 159-187 esp. 167, with accurate textual analysis).

35 In the twelfth century, Zonaras blamed Justinian for having destroyed a lead conduit that brought water to Constantinople in order to reuse the lead as building material (*Zonaras*. Ep. Hist. XIV.6 / Ed. cit. (n. 13), vol. III, p. 157). The lead was then probably reused in Justinian's new buildings both as to cover the roofs in lead sheets and to clasp the masonry (*Bardill J.* Brickstamps of Constantinople. Oxford, 2004, vol. I, p. 34). The hymn on the inauguration of the cathedral at Edessa further attests for the use of lead roofs in the new architecture promoted by Justinian (for the hymn see *McVey K.E.* The Domed Church as Microcosm: Literary Roots of an Architectural Symbol // DOP, 37 (1983), p. 91-121 esp. 93 and 95). On metalwork in the sixth-century Byzantine economy and on the value of lead versus gold and silver: *Morrisson C., Sodini J.-P.* The Sixth Century Economy // The Economic History of Byzantium / Eds. A. Laiou, C. Bouras, C. Morrisson, N. Oikonomides, C. Pitsakis. Washington D.C., 2002, p. 171-220 esp. 205; on this subject, much awaited are the scholarly contributions in *Grünbart M. (Ed.)*. Gold und Blei. Byzantinische Kostbarkeiten aus dem Munsterland. Wien, 2012, forthcoming. On metals in late antiquity: *Giannichedda E.* Metal Production in Late Antiquity: from Continuity of Knowledge to Change in Consumption // Technology in Transition A.D. 300-650 / Eds. L. Lavan, E. Zanini, A. Sarantis. Leiden, 2007 // Late Antique Archaeology 4, p. 187-210 though mentioning lead only in passing.

36 The choice to cover the church model in what seems to be a gilded roof or even a bronze roof reflecting the sunrays — or even a lead roof clad in gold — may be due to the palette used for the mosaic, dominated by warm rather than cool colours: this is suitable to the golden background of the mosaic and produces an image illuminated by reflecting light. Lead was widely used as roofing material from the time of Justinian onwards, still it can be excluded that it was never gilded. Gilding lead plates would have been extremely anti-economical, bringing to regular repairs to the roofs. In fact, due to the galvanic effect, in presence of humidity, gold corrodes lead. Hence, in antiquity, gilding was applied to small lead decorative objects and almost never used outdoors (I thank Riley Snyder, British Insitute at Ankara, and Carla Martini and Mariangela Vandini, University of Bologna, for their advise on this point; see also: *Selwyn L.* Metals and Corrosion. A Handbook for the Conservation Professional. Ottawa, 2004, p. 79-80, 118, 121-122).

37 The architectural features of the present dome (562) as well as of the one collapsed in 558, have raised much scholarly discussion. However, there is no detailed publication on the church's roofs, which, nevertheless, were surely investigated during numerous surveys by Van Nice. For this reason, in the future I am planning to work on the Hagia Sophia's roofs from a more archaeological point of view, discussing archival material and data. For Hagia Sophia's lead roofs, which, however, do not clarify their dating or features: *Emerson W., Van Nice R.* Haghia Sophia, Istanbul: Preliminary Report of a Recent Examination of the Structure // AJA, 47.4 (1943), p. 423; *Mainstone R.* Hagia Sophia. Architecture, Structure and Liturgy of Justinian's Great Church. London, 1988, p. 21-24, 71.

38 The major written sources of Justinian's Great Church — Procopius's and Paul the Silentiary's *ekphraseis* — describe the building from the inside, never referring to the buildings' roofs (*Procopius*. Aed. I.1.20-78 // Ed. cit. (n.

6), p. 8-32; *Paul the Silentiary*. Ekphrasis // Ed. C. De Stefani. Berlin, 2011, p. 1-71). However, Paul the Silentiary's metaphor of the traveller who, arriving at Constantinople at night by boat, is guided not by the stars but by the divine light coming from the church, may evoke the bright roofs of the church (*Paul the Silentiary*. Ekphrasis. 906-920 // Ed. cit., p. 62-63).

39 For the continuity of the Byzantine building practice into Ottoman architecture: R. *Ousterhout R.* The East, the West, and the Appropriation of the Past in Early Ottoman Architecture // Gesta, 43.2 (2004), p. 167-178. On the great value of the architecture of Hagia Sophia after the fall of Constantinople and in the building practice of the capital: *Necipoğlu G.* The Life of an Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia after Byzantium // Hagia Sophia from the Age of Justinian to the Present / Eds. R. Mark, A. Çakmak. Cambridge, 1992, p. 195-225; *Ahunbay Z., Ahunbay M.* Structural Influence of Hagia Sophia on Ottoman Mosque Architecture // *ibidem*, pp. 179-194; *Necipoğlu G.* The Age of Sinan. Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire. London, 2005, p. 138-140, 143-145, 154, 179. For important reflections on the resplendence of lead roofs in Ottoman architecture: *Cağaptay S.* Visualizing the Cultural Transition in Bithynia: Byzantine-Ottoman 'Overlap' Architecture. PhD dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana Champain, 2007, p. Lead roofs became a constant in imperial church architecture at Constantinople after the sixth century. On the roofs of the complex of Christ Pantokrator, recently restored: *Ousterhout R., Ahunbay Z., Ahunbay M.* Study and Restoration of the Zeyrek Camii at Istanbul: First Report 1997-98 // DOP, 54 (2000), esp. p. 267-268 and Study and restoration of the Zeyrek Camii in Istanbul: Second report 2001-05 // DOP. 63 (2009), p. 235-256 esp. p. 236-240. In Carolingian Europe lead roofs were widely used in palatine churches — such as the Palatine Chapel at Aachen — and important monasteries (*McCormick M.* Origins of the European Economy. Communications and Commerce A.D. 300-900. Cambridge, 2001, p. 700-702).

40 For a meticulous analysis of the distinctive features linking the basilica of St. Vitale to the sixth-century architecture of Constantinople: *Russo E.* L'architettura di Ravenna paleocristiana. Venezia, 2003, esp. p. 59-82. Although the dome shows a low sloping roof, which is very different from the round shape of the roof of Hagioi Sergios and Bacchos and that of Hagia Sophia, it is the choice of the material — metal — that reveals a common inspiration and the same building concept. A metal roof is indeed unique to the building practice of the late-antique architecture of Ravenna and of Northern Italy, in general.

41 Although, the roof tiles of St. Vitale have never been the subject of a detailed study, archival documents demonstrate that they have been replaced several times after 1510 (*Foschi S.* Appunti per una cronologia delle trasformazioni architettoniche di San Vitale // La basilica di San Vitale a Ravenna / Ed. P. Angiolini Martinelli. Modena, 1997, vol. II, p. 67 n. 37; *Lombardini N.* Le vicende del monumento dal 1860 ad oggi: l'eliminazione delle superfettazioni // Ibidem, p. 96; *Eadem*, Restauro e conoscenza di un sistema costruttivo: la cupola della chiesa di San Vitale a Ravenna // Ananke, 19 (1997), p. 52-59, esp. 56, 59 and n. 16 with reference to a sixteeenth-century anonymous parchment held at the Biblioteca Classense in Ravenna). On the model of St. Vitale, the roof of the Basilica Ursiana (the fifth-century cathedral of Ravenna) had a lead cover at least since the seventh century, as the stamps on the lead tiles attest (*Muratori S.* Le coperture della cupola di San Vitale dal cinquecento in poi // Felix Ravenna, 30 (1925), p. 44-47). However, Deichmann claims that the central nave has always been covered in bronze — rather than lead — and the ambulatory in brick tiles (*Deichmann F.W.* Ravenna. Haupstadt des spätantiken abenlandes. Kommentar. Wiesbaden, 1976, vol. II, p. 65-69). If this was the case, then, the model of the apse mosaic would shown an oxidized bronze roof, which very unlikely would have been represented on the model offered to Christ by the church patron. Most

recently, the roofs of San Vitale have been restored by the Soprintendenza per i Beni Architettonici (2010-2011), which will soon publish the results of these works.

42 It is worth noticing that in antiquity bronze and alloys — and, to a certain extent, also lead — had the same status of noble metals (*Pace V.*, *Pollio G.* Bronzo e arti della fusione // Arti e storia nel Medioevo, vol. II, Del costruire: tecniche, artisti, artigiani e committenti / Eds. E. Castelnuovo, G. Sergi. Torino, 2003, p. 467-479).

43 On the imperial palace as the privileged space for the private manifestation of the sacred royalty in Byzantium: *Carile A.* Il Sacro Palazzo di Costantinopoli Nuova Roma // Quaderni di Scienza della Conservazione, 2 (2002), p. 15-35; *Idem.* La prossemica. cit. (n. 24), p. 589-653; *Idem.* Credunt aliud romana palatia caelum. Die Ideologie des Palatium in Konstantinopel dem Neuen Rom // Palatia. Kaiserpalaeste in Konstantinopel, Ravenna und Trier / Eds. M. Konig, E. Bolognesi Recchi Franceschini, E. Riemer. Trier, 2003, p. 27-32; see also: *Teja R.* Il cermoniale imperiale // Storia di Roma / Eds. A. Carandini, L. Cracco Ruggini, A. Giardina. Torino, 1993, vol. III.2, p. 628-629.

44 On the symbolic value of gold and on its association with the sacred royalty: *Averincev S.* L'or dans le système des symboles de la culture proto-byzantine // Studi medievali, 20 (1979), p. 54-68; *James L.* Light and colour in Byzantine Art. Oxford, 1996, p. 106-107, 121-123; *Janes D.* God and Gold in Late Antiquity. Cambridge, 1998, p. 18-42. On the light as expression of royalty: *Bührer-Thierry G.* Lumière et pouvoir dans le haut moyen âge occidental. Célébration du pouvoir et métaphores lumineuses // MEFRM, 116.2 (2004), p. 521-556.

45 Both the buildings were located on the *Augusteon* square, the former on its south corner the latter with its huge dimensions on its north-eastern side.

46 The ruins of the *Chalkē* have been identified with the remains found during the excavations carried on since 1997 by the staff of the Istanbul Archaeological Museums in the area of the ex-palace of Justice at Sultanahmet (Istanbul) (*Girgin 3.* La Porte Monumentale trouvĕe dans les fouilles prиs de l'ancienne prison de Sultanahmet // Anatolia Antiqua, 16 (2008), p. 259-290; *Denker A., Yağci C., Akay A.B. Büyük Saray kazısı // Gün Işığinda. İstanbul'un 8000 yılı. Marmaray, Metro ve Sultanahmet kazıları.* Exhibition Catalogue, Istanbul, 2007, p. 126-141). For a recent hypothetical reconstruction: *Ćurčić S.* Architecture in the Balkans from Diocletian to Suleyman the Magnificent. New Haven and London, 2010, p. 287.

47 For the symbolism of colours in the ecclesiastic context, but with particular attention to the medieval west: *Pastoureau M.* L'Eglise et la couleur, des origines à la Réforme // Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes, 147 (1989), p. 203-230, for the white p. 218-221.

48 For the text : *Maas P.* Metrische Akklamationen der Byzantiner // BZ, 21 (1912), n. X, p. 45: commentary: *Carile A.* Immagine e realta nel mondo bizantino. Bologna, 2000, p. 9-31, esp. 16-17. For the hymn in the imperial ceremonial after the tenth century: *Vespignani.* ΙΠΠΟΔΡΟΜΟΣ. cit. (n. 24), p. 217.

49 *Corippus.* In Laudem Iustinii Augusti Minoris [hereafter In Laudem]. III.191-193 / Ed. and commentary A. Cameron, London, 1976, p. 66 see also Ed. S. Antиs, Paris, 1981, p. 119-120: *atria praelargis extant altissima tectis,/sole metallorum splendentia mira paratu,/et facie plus mira loci, cultuque superba* ("the tall hall stands under huge roofs, splendour of the metals in the sun marvellous for its appearance, even more marvellous for the aspect of the place, and superb for its splendour" my translation). After the description of the porticoes of the palace where the troops were deployed in their ceremonial apparatus, these three verses mark the transition between the outside and the inside of the structure where the imperial reception was to be set. In the ambiguity of Corippus's poetic language, the "splendour

of the metals in the sun" (*spendentia sole metallorum*) placed directly after the reference to the roofs (*tecta*) seems to apply to both the hall, which we know from the following lines was marvellous, and to the roofs themselves. Here, in the incipit of the description of the hall, as well as in the following lines, the punctual reference to the room's architectural features, furniture and decoration (the roofs, the throne, the canopy, the floor, the carpets, the hangings and the doors) reveals the power of every element and of the hall as a whole in conveying the splendour of the imperial reception. Later in the same passage, the gilded roofs almost become an attribute of the room, which is called the "hall of the gilded roof" (*aurati … atria tecti*) and glitters with the light emanating from the emperor (*Corippus*. In Laudem. III.256 / Ed. cit. above, p. 68).

50 *Cameron A.* Commentary // Corippus. In Laudem. cit. (n. 49), p. 186. For the Great Consistory: *Guilland R.* Études de topographie de Constantinople Byzantine. Berlin — Amsterdam, 1969, vol. I, p. 56-59; *Bolognesi E.* The Great Palace of Constantinople // Neue Forschungen und Restaurierungen im byzantinischen Kaiserpalast von Istanbul / Eds. W. Jobst, R. Kastler, V. Scheibelreiter. Wien, 1999, p. 12-16.

51 *Eusebius*. Vita Const. I.5-6, III.10.4-5 and 15.2 / Ed. cit. (n. 21), p. 17, 86, 89; *Eusebius*. Laud. Const. III.5, VII.12 / Ed. cit. (n. 27), p. 201, 215; *Agapetos the Deacon*. Ekthesis. 37, 46, 61 / Ed. R. Riedinger. Athens, 1995, p. 50-51, 58-59, 68-69. On the sacredness of the imperial *basileia* in Byzantium: *Carile A.* La sacralita rituale dei ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΣ bizantini // Adveniat regnum. La regalita sacra nell'Europa medievale / Eds. F. Cardini, M. Saltarelli. Siena, 2002, p. 65-117; *Idem.* Regalita sacra ed iniziazione nel mondo bizantino // Sulla soglia del sacro. Esoterismo ed iniziazione nelle grandi religioni e nella tradizione massonica. Atti del Convegno di studio (Firenze, 1-3 marzo 2002). Milano, 2002, p. 75-96; *Idem.* EUTAXIA: l'ordine divino nel cosmo e nell'impero // Spazio e centralizzazione del potere. Atti del IV seminario internazionale di studi storici "Da Roma alla Terza Roma" / Eds. P. Catalano, P. Siniscalco. Roma, 1998, p. 131-136. During Late Antiquity, court writers — such as Libanius in relation to the palace of Antioch and Procopius in relation to the Great Palace — refer to the imperial palace as indescribable in its beauty: *Libanius*. Or. XI, 207 / Ed. cit. (n. 1), p. 508; *Procopius*. Aed. I.10.10/ Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 82. For the palace as impenetrable and sacred, thus indescribable: *Eusebius*. Laud. Const. Prolog.4 / Ed. cit. (n. 27), p. 196; *Panegyrici Latini*. IX, 19.3 / Ed. R.A.B. Mynors // In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The *Panegyrici Latini* / Ed. C.E.V. Nixon, B.S. Rodgers. Berkeley — Los Angeles — Oxford, 1994, p. 604; for discussion: *Carile M.C.* The Vision of the Palace of the Byzantine Emperors as a Heavenly Jerusalem. Spoleto, 2012, p. 1-25.

52 See for example the author comments to the *Vita Basilii: VB*. 87.8-14 /Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 282).

53 *VB*. 84.1-3 / Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 274. Here the text mentions metals of bronze — likely, bronze alloy, such as brass — resembling gold. It is worth noting that, while describing the churches built by Basil in the palace, the anonymous author mentions another luminous roof, but one that seems made of mosaic rather than metal sheets: the Church of Elijah the Tishbite (*VB*. 87.16-17 / Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 282). If true, this might be the only instance of the use of mosaic decoration on a roof. The textual evidence is suggestive, first for the language used and second, for the writer's comments. The author underlines that it was beautiful "not only in the inside" but also "on the outside". Then he mentions the roofs, using a word (*τέγος*) that in the textual tradition seems to indicate the roofs and not the ceilings. Here the word is preceded by the preposition "above", reinforcing the idea that the text refers to the upper side of the roofs. Furthermore, the word *τέγος* finds only one other instance in the whole *Vita Basilii* and there it clearly refers to the building roofs (see the description of Basil's renovations at the church of the *Chalkoprateia*, which had its roofs raised higher as to make the church more luminous: *VB*. 93.13-15 / Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 304). However, it is the aut-

hor's comment about the mosaic decoration that indicates the text refers to the roofs and not the ceilings; he says that by his time (ca. 957-959), the mosaics, once resplendent in gold, had lost their beauty, having been damaged by rain, snow and frost (for the dating of the *Vita Basilii* see the posthumous notes by I. Ševčenko in: *Mango C.* Introduction // Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur Liber quo Vita Basilii Imperatoris amplectitur / Ed. I. Ševčenko. Berlin — Boston, 2011 // CSHB, p. 9). Although there were several structures with golden mosaics decorated in the palace under the reign of Basil I, these remarks were used specifically in the context of describing the Church of Elijah the Tishbite. Considering the special association of Basil with the prophet Elijah, it is perhaps not surprising that the church dedicated to the latter in the palace had such a peculiar and expensive decoration (for the cult of Elijah by Basil: *Magdalino P.* Basil I, Leo VI, and the Feast of the Prophet Elijah // Jahrbuch der Osterreichischen Byzantinistik, 38 (1988), p. 193-196; *Brubaker L.* Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium. Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus. Cambridge, 1999, p. 159-161). Indeed, although never noted before, this seems to be unparalleled evidence for the use of mosaics on the roof of a building and shows the great experimental trend in architecture during the time of Basil I.

54 *Krautheimer.* Early Christian. cit. (n. 26), p. 355-356; *Mango C.* Architettura bizantina. Milano, 1999 (first edition: 1977), p. 106-107, 111; *Theis L.* Flankenräume im mittelbyzantinischen Kirchenbau: zur Befundsicherung, Rekonstruktion und Bedeutung einer verschwundenen architektonischen Form in Konstantinopel. Wiesbaden, 2005, p. 30-39 (with bibliographical discussion); *Ousterbout R.* Master Builders of Byzantium. Pennsylvania, 2008 (first published: 1999), p. 36-37, 119-120 (arguing against the supposed impact of the *Nea Ekklesia* on following architecture); *Ćurčić.* Architecture. cit. (n. 46), p. 273-274.

55 For the *Chysotriklinos*: *Janin.* Constantinople. cit. (n. 5), p. 115-117; *Møller-Wiener.* Bildlexikon. cit. (n. 5), p. 231. In reference to the ceremonies taking place in the throne hall: *Featherstone J.M.* The Chrysotriklinos Seen through *De Cerimoniis* // Zwischen Polis, Provinz und Peripherie. Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte und Kultur, Mainzer Veröffentlichunen zur Byzantinistik / Ed. L. Hoffmann. Wiesbaden, 2005, p. 845-852; *Idem.* The Great Palace as Reflected in the *De Cerimoniis* // Visualisierungen von Herrschaft. Frühmittelalterliche Residenzen, Gestalt und Zeremoniell, Internationales Kolloquium 3./4. Juni 2004 in Istanbul / Ed. F.A. Bauer. Istanbul, 2006 // Byzas 5, p. 50-54; *Idem.* ΔΙ' ΕΝΔΕΙΞΙΝ: Display in Court Ceremonial (*De Cerimoniis* II, 15) // The Material and the Ideal. Essays in Medieval Art and Archaeology in Honour of Jean-Michel Spieser / Eds. A. Cutler, A. Papacostantinou. Leiden, 2007, p. 75-112.

56 For a thorough analysis of the value of the *Nea Ekklesia* and its ambivalent status: *Magdalino P.* Observations on the *Nea Ekklesia* of Basil I // JoB. 37 (1987), p. 51-64, reprinted // *Idem.* Studies on the History and Topography of Byzantine Constantinople. Aldershot, 2007, essay V.

57 See above n. 55.

58 From the time of Michael III (842-867), the wall decoration of the hall included an image of Christ above the imperial throne and of the Virgin above the main entrance. The apostles, martyrs and saints were represented on the walls, next to the Emperor Michael III, the Patriarch Photios and the imperial court (*Anthologia Graeca.* I.106/ Ed. cit. (n. 2), vol. I, p. 41). For an interpretation of the epigram in the context of ninth-century court culture: *Brubaker.* Vision and Meaning. cit. (n. 53), p. 148-149.

59 Before 1261, when the Great Palace was in unrestrained decline, the Balchernae Palace had lead roof tiles, in line with the contemporary architectural practice but, possibly, also a reminiscence of the metal roof tiles of the Great Palace. Baldwin II (1228-1261), the last Latin emperor of

Constantinople, expoliated the palace (*palatia*) of its lead roof to sell metal: *Marin Sanudo il Vecchio*. Fragmentum // Chroniques grĕco-romanes inĕdites ou peu connues / C. Hopf. Berlin, 1873, p. 171 (following: BNF, Cod. 4792, ex 9644); see also: *Wolff R. L.*, Hopf's So-called "Fragmentum" of Marino Sanudo Torsello // The Joshua Starr Memorial Volume. New York, 1953, p. 149-159, repr. // *Idem.* Studies in the Latin Empire of Constantinople. London, 1976, essay X (following: Oxford, Bodleian, Laud. Misc. 587, f. 57v-58v). Although the text does not mention the Balchernae Palace, it probably refers to it as, since the eleventh century, it had become the official imperial residence. On the Blachernae Palace: *Ćurčić.* Architecture. cit. (n. 46), p. 352-354, 528. On the palaces of Constantinople after 1261: *Talbot A. M.* The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII // DOP, 47 (1993), p. 243-261, esp. 250-251.

60 In antiquity and in the Middle Ages, bronze roofs and doors were periodically polished augmenting their brightness (*Jerome*. Ep. CVII, 1 / Ed. J. Labourt, Paris, 1955, vol. 5, p. 145: in reference to the roofs of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome, which at the beginning of the fifth century were dirty for negligence; see also a twelfth-century inscription on the bronze doors of the basilica of San Michele at Monte Sant'Angelo, in which the donor Pantaleone of Mauro beseeches the monks to polish the bronze doors at least once a year, in order to keep them always shining). In contemporary cityscapes, where metal roofs and domes are not polished or even maintained and sometimes are black from pollution, if hit by the sunrays, metal roof tiles shine. (FIG.: 5)

61 This lighthouse of unknown date surely existed in the eighth century when the church that took its name from it, the Theotokos of the Pharos, was probably built. Later this church was one the first buildings restored after iconoclasm by Michael III (842-867) and inaugurated by Partiarch Photios in 864 (*Kalavrezou I.* Helping Hands for the Empire: Imperial Ceremonies and the Cult of Relics at the Byzantine Court // Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204 / Ed. H. Maguire. Washington, D.C., 1997, p. 55-57; *Jenkins R.J.H.*, *Mango C.* The Date and Significance of the Tenth Homily of Photius // DOP, 9-10 (1956), p. 130 and n. 38).

62 The Pharos was located on a terrace just above the *Boukoleon* harbour and near the *Chrysotriklinos* (*Guilland.* Etudes. cit. (n. 50), p. 315-325, 330-333). As an anonymous Russian traveller of the fourteenth-century reports, the lighthouse had the shape of a tower, on the top of which was a lantern protected by glass, the latter set between four columns and a stone roof (*Majeska G.P.* Russian Travellers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century. Washington D.C., 1984, p. 245-246). According to the continuators of Theophanes, at night, its light lit everything, showing the way to the safest place, the palace (*Theophanes Continuatus*. Chronographia [hereafter *Theoph. Con.* Chronogr.]. I.10 / Ed. Bekker. Bonn, 1838 // CSHB, p. 19).

63 For the gardens of the palace and their fountains: *Maguire H.* Imperial Gardens and the Rhetoric of Renewal // New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries. Papers from the Twenty-Sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies (St. Andrews, March 1992) / Ed. P. Magdalino. Aldershot, 1994, p. 181-197; *Littlewood A.* Gardens of the Palaces // Byzantine Court Culture. cit. (n. 61), p. 13-38 esp. 33; *Broilo F.A.* "Cleanses the sins with the water of the pure-flowing font": Fountains for Ablutions in the Byzantine Constantinopolitan Context // Revue Des Études Sud-Est Européennes, 47.1-4 (2009), p. 5-24 esp. 17-21.

64 *Theoph. Con.* Chronogr. III.43 / Ed. cit. (n. 62), p. 141-142; translation: *Mango C.* The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312-1453. Toronto, 1986 (first published 1972), p. 162. For a recent discussion of Theophilos' building activity in the Great Palace: *Brubaker, Haldon.* Byzantium. cit. (n. 5), p. 422-423 with references.

65 *VB.* 85.19-20 / Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 278.

66 For this text: *Schreiner P.* Eine chinesische Beschreibung Konstantinopels aus dem 7.Jahrhundert // Istanbuler Mitteilungen, 39 (1989), p. 489-505.

67 *Corippus.* In Laudem. III.157-259 / Ed. cit. (n. 49), p. 65-68. The author carefully describes the diverse phases of the ceremony, the guards and the court with their ceremonial apparel, the appearance of the emperor.

68 *Corippus.* In Laudem. III.183-185 / Ed. cit. (n. 49), p. 66 and 106 (translation): [..] *unumque iubar super omnia fulget;/ omnia subcumbunt flammis melioribus astra, et quo tecta latent, regis pascuntur ab igne*, trans. "and one light shines over all; all the stars yield to its superior flames and feed on the fire of their monarch, by which they lie eclipsed". Again, a few lines below (vv. 228-230), the entrance of Narses, the emperor's sword bearer, is compared to the appearance of the morning star in the sky and the entrance of the emperor to the arrival of the day with its flames: *matutina micans ut caelo stella sereno/ auratis radiis argentea sidera vincit/ vicinumque diem claro praenuntiat igne*; trans. "as the morning star, glittering in the clear sky, outdoes the silvery constellations with its golden rays and announces the coming of the day with its clear flame" (Ibidem, p. 67 and 106 translation).

69 For this very telling metaphor: *Corippus.* In Laudem. III.182-187 / Ed. cit. (n. 49), p. 66, 106 (translation).

70 The author celebrates the spaces of the palace, beautifully adorned for the event and astonishingly bright and glittering with light, so that the imperial palace itself seems another heaven: *Corippus.* In Laudem. III.179-181 / Ed. cit. (n. 49), p. 66, 106 (translation): *imitatur Olympum/ officiis Augusta domus. Sic omnia clara/ sic numeris bene compta suis, ita luce corusca* (trans. "The imperial palace with its officials is like Olympus. Everything is as bright, everything as well ordered in its numbers, as shining with light"). For a discussion on the word *Olympus* in Corippus's poetry: *Carile M.C.* The Vision. cit. (n. 51), p. 173-174 n. 136.

71 For a thorough analysis of the heavenly character of the imperial epiphany: *Carile A.* Il palazzo imperiale come luogo dell'epifania trascendente dell'imperatore // Palatia. Palazzi imperiali tra Ravenna e Bisanzio. Catalogo della mostra (Ravenna, Biblioteca Classense, 14.10.2002-4.01.2003) / Ed. A. Augenti. Ferrara 2003, p. 6-15; *Idem*. La prossemica. cit. (n. 24), p. 606-612; *Idem.* Credunt. cit. (n. 43), p. 27-32.

72 *Corippus.* In Laudem. III.188-190 / Ed. cit. (n. 49), p. 66, 106 (translation): *Hac se magnarum Romana potentia rerum/ lege tenens medias inter super omnia gentes/ regna micat claro tantum uni subdita caelo* (trans. "In this way the power of Rome over all that is great keeps itself over all kingdoms in the midst of the peoples, and shines, subject only to the clear sky").

73 *Procopius.* Aed. I.10.19-21 / Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 86-87, with translation.

74 Photios, *Homilies.* X.4-6 / Ed. V. Laourdas. Thessaloniki, 1959, p. 100-103; for translation and commentary: *Mango C.* The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople. Cambridge, 1958, p. 185-188; see also: *Jenkins, Mango*. The Date. cit. (n. 61), p. 123-140. For the significance of this church within the palace: *Kalavrezou*. Helping Hands cit. (n. 61), p. 55-57; *Pentcheva B.* Icons and Power. The Mother of God in Byzantium. University Park, 2006, p. 28, 30, 190. For the architecture of the church: *Ćurčić.* Architecture. cit. (n. 46), p. 272.

75 Photios, *Homilies.* X.5 / Ed. cit. (n. 74), p. 101: "It is as if one had entered heaven itself with no one barring the way from any side, and was illuminated by the beauty in all forms shining all around like so many stars, so is one utterly amazed" (trans. *Mango.* The Art. cit. (n. 64), p. 185).

76 See for instance, Eusebius's description on the inauguration of the Church of Tyre (*Eusebius*. Historia Ecclesiastica,. X.4.2 and 45 / Ed. G. Bardy. Paris, 1993, p. 82, 96). This concept is again stressed in Paul the Silentiary's *ekphrasis* of the Hagia Sophia. For the assimilation of the church to the house of God, though in reference to the western tradition: *Carozzi C.* Dalla Gerusalemme celeste alla Chiesa: testo, immagini, simboli // Arti e storia nel Medioevo. cit. (n. 42), p. 145-166.

77 Just as the appearance of God is always associated with light in the biblical tradition, the brightness and luminosity of heaven is a constant in hagiographic descriptions of the kingdom of God from the first centuries of the current era (*Carile M.C.* The Vision. cit. (n. 51), p. 40-47).

78 From the reign of Micheal III onwards, the Theotokos of the Pharos became a great reliquary. By virtue of its treasury of holy relics, the church was central in court ceremonial. After 1204 its venerated objects were robbed and taken to western Europe by the Crusaders (*Klein H.* Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople // Visualisierungen. cit. (n. 55), p. 79-99 esp. p. 79-80, 91-92).

79 *VB.* 83-84 / Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 272-274.

80 *VB.* 83.15-19 / Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 274. The author of the *Vita Basilii* adds that the church was meant to show the emperor's piety towards God and to manifest the imperial grandeur (*VB.* 83.4-6 / Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 272).

81 *VB.* 84.5-7, 87.35-42 / Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 274, 284-286. A few centuries later Ignatius of Smolensk, a Russian traveller who visited Constantinople in 1389, was astonished by the *Nea Ekklesia*'s polished marble columns, which, like mirrors, reflected the image of people (*Majeska.* Russian Travellers. cit. (n. 62), p. 96-97, 248).

82 *VB.* 89.25-83 / Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 290-294. This too was a new building erected by Basil I. It was perhaps a basilica, beautifully adorned (*Ćurčić*. Architecture. cit. (n. 46), p. 269).

83 *VB.* 89. 60-67 / Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 292.

84 *VB.* 89.77-81 / Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 294. For a discussion on the room's decoration and inscriptions in the context of Basil's imperial ideology: *Brubaker*. Vision and Meaning. cit. (n. 53), p. 156, 170-171.

85 *Theoph. Con.* Chronogr. III.42-43 / Ed. cit. (n. 62), p. 140, 144-145. The function of the *Triconchos* is unknown. The *Sigma*, a curved portico outside the *Triconchos*, had a splendid ceiling. The imperial bedchamber adjoining the *Margarites*, which was used as the summer apartment of the emperor, had a golden domed ceiling. At the time of Theophilos, the *Kamilas* and its annexes included a triclinium, the private apartments of the empress, and rooms for the eunuchs (*Ebersolt.* Le Grand Palais. Paris, 1910, p. 115-116, esp. 118; *Brubaker, Haldon.* Byzantium. cit. (n. 5), p. 422-423). The *Kamilas* was later transformed into a library under Constantine VII (*Ibidem*, pp. 115-116, 172). For the architecture of these rooms: *Ćurčić*. Architecture. cit. (n. 46), p. 268-269.

86 *VB.* 89. 17-25 / Ed. cit. (n. 6), p. 288-290. For the architecture of the *Kainourgion*: *Ćurčić*. Architecture. cit. (n. 46), p. 269.

87 *Theoph. Con*. Chronogr. VI.20 / Ed. cit. (n. 62), p. 449-450. For the *Decanneaccubita* (Triclinium of the Nineteen Couches): *Krautheimer R.* Die Dekanneakkubita in Konstantinopel. Ein kleiner Beitrag zur Frage Rom und Byzans // Tortualae. Studien zu altchristlichen und byzantinischen Monumenten / Ed. W. N. Schumaker. Rom — Freiburg — Wien, 1966, p. 143-146.

88 *Liutprand of Cremona*. Antapodosis. VI.8 / Ed. P. Chiesa. Turnholt, 1998, p. 148. For the ceremonial use of the palace in the tenth century: *Featherstone*. The Great Palace. cit. (n. 55), p. 47-60.

89 In the *Decanneaccubita*, which in the tenth century was used only on few occasions, the ceremony of the banquet happened in the ancient way, with the participants laying on couches, and followed strict rituals that expressed with perfect rhythm the hierarchical order of the empire (*Malmberg S.* Visualizing Hierarchy at Imperial Banquets // Feast, Fast or Famine: Food and Drink in Byzantium / Eds. W. Mayer, S. Trzcionka. Brisbane, 2005, p. 11-24; *Idem.* Dazzling Dining: banquets as an expression of imperial legitimacy // "Eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19). The Production, Consumption and Celebration of Food and Wine in Byzantium (The 37th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, 29-31 March 2003) / Eds. L. Brubaker, K. Linardou. Aldershot, 2007, p. 84-86).

90 *Theoph. Con.* Chronogr. VI.21 / Ed. cit. (n. 62), p. 450. For the identification of this room as the *Pentacubiculum*: *Mango.* The Art. cit. (n. 64), p. 208 n. 127.

91 *Niketas Choniates.* Hist. De Manuele Comneno. VII / Ed. cit. (n. 13), p. 206.

92 *Mesarites N.* Die Palastrevolution von Johannes Komnenos / Ed. A. Heisenberg. Wьrzburg, 1907, p. 44-45 (paragraph 27); *Walker A.* Middle Byzantine Aesthetics of Power and the Incomparability of Islamic Art: the Architectural Ekphraseis of Nikolaos Mesarites // Muqarnas, 27 (2010), p. 79-102 with references (esp. 94-95 for text and new English translation of the passage). For this building see also: *Magdalino P.* Manuel Komnenos and the Great Palace // Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 4 (1978), p. 101-114; *Ćurčić.* Architecture. cit. (n. 46), p. 352; *Walker A.* The Emperor and the World. Exotic Elements and the Imaging of Middle Byzantine Imperial Power, Ninth to Thirteenth Centuries, Cambridge, 2012, p. 144-164.

93 The various marbles used for floors, wall revetment, and columns particularly attracted the attention of writers. For instance, while describing the buildings built by Theophilos in the palace, the author pays special attention to the kind of marble used for the columns and floors (*Theoph. Con.* Chronogr. III.42-43 / Ed. cit. (n. 62), p. 140, 144-145). A few centuries later, Niketas Choniates reports that Isaac II Angelus (1185-1195) spoliated the floors and walls of the Great Palace of its colourful and polished marble slabs and the *Chalkē* of its bronze doors, to reuse those in the Church of St. Michael at Anaplous (*Niketas Choniates.* Hist. De Isaacio Angelo. III / Ed. cit. (n. 13), p. 442. As for the precious doors, the *Triconchos* had a central silver door and two bronze doors at the sides, while the *Chrysotriklinos* received silver doors under Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (*Theoph. Con.* Chronogr. III.42.8-10, VI.23.21 / Ed. cit. (n. 62), p. 140, 450). The tenth-century *De Cerimoniis* refers to the bronze doors of another imperial building, the *Onopodion* (*Constantinus Porphyrogenitus.* De Cerimoniis [hereafter Const. Porph. *De Cer.*]. I.32 / Ed. J.J. Reiske. Boon, 1829 // CSHB, vol. I, p. 176). Constantine VII was also responsible for having the *Chrysotriklinos* decorated with a cornice in silver, probably running all around the hall, and a mosaic decoration with floral design. He is also credited with a splendid piece of furniture: a silver table decorated with multicoloured plaques of other materials (*Theoph. Con.* Chronogr. VI.23 and 33 / Ed. cit. (n. 62), p. 450-451, 456). As for the furniture, organs made of gold and the famous *Pentapyrgion*, possibly a cupboard with five towers holding precious ornaments and objects and exhibited in the *Chrysotriklinos*, are attributed to Theophilos (*Leo Grammaticus.* Chronographia / Ed. I. Bekker. Bonn, 1842 // CSHB, p. 215; translation in *Mango.* The Art. cit. (n. 64), p. 160-161). For the silver and golden organs set in the *Magnaura*: Const. Porph. *De Cer.* II.15 / Ed. cit., p. 571).

94 For the decoration of the *Chrysotriklinos* with objects and wall hangings on the occasion of foreign embassies: Const. Porph. *De Cer.* II.15 / Ed. cit. (n. 93), vol. I, p. 570, 580-581). For the enamels of the palatine treasury: *Pentcheva B.,* The Sensual Icon. Space, Ritual and the Senses in Byzantium. Pennsylvania, 2010, esp. p. 102-109.

95 For instance, for the funeral of Constantine the Great, "in the most superb of all the imperial halls", around the body of the emperor candles were light on high pedestals in a wonderful spectacle for the beholders that paid respect to emperor in a vigil that lasted days and nights (*Eusebius.* Vita Const. IV.66 / Ed. cit. (n. 21), p. 147; translation and commentary: *Cameron. Hall.* Eusebius. cit. (n. 23), p. 179, 343-344). From 330, on the occasion of the anniversary of the inauguration of Constantinople, candles were held by the soldiers in procession through the city (*John Malalas.* Chronographia. XIII.8 / Ed. cit. (n. 32), p. 247; *Chronicon Paschale.* s.a. 330 / Ed. L. Dindorf, Bonn, 1932, p. 530, see also the commentary by *Whitby* M. *and Whitby M.* // Chronicon Paschale 284-628 AD. Liverpool, 1989, p. 17-18 n. 56). After the death of Basil I, on the anniversary of the dedication of the *Nea Ecclesia*, the

emperor and the patriarch went in procession from the *Chrysotriklinos* to the church where they honoured an icon of Basil by lighting candles and praying (Const. Porph. *De Cer*. I.19 / Ed. cit. (n. 93), vol. I, p. 117-118). Again, on Palm Sunday, the court held candles in a procession, stopping in various spaces within the imperial palace, while the emperor himself lit candles when he arrived in the Church of the Theotokos of Daphne (Const. Porph. *De Cer*. I.32 / Ed. cit. (n. 93), vol. I, p. 171-177, for commentary on the different types of candles used in the ceremonies: in *Vogt A.* Constantin VII Porphyrogenete, Le livre des ceremonies. Paris, 1967, vol. I.2, p. 75). For the use of *polycandela* and lamps suspended from the ceilings of palatine halls decorated for the ceremony of the imperial reception: Const. Porph. *De Cer*. II.15 / Ed. cit. (n. 93), vol. I, p. 571-573.

96 For a phenomenological study of the manifestation of sacredness through light, smoke, and scents, though with particular focus on the cult of icons, see: *Pentcheva*, The Sensual Icon. cit. (n. 94), esp. p. 36-44, 119, 188.

97 In another passage we are told that the preparations for the arrival of a foreign embassy to the imperial palace included the exhibition of precious objects, such as silver lamps, curtains with gold embroideries, enamels, and richly decorated carpets, while rose perfumes scented the palace and the officials dressed in ceremonial garments (Const. Porph. *De Cer*. II.15 / Ed. cit. (n. 93), p. 570-588). The *automata* of the *Magnaura* hall had singing birds, roaring lions, and scented rain (*Liutprand*. Antapodosis. VI.5 / Ed. cit. (n. 88), p. 147). For the automata in the throne of Solomon: *Brett G.* The Automata in the Byzantine *Throne of Solomon* // Speculum, 29 (1954), p. 477-487).

98 Several papers of a recent international conference organized by the Centro Italiano di Studio sull'Alto Medioevo (Spoleto, Italy) explored the diverse meanings and manifestations of the divine through fire (LX *Settimana di Studio del CISAM. Il Fuoco nell'Alto Medioevo*. Spoleto, forthcoming).

99 *Carile M.C.* The Vision. cit. (n. 51), p. 24.