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From the Great Palace to the Great Church: Art and Light in the Context of Court Ritual in Tenth-Century Constantinople

Throughout the long life of the Byzantine Empire, court ceremonies were of great importance for state ideology, particularly given the relative rarity of the emperor's public appearances.¹ Comprising a complex interaction of ritual practices with art and light, they served to transmit key political and religious messages related to the nature of the imperial office in Byzantium. This very idea is clearly expressed in the preface of the so-called *Book of Ceremonies* which contained a number of protocols for imperial rituals and was compiled in the tenth century by the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos: "...owing to a praiseworthy *taxis* (order), the imperial power appears more decent, the respect accorded it soars, and for this it is marvellous to both foreigners and our own subjects."³ This paper will explore the relationship between art, light and court ceremonial in the Byzantine capital and its grand cathedral, Hagia Sophia, making special reference to political and religious symbolism, and the way in which it glorified and limited imperial power within this sacred space.

I will focus in particular on one especially significant procession, the first to be described in the *Book of Ceremonies*.⁴ Dating to ca 957–59,⁵ the procession solemnly led the emperor and his entourage from the Great Palace (μέγα παλάτιον)⁶ to Hagia Sophia and back after the liturgy (fig. 1). It was followed, with minor variations, on great feasts of the Christian calendar, while its position at the very beginning of the book accommodated references to it throughout the work. Previous scholarship has frequently noted the importance of this procession,⁷ particularly when seeking to establish the nature of the emperor's special charisma. Such studies usually conclude by suggesting that the emperor possessed a "priestly" or "quasi-priestly" status during the services in Hagia Sophia. In contributing to this discourse, I will suggest that, given the lack of clarity surrounding the specific nature of the emperor's role within the liturgy, scholars should employ caution in using terminology such as "priest", which carry clearly-established definitions within the clerical structure of the Church.

Light played a central role during this procession. The ceremony started at the break of dawn (ἔωθεν πρωΐας),⁸ which made lighting devices necessary in the palace complex and Hagia Sophia, as well as in the open spaces between them. In fact, a number of services in the Byzantine Church took place in the weak light of early morning or the darkness of the evening or night, thus requiring the illumination of churches by candles and oil lamps. For this reason, Hagia Sophia was designed to be seen as much by artificial as natural light.⁹ The appreciation of both sun and lamp light in the cathe-

dral is reflected in the works of sixth-century Byzantine authors. The historian Prokopios of Caesarea wrote with regard to natural light: “it abounds exceedingly in gleaming sunlight. You might say that the [interior] space is not illuminated by the sun from the outside, but that the radiance is generated within, so great an abundance of light bathes this shrine all round.”¹⁰ Conversely, the poet Paul Silentiarios emphasised the artificial light produced by lamps: “But no words are sufficient to describe the illumination in the evening; you might say that some nocturnal sun filled the majestic temple with light.”¹¹

However, the experience of modern day visitors to the Great Church¹² is very different to that of the Byzantine period, due to the use of steady bright electric light¹³ and alterations to the original lighting conditions of the cathedral over time. Many of the aisle windows have either been blocked or shaded, resulting in most light coming from the nave, while pairs of the dome windows over the west pendentives have been filled with masonry.¹⁴ An additional factor altering today’s experience in the cathedral is dirt and discolouration.¹⁵ The greatly prized multi-coloured marble revetments of Hagia Sophia used to be highly polished and therefore glittered¹⁶, while large parts of the upper walls were covered with gold and silver glass mosaics designed to catch the light at various angles.¹⁷ The lighting system of the church was very elaborate¹⁸, comprising numerous individual lamps, silver or brass polykandela, candelabra and, in later times, candles.¹⁹ In addition to these practical and decorative purposes, light also had deeper symbolic dimensions, among the most common of which was its widespread association with divine light²⁰.

The ceremony itself comprised many stages that we will not examine in depth, choosing instead to focus on elements that have relevance to the subject under discussion. Preparations started the previous day, when the streets were cleaned and adorned with aromatic plants,²¹ and many silk and embroidered pieces of cloth were hung in various parts of the palace buildings.²² On the actual day of the procession the emperor’s attendants assembled his garments and insignia, such the “rod of Moses”, the crowns and the imperial arms, lances and shields. Before wearing his imperial garments, the monarch prayed in front of the mosaic of the enthroned Christ located in the apse of the *Chrysotriklinos* (golden hall), the throne room where imperial receptions took place (fig. 1).²³ The *Book of Ceremonies* does not make any mention of candles being held during this prayer as per normal practice at the time. Nevertheless, the setting and actions of the emperor were full of symbolism. The domed throne room was octagonal in shape and had an apse to the east, which was adorned with an image of Christ, possibly a mosaic.²⁴ Right under the radiant depiction of Christ in majesty sitting on His throne was the emperor’s own throne. This was a powerful visual statement of the divine origins of the imperial office. During his prayer to the absolute ruler the emperor appeared humble,²⁵ bereft of his ceremonial attire and insignia.

After this, he put on his gold-bordered *sagion* (χρυσοπερίκλειστα σαγία)²⁶ and processed through other buildings of the palace complex where he received the rest of his garments and insignia.²⁷ He also passed

through sanctuaries where he venerated relics and paid homage to God by deeply bowing three times with lit candles in his hands.²⁸ Though not specifically mentioned in the *Book of Ceremonies*, lighting devices such as torches and lanterns must have been used in the open spaces during this procession, for it was still not fully light.²⁹ Finally, the cortege reached the *Augoustaion* (Αὐγουσταῖον), the square between the palace and the cathedral (fig. 1).³⁰ From there the sovereign and his entourage entered through the *Beautiful Gate* (Ὠραία Πύλη)³¹ into the southwest vestibule of Hagia Sophia (fig. 2.1), a chamber known as the *Metatorion* (μητατόριον),³² the tiring room, where he was divested of his crown.³³ Coming from a secular space, the emperor's crown, the royal symbol par excellence, had to be removed as he was entering a holy space. This moment in the ceremonial made clear to the emperor that beyond this point it was not he who exercised authority; within the space of Hagia Sophia kingship belonged to God alone, who had temporarily given authority to a person He had chosen.³⁴

This symbolically charged act was taking place in front of the late ninth or early tenth-century lunette mosaic (figs 3, 2.2) that depicts Constantine the Great and Justinian I, offering respectively a model of Constantinople and Hagia Sophia to the seated Virgin and Child (fig. 4).³⁵ Scholars have placed great emphasis on the representation of the Virgin receiving the emperors' gifts, and have particularly linked this with the idea that Constantinople was under the special protection of the Virgin.³⁶ Indeed, in full daylight or under the modern electric lights now in place, the larger image of the Virgin naturally appears more prominent by comparison to that of the infant Christ. However, studies on the effect of light upon mosaics have shown that gold and silver cubes, such as those that form the robes of Christ, are neutered by steady bright light but pick up and reflect light far more effectively in the low, indirect light conditions that would have prevailed at the time of the ceremony.³⁷ Thus, under the subdued light of dawn coming through the windows of the vestibule and the gentle light of oil lamps, the focus of the composition would have shifted from the Virgin to Christ. His gleaming gold *chiton* and *himation* with silver highlights, in direct contrast to the dark blue garments of the Virgin,³⁸ reflected light, arresting the attention of the viewer. One might add that the visual emphasis on Christ achieved at this particular time of day was, perhaps, most appropriate for the ceremonial act that was taking place in the vestibule — the removal of the emperor's crown as a symbol of his subservience to God.

The emperor then passed into the narthex, where the Patriarch and clergy awaited him. Having first venerated the Gospel, he greeted and embraced the Patriarch and walked together with him to the *Imperial Gates* (βασιλικαὶ πύλαι), the central and highest of nine portals leading to the nave of the cathedral (figs 5, 2.3).³⁹ There, the emperor received a lit candle from the *praipositos*⁴⁰ and performed a *proskynesis*, that is he prostrated himself three times at the threshold of the nave while the Patriarch read a prayer. Directly above these doors is the late ninth or early tenth-century lunette mosaic portraying Christ, enthroned holding an open Gospel with a kneeling emperor praying at his feet (fig. 6).⁴¹ It is obvious that the choice of

theme for this particular piece was inspired by the fact that the emperor rendered homage to God in this part of the church, prior to entering the holy space where the liturgy took place.⁴² Such an interpretation is further supported by the psalms chanted at this point, prompting the faithful to thank and praise the name of God.⁴³ The open codex held by Christ reads: “Peace [be] unto you. I am the light of the world”, a combination of two different passages from the Gospel of St John (*John* 20:19, 21, 26 and 8:12). Christ greets those standing in front of the Imperial Gate in the same manner He greeted His disciples, for the phrase “peace be unto you” was used when He appeared among the Apostles after His resurrection. At the same time, He reveals an aspect of His divine nature as being the source of life-giving light.⁴⁴

The skilful mosaicist rendered this divine truth in the most effective way; the golden tesserae of the haloes and background of the narthex mosaic are set at an angle ranging from 9 to 26 degrees from the perpendicular so as to reflect light down to the viewer.⁴⁵ Furthermore, Christ’s silver *chiton* decorated with gold *clavi* would have appeared radiant, emphasising His central role in the scene. At present, apart from an arched window on the wall opposite the mosaic,⁴⁶ a single spotlight sheds bright light at the mosaic, thus neutralising the reflective quality of the golden and silver tesserae.⁴⁷ In Byzantine times, the subject and position of the narthex mosaic would also have necessitated the existence of an individual source of light,⁴⁸ and it is likely that a lamp or polykandelon hung from the cross-vault above. Bearing in mind that the imperial procession took place in the dim light of dawn and that the mosaic was appropriately illuminated, it is clear it would have made for an impressive spectacle. As the emperor paid homage to God beneath the lunette mosaic, his subjects would see the light from the lamps and the mosaic reflecting onto his jewel-encrusted, golden vestments, as if it came directly from the holy image. The message communicated by this carefully staged scene was obvious: the origins of imperial office were divine. God had endowed earthly rule to the reigning emperor and therefore he was the only suited candidate for this appointment.

Following the prayer, the emperor returned the candle to the *praipositos* and once again venerated the Gospel, after which he and the Patriarch entered the main part of the cathedral. It is important to note that in this part of the liturgy, known as the Little Entrance,⁴⁹ the candles carried along with the Gospel symbolised the divine light.⁵⁰ In a way, this light, which had just been seen shining forth to the emperor and Patriarch from the narthex mosaic, was now moving with them into the cathedral. The vast space of the nave, decorated with colourful marbles, glass mosaics, lustrous silk textiles, precious church furnishings and liturgical vessels of gold and silver, Gospel books with lavish covers, icons and censers, formed an ideal environment for the employment of light. The radiance of hundreds of flickering lamps and candles reflected on these rich surfaces and the fragrance of burning incense truly gave the feeling of entering a holy space where God “the Light” dwelled. In this atmosphere, the emperor and Patriarch walked side by side across the main body of Hagia Sophia until they approached the Holy Doors (*ἅγια θύρα*) of the sanctuary (fig. 2.5).

There the Patriarch entered alone, while the emperor stood at the *omphalion*,⁵¹ located outside the chancel barrier, and prostrated himself three times again holding a candle in his hands.⁵² At the end of his prayer, he passed into the sanctuary (fig. 2.7), kissed the altar cloth, venerated liturgical vessels and relics and offered his gift to God, usually a bag of gold coins (*ἀποκόμβιον*) or on occasion other precious objects. Then the sovereign walked with the Patriarch to the apse (fig. 2.8) and there once again rendered thanks to God by bowing three times in front of the large golden cross, holding a candle in his hands. After the *proskynesis*, the Patriarch gave the censer to the emperor to incense the cross himself and then the two men exchanged the kiss of peace and the emperor went to his *Metatorion* (fig. 2.10), the imperial box arranged in two floors in the southeast of the nave,⁵³ where he attended the rest of the service.

All these highly symbolic acts were taking place beneath the apse mosaic of the Virgin and Child (figs 7, 8),⁵⁴ an image that again seems designed to make visually manifest Christ's message from the narthex piece: "I am the Light of the World". As with the mosaics discussed previously, the metallic cubes of the composition are at their full glow in the twilight of this dawn ceremony.⁵⁵ Christ's gold robes as well as the gold highlights on his hair, in sharp contrast to the dark blue garments of the Virgin, radiate light out to the onlooker, rendering Him the most prominent figure. From an image of the Virgin holding the Child, the work is transformed, as is more appropriate at this part of the ceremony, into an image of Christ shining forth to the ruler and the world.

The sovereign also played an active role during the Great Entrance of the liturgy, when the Eucharistic bread and wine were transferred from the prothesis chamber to the altar.⁵⁶ Accompanied by his courtiers he walked to the ambo (*ἄμβων*), a raised platform in the middle of the cathedral (fig. 2.6), where he met the clergy procession carrying the paten and chalice. There he received a large candle (*λαμπάς*) and led the procession as it moved towards the *Holy Doors* of the sanctuary (fig. 2.5) where the Patriarch was waiting. At this point, the emperor stepped to the side so that the priests holding the liturgical vessels could enter.⁵⁷ He then greeted the Patriarch and returned to the *Metatorion* until it was time to receive the Holy Communion, which brought him again outside the sanctuary.⁵⁸ After this, he went back to the *Metatorion* where he stayed until the end of the liturgy.

When the service was over the sovereign walked with the Patriarch until the door opening to the *Holy Well* (*ἅγιον φρέαρ*), a shrine located at the southeast corner of Hagia Sophia (fig. 2.13),⁵⁹ and only at this point did the Patriarch return the crown to the emperor as he was about to leave the cathedral and enter the earthly world where he ruled.⁶⁰ The procession back to the Great Palace was repeated in reverse order, though more quickly, and was less formal than that of the arrival. When he arrived at the palace, his crown and the rest of his regalia were removed, and the procession ended as it had begun — with the emperor prostrate before the image of Christ in his throne room, the *Chrysotriklinos*.

The issue of the emperor's role in the liturgy is a complicated subject that requires significantly more discussion than is possible here. However, hav-

ing described this procession in Hagia Sophia, it is possible to outline some thoughts that may contribute to this discussion. The emperor is often described by scholars as being a priest and king, king-priest, or as having a priestly or quasi-priestly status,⁶¹ but to what extent is this a valid term? It is clear that the emperor held a special place during the liturgy that derived from his God-given right to rule.⁶² It is, however, just as clear that his role during the liturgy was restricted and this is apparent when considering his ritual behaviour during the ceremony under discussion. He prayed with candles, which was a practice that extended to both laity and clergy.⁶³ He led the procession of the Great Entrance carrying a candle, but this was normally performed by a member of the minor orders of the clergy.⁶⁴ He entered the sanctuary, kissed the altar cloth and censed, all of which were clerical privileges, yet not only of bishops or priests but also of the lower ranking offices of the Byzantine Church, such as the deacon.⁶⁵ Moreover, he entered only once and for a very specific reason - to leave his offering of gold.⁶⁶ He remained outside the sanctuary when receiving the Holy Communion, although he received the Eucharistic bread and wine separately, in the same manner as the clergy.⁶⁷ Again, however, this was the case not only for bishops and priests, but also members of the lower ranks of the clergy. For most of the liturgy, his position was in the *Metatorion*, his special private chamber in the nave with the laity. George P. Majeska rightly points out the ambiguity of the emperor's role within the liturgy of Hagia Sophia, and it is indeed possible that this ambiguity was intentional.⁶⁸ Only much later is he ascribed a specific clerical rank, that of the *deputatus* (δεποτάτορος), a minor official of Hagia Sophia.⁶⁹ This, as well as the fact that a priest was an order of the Byzantine clergy clearly defined by certain rights and duties such as the administering of the Eucharist,⁷⁰ would also argue against referring to the emperor as a priest or describing him as priestly. Certainly at no point in this procession do we see him play a role in the liturgy that falls exclusively within the preserve of a priest.

This study has followed a single procession from the Great Palace to the Great Church. In terms of length, it was one of the shortest among those described in the *Book of Ceremonies*. However, it was perhaps the most important as it was followed on all great feasts of the Christian calendar. It can be seen that, in this fundamental piece of ceremonial, light, either in the form of a simple candle or an elaborate polykandelon with numerous glass lamps, played a vital role in the creation of sacred space within the city of Constantinople and its grand cathedral. Candles and lamps had a practical role given the times at which major services often took place, but were also representative of the divine light, and served throughout this ritual as a means of paying homage to sacred figures.

It is not surprising that light was employed with such care and symbolic meaning during this procession. Any appearance of the emperor in public was as significant as it was rare, and was the subject of careful choreography and staging that sought everywhere to glorify the ruler and reinforce a public image of his legitimacy and righteousness. However, it also served to establish the limitations of his temporal authority, divesting him of the earthly insignia of kingship as he entered a space reserved for the authority

of God. It is clear that light formed a key aspect of the symbology employed to promote and reinforce these messages to the people.

Елени Димитриаду (London) От Большого Дворца к Великой Церкви. Искусство и Свет в при- дворном церемониале византий- ских императоров в Константинополе X века

Имперские церемонии были неотъемлемой частью византийской государственной идеологии на протяжении долгой истории Империи. Сравнительно редкие появления императора на публике были тщательно срежиссированы и сопровождались ритуальными световыми и художественными действиями, служившими для передачи ключевых идей, связанных с ролью императора. При этом особо акцентировались величие и легитимность власти императора, ее отношение к церкви и другим слоям византийского общества. В докладе рассматривается вопрос о роли искусства и световых эффектов в придворном церемониале на примере отдельной процессии, описанной в «Книге церемоний» (изд. под ред. Reiske, том I, кн. 1, 5-35), представляющей из себя собрание документов, датируемых с пятого по десятый век и скомпонованных по указанию императора Константина VII Багрянородного. Датированная примерно 957-59 гг., процессия с участием императора и его придворных направлялась от Большого дворца к собору Святой Софии, и с небольшими изменениями совершалась по большим престольным праздникам церковного календаря.

При этом свет играл знаменательную роль в ходе этих шествий, выполняя практические, эстетические и символические задачи. Церемонии свершались во время сумерек или на рассвете, тем самым сообщая необходимое значение осветительным устройствам в виде лампад или факелов, как внутри, так и снаружи зданий. Величественный собор, щедро украшенный сверкающим мрамором и мозаиками, согласно замыслу архитектора, должен был производить грандиозное впечатление, как при естественном дневном, так и при искусственном, вечернем, освещении, выявлявшем различные эстетические и символические аспекты его декора. В зависимости от характера освещения в различное время суток, мозаики меняли свой облик, что вело к смещению визуальных акцентов от фигуры одного святого к другой. Это, в свою очередь, меняло и смысловые акценты, благодаря чему собор являлся надлежащим пространством для проведения торжественных церемоний.

В заключительной части этого исследования автор рассматривает роль фигуры императора, характер его присутствия и участия в литургии Святой Софии, сосредотачиваясь на аспектах, ограничивающих власть императора внутри сакрального пространства. В частности, ставится вопрос о пересмотре значения понятия «священник» по отношению к византийскому государю.

- 1 *Doig A.* Liturgy and Architecture from the Early Church to the Middle Ages, Aldershot, 2008, p. 74 has counted seventeen occasions on which the emperor appeared in Hagia Sophia.
- 2 The book includes records dating between the fifth and tenth centuries and offers very detailed descriptions of ceremonies during major and minor Christian feasts as well as ceremonies of a secular nature, such as celebrations in the Hippodrome of Constantinople or promotions of Byzantine officials. For a concise description of the contents and the chronology of the different parts of the *Book of Ceremonies* with relevant bibliography, see *McCormick M.* De Cerimoniis // Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium / Ed. Kazhdan A. 1991, vol. 1, p. 595–597. More general studies on the Book of Ceremonies include: *Bury J. B.* The Ceremonial Book of Constantine Porphyrogenetos // English Historical Review 22 (1907), p. 209–227, 417–439; *McCormick M.* Analyzing Imperial Ceremonies // Byzantinische Zeitschrift 35 (1985), p. 1–20; *Cameron Av.* The Construction of Court Ritual: The Byzantine Book of Ceremonies // Rituals of Royalty. Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies / Eds D. Cannadine and S. Price. Cambridge, 1987, p. 106–136. On Porphyrogenetos, see *Toynbee A.* Constantine Porphyrogenetos and his World. Oxford, 1973; *Kazhdan A. H* *Εποχή του Κωνσταντίνου Ζ' Πορφυρογέννητου // Διαβάζω* 129 (1985), p. 17–20.
- 3 *Constantine Porphyrogenetos*, De Cerimoniis Aulae Byzantinae // Ed. J.J. Reiske. Bonn, 1829, preface, p. 3, lines 4–5, p. 4, lines 1–2: “ἄτε διὰ τῆς ἐπαινετῆς τάξεως τῆς βασιλείου ἀρχῆς δεικνυμένης κοσμιωτέρας καὶ πρὸς τὸ εὐσχημονέστερον ἀνατρεχούσης καὶ διὰ τοῦτο θαυμαστῆς οὐσίας ἕνεσσι τε καὶ ἡμετέροις.” Most recently, an English translation and commentary on the book along with J.J. Reiske’s edition of the original text was published by *Moffatt A.* and *Tall M.* *Constantine Porphyrogenetos: The Book of Ceremonies // Byzantina Australiensia* 18, Canberra, 2012. Unfortunately, this book was not available to me when writing this paper.
- 4 *Constantine Porphyrogenetos*, De Cerimoniis, I, 1, p. 5–22.
- 5 *McCormick M.* De Cerimoniis, p. 596.
- 6 For a concise description of the Great Palace of Constantinople, see *Mango C.* Great Palace // Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium, vol. 2, p. 870 including the most important earlier bibliography. More recent works on the palace include *Bardill J.* Visualizing the Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors at Constantinople. Archaeology, Text, Topography // Visualisierungen von Herrschaft / Ed. F.A. Bauer [Byzas 5] 2006, p. 5–45 and *Featherstone J. M.* The Great Palace as Reflected in the De Cerimoniis // Visualisierungen von Herrschaft / Ed. F.A. Bauer [Byzas 5] 2006, p. 47–61.
- 7 *Majeska G. P.* The Emperor in His Church: Imperial Ritual in the Church of St Sophia // Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204 / Ed. H. Maguire. Washington D.C., 1997, p. 1–11, esp. p. 1. *Dagron G.* Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium, transl. by Birrell J. Cambridge, 2003, p. 5. *Nelson R.* Hagia Sophia, 1850–1950: Holy Wisdom Modern Monument, Chicago, London, 2004, p. 5.
- 8 *Constantine Porphyrogenetos*, De Cerimoniis, I, 1, p. 6, lines 19–20.
- 9 There is evidence that the architects of Hagia Sophia were well-versed in sciences related to the use of light and its effects within the interior of buildings. See *Schibille N.* Astronomical and Optical Principles in the Architecture of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople // Science in Context 22 (2009), p. 27–46. See also in

- this volume the paper of Alexandr Godovanets with relative bibliography. Mosaicists too paid particular attention to the planning and placing of mosaics, in order to optimise the influence of light upon the tesserae. See *James L. Light and Colour in Byzantine Art*, Oxford, 1996, p. 5.
- 10 *Prokopios of Caesarea*, On Buildings, I, i, 28-31 // Loeb Classical Library / Ed. T. E. Page et al. London, Cambridge Mass., 1940, vol. 7. Translation taken from *Mango C. The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents*, Englewood Cliffs N.J., 1972, p. 74.
 - 11 *Paul Silentiarios*, Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia // Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentiarios. Kunstbeschreibungen justinianischer Zeit / Ed. P. Friedlunder. Leipzig, Berlin, 1912, p. 250, v. 390-392. Translation after *Mango C. Art of the Byzantine Empire*, p. 89.
 - 12 *Prokopios of Caesarea*, On Buildings, I. i. 66, p. 28-9: “τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἐκκλησίας, ἥνπερ μεγάλην καλεῖν νενομίκασι” (the church of Constantinople which [people] are accustomed to call great). The name Great Church was commonly used throughout the Byzantine period. For the various names ascribed to Hagia Sophia, see Downey G. The Name of the Church of St Sophia in Constantinople // *The Harvard Theological Review* 52 (1959), p. 37-41.
 - 13 Scholars have frequently pointed out the importance of light in the perception of monumental art and particularly the difference in effect between modern electric lighting and original illumination by lamps or candles. See for instance *James L. Light and Colour*, p. 8 and *Franses R. When All that is Gold does not Glitter: On the Strange History of Looking at Byzantine Art // Icon and Word: The Power of Images in Byzantium. Studies Presented to Robin Cormack / Eds A. Eastmond A. and L. James. Aldershot, 2003, p. 13-23, esp. p. 13.*
 - 14 *Mainstone R.J. Hagia Sophia: Architecture, Structure and Liturgy of Justinian's Great Church*, London, 1988, p. 49, 65. Compare in particular plates 52 and 59.
 - 15 *James L. Light and Colour*, p. 7-8.
 - 16 Paul Silentiarios in his *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia* offers a lengthy account of the different kinds of marbles originating from various lands and their gleaming qualities. See *Mango C. Art of the Byzantine Empire*, p. 85-86.
 - 17 *James L. Light and Colour*, p. 5-6.
 - 18 On the lighting system of Hagia Sophia in the sixth century, see *Fobelli M.L, Un Tempio per Giustiniano: Santa Sofia di Costantinopoli e la Descrizione di Paolo Silenziario*, Rome, 2005. For a general discussion of lighting devices between the fourth and seventh centuries, see *Bouras L. and Parani M. Lighting in Early Byzantium*, Washington D.C., 2005.
 - 19 Candles were used in the liturgy and during processions from the Early Christian times, and it is likely that they became a source of artificial illumination from the seventh century, supplanting lamps, which are almost completely absent in archaeological finds from that period onwards. See *Mango C. Addendum to the Report of Everyday Life // Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32 (1982), p. 252-257, esp. p. 255-256.
 - 20 Lamps and candles themselves were considered to represent the image of the eternal light. Generally on the symbolic use of light, see *Galavaris G. Some Aspects of Symbolic Use of Lights in the Eastern Church: Candles, lamps and Ostrich Eggs // Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 4 (1978), p. 69-78.
 - 21 *Constantine Porphyrogenetos*, De Cerimoniis, I, 1, p. 6, lines 13-18.
 - 22 *Featherstone J.M. The Great Palace as reflected in the De Cerimoniis*, p. 50 posits the question as to whether those lavish pieces of fabric were there to conceal the poor state of the older buildings of the Great Palace.
 - 23 For a detailed description of the Chrysotriklinos, see *Featherstone J. M. The Chrysotriklinos as Seen through De Cerimoniis // Zwischen Polis, Provinz und Peripherie. Beiträge zur byzantinischen Kulturgeschichte [Mainzer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik 7] / Ed. L. Hoffmann. Wiesbaden, 2005, p. 845-852, including a very useful reconstruction of the edifice. Also Featherstone J.M. The Great Palace*, p. 50-53.
 - 24 *Featherstone J.M. The Great Palace*, p. 51.

- 25 In a different part of the *Book of Ceremonies*, the prayer of the emperor in front of the image of Christ in the Chrysotriklinos is described as “showing to God the respect of a servant”: τὸ δουλικὸν πρὸς Θεὸν δεῖκνυσι σέβας. See *Constantine Porphyrogenetos*, De Cerimoniis, II, 1, p. 519, lines 21–22.
- 26 The emperor's sagion was a type of cloak normally of purple or gold colour. See *Bellinger A. R.* and *Grierson P.* Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, Washington D.C., 1999, vol. 4, part 1, p. 156–157. On the Byzantine imperial costume in general, see *Piltz E.* Middle Byzantine Court Costume // *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* / Ed. H. Maguire. Washington D.C., 2004, p. 39–51.
- 27 Once fully dressed, the emperor was received at various points both within and outside the palace by the circus factions (δημοί) to the sound of acclamations.
- 28 The emperor repeated this prayer with candles seven times before he reached Hagia Sophia. On this practice and its origins in secular imperial rituals with relevant bibliography, see *Taft R. F.* The Pontifical Liturgy of the Great Church according to a Twelfth-Century Diataxis in Codex British Museum Add. 34060 // *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 46 (1980), p. 89–124, esp. p. 108–109.
- 29 On lanterns and their use with further bibliography, see *Bouras L.* and *Parani M.* Lighting in Early Byzantium, p. 5.
- 30 The function of the Augoustaion changed with time from a public forum to an average-sized courtyard of Hagia Sophia. See *Mango C.* The Brazen House: A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople, Copenhagen, 1959, p. 46. Also *Cormack R.* and *Hawkins E. J. W.* The Mosaics of St Sophia at Istanbul: The Rooms above the Southwest Vestibule and Ramp // *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 31 (1977), p. 175–251, esp. p. 199–200.
- 31 Scholarly opinion is not unanimous as to the exact location of the Beautiful Gate. For a discussion of the different views on the subject and its identification with the south door of the southwest vestibule of Hagia Sophia, see *Dimitriadou E.* The Lunette Mosaic in the Southwest Vestibule of Hagia Sophia at Constantinople: A Reconsideration, PhD Thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, London, 2010, chapter 2.
- 32 The exact location and number of Metatoria in Hagia Sophia has been the subject of controversy among scholars. See *Papadopoulos J. B.* Le mutatorium des églises byzantines // *Mémorial Louis Petit* [Archives de l'Orient Chrétien 1] Bucharest, 1948, p. 366–372; *Matheus T. F.* The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy, University Park, London, 1971, p. 96, 132, 134; *Strube C.* Die westliche Eingangsseite der Kirchen von Konstantinopel in justinianischer Zeit: architektonische und quellenkritische Untersuchungen, Wiesbaden, 1973, p. 72–81; *Mainstone R. J.* Hagia Sophia: Architecture, Structure and Liturgy of Justinian's Great Church, London, 1988, p. 223–226; *Baldwin J. F.* The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development and Meaning of Stational Liturgy, Rome, 1987, p. 177–178. There were at least two Metatoria in the cathedral, one in close proximity to the Beautiful Gate and the other in the southeast part of the nave. For the identification of the southwest vestibule with the Metatorion close to the Beautiful Gate, see *Dimitriadou E.* The Lunette Mosaic, chapter 2 with further bibliography.
- 33 *Constantine Porphyrogenetos*, De Cerimoniis, I, 1, p. 14, lines 15–16.
- 34 This ceremonial act is discussed in *Dagron G.* Emperor and Priest, p. 99. The emperor wore his crown into the cathedral only during his coronation; see *Constantine Porphyrogenetos*, De Cerimoniis, I, 38, p. 193. However, by the Palaiologan period the emperor only removed his crown upon receiving the Holy Communion; see *McCormick M.* Crown // *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 1, p. 554 with relevant bibliography.
- 35 A late ninth or early tenth-century dating for the lunette mosaic is proposed on the basis of mosaic technique in *Dimitriadou E.* The Lunette Mosaic, chapter 1.
- 36 *Mango C.* Constantinople as Theotokoupolis // *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* / Ed. M. Vassilaki. Athens, 2000, p. 17–25, esp. p. 24.

- 37 *Franses R.* When All that is Gold does not Glitter, p. 13–23. These conclusions are based on the examination of the apse mosaic of Hagia Sophia.
- 38 *James L.* Light and Colour, p. 8 points out the fact that blue is the last colour to shine out in darker spaces.
- 39 By the late twelfth century the Imperial Gates were called Beautiful Gates; see *Laurent V. Travaux Archéologiques à Constantinople // Échos d'Orient* 35 (1936), p. 97–111, esp. p. 103–105. *Baldovin J. F.* The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development and Meaning of Stational Liturgy, Rome, 1987, p. 177 considered the middle three doors as being the Imperial Gates.
- 40 The praepositos was a high court dignitary; see *Gulland R.* Recherches sur les Institutions Byzantines, Berlin, 1967, vol. 1, p. 333–380.
- 41 There is sizeable bibliography on the dating and interpretation of this mosaic, identifying the kneeling emperor as either Basil I or his son Leo VI. The two most discussed and controversial papers are those of *Hawkins E. J. W.* Further Observations on the Narthex Mosaic in St Sophia at Istanbul // *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 22 (1968), p. 151–166 and *Oikonomides N.* Leo and the Narthex Mosaic of Saint Sophia // *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 30 (1976), p. 151–172.
- 42 On the role of the narthex mosaic, located at a significant point in the processional route in Hagia Sophia, I find myself in agreement with André Grabar and Robert Nelson, who interpret the piece in the context of imperial ceremonies and ecclesiastical rituals; *Grabar A.* L'empereur dans l'art byzantin: Recherches sur l'art officiel de l'empire d'Orient, Paris, 1936, p. 101 and *Nelson R.* Hagia Sophia, 1850–1950, p. 10–13. For a different view, see *Mango C.* The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia // *H. Kuhler*, Hagia Sophia, London, 1967, p. 47–60, esp. 54. Also *Oikonomides N.* Leo VI and the Narthex Mosaic of Saint Sophia // *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 30 (1976), p. 151–172, esp. 156.
- 43 Psalm 91:1: ἀγαθὸν τὸ ἐξομολογεῖσθαι τῷ Κυρίῳ καὶ ψάλλειν τῷ ὀνόματί σου, Ὑψίστε. (It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord and to sing praises to thy name, O thou Most High). This idea draws on *Nelson R.* Hagia Sophia, 1850–1950, p. 12–13 who provides further relevant psalms chanted while the emperor and Patriarch were standing at the Imperial Gates.
- 44 For a summarised theology of light with further reading suggestions, see *Perl ED.* “...That Man might Become God”: Central Themes in Byzantine Theology // *Heaven on Earth: Art and the Church in Byzantium / Ed. L. Saffran.* University Park, 1998, p. 39–57, esp. p. 46–52.
- 45 *Hawkins E. J. W.* Further Observations on the Narthex Mosaic in St Sophia at Istanbul // *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 22 (1968), p. 151–166, esp. p. 166.
- 46 That is on the west wall of the narthex.
- 47 A number of scholars have emphasised the fact that contemporary lighting devices alter the appearance of the colours of images, especially metallic colours such as gold and silver. See *Demus O.* Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium, London, 1948, p. 35–37. *James L.* Light and Colour, p. 4–8. *Franses R.* When All that is Gold does not Glitter, p. 13–23.
- 48 It is a known fact that oil lamps and candles were placed in front of sacred images as a means to honour them and enhance their splendour. See *Bouras L.* Lighting, Ecclesiastical // *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 2, p. 1228.
- 49 *Taft R. F.* Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding, Washington D.C., 1984 p. 170–177.
- 50 *Sophronios of Jerusalem*, Commentarius Liturgicus // *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca / Ed. Migne J. P.*, vol. 87, part 3, p. 3993C: “Τὰ κηρία ὀνηκεύοντα ἐν τῇ εισόδῳ, δεικνύουσι τὸ θεῖον φῶς” (the accompanying candles during the entrance represent the divine light).
- 51 The omphalion was a round plaque made of porphyry stone set in the floor in close proximity to the chancel barrier. See *Treitinger O.* Die ostrumische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung im hufischen Zeremoniell, Jena, 1938; repr. Darmstadt, 1956, p. 60; *Schreiner P.* Omphalion und Rota Porphyretica. Zum Kaiserzeremoniell in Konstantinopel und Rom // *Byzance et les Slavs: Etudes de Civilisation. Mélanges Ivan Dujčev / Ed. S. Duffrene.* Paris, 1979, 401–410.

- 52 *Constantine Porphyrogenetos*, De Cerimoniis, I, 1, p. 15, lines 10–14.
- 53 On the location of the Metatorion of the emperor in the southeast part of the nave, see note 32 above.
- 54 As mentioned earlier, a detailed discussion on the effect of light on this mosaic can be found in *Franses R.* When All that is Gold does not Glitter, p. 15–19. The year 867 is the most widely accepted dating for this mosaic, proposed by *Mango C.* and *Hawkins E. J. W.* The Apse Mosaic of St Sophia at Istanbul. Report on Work Carried Out in 1964 // *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 19 (1965), p. 113–151, including former bibliography on the subject.
- 55 See *Franses R.* When All that is Gold does not Glitter, particularly pl. III and IV.
- 56 See *Taft R. F.* The Great Entrance: A History of the Transfer of Gifts and Other Pre-anaphoral Rites of the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, Rome, 1975.
- 57 *Constantine Porphyrogenetos*, De Cerimoniis, I, 1, p. 16–17.
- 58 *Constantine Porphyrogenetos*, De Cerimoniis, I, 1, p. 17–18.
- 59 On the location of the Holy Well, see *Antoniades, E. M.* *Ἐκφρασις τῆς Ἁγίας Σοφίας*, vol. 2, Athens, Leipzig, 1907–1909, p. 169–185 and *Mango C.* The Brazen House: A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople, Copenhagen, 1959, p. 60–72.
- 60 *Constantine Porphyrogenetos*, De Cerimoniis, I, 1, p. 18.
- 61 Specifically, *Dagron G.* Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium. Transl. by Birrell J. Cambridge, 2003, p. 84–124. Also, *Majeska G. P.* The Emperor in His Church, p. 4–9. Earlier studies have addressed the issue of the emperor's participation in the liturgy and its implications with regards to his religious or liturgical status. See for instance *Treitinger O.* Die oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee; *Bréhier L.* *Τερεὺς καὶ βασιλεύς* // *Mémorial Louis Petit* [Archives de l'Orient Chrétien 1] Bucharest, 1948, p. 41–45.
- 62 *McCormick M.* Emperors // *The Byzantines* / Ed. G. Cavallo. London, 1997, p. 230–254, esp. p. 232 emphasises the use of the phrase “ἐκ Θεοῦ βασιλεύς” (ek theou basileus — emperor through God) on Byzantine coinage.
- 63 *Taft R. F.* The Pontifical Liturgy, p. 108–109.
- 64 *Majeska G. P.* The Emperor in His Church, p. 7 also points to this. Bishop, priest and deacon formed the major orders of the Byzantine clergy, while subdeacon and anagnostes belonged to the minor orders; see *Papadakis A.* Clergy // *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 1, p. 471.
- 65 *Nowack G.* Le rôle du diacre dans la liturgie orientale; Étude d'histoire et de liturgie, Paris, 1962. For a summary of the deacon's duties within the Church, see *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 1, p. 592.
- 66 In Early Christianity laymen also had the right to enter the sanctuary to make an offering to God — a right which after the Council in Trullo (692) could only be exercised by the emperor. See *Kolbaba T. M.* The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins, Urbana, 2000, p. 59.
- 67 The laity received the bread and wine of the Holy Communion mixed together and presented on a spoon. See *Taft R. F.* A History of the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom. Vol. 6: The Communion, Thanksgiving and Concluding Rites [Orientalia Christiana Analecta 281] Rome, 2008.
- 68 *Majeska G. P.* The Emperor in His Church, p. 11.
- 68 The term appears in the fourteenth-century *Traitê des offices* of pseudo-Kodinos; see *Majeska G. P.* The Emperor in His Church, p. 10–11. Also, *Majeska G. P.* Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, Washington D.C., 1984, p. 428 with further bibliography.
- 70 On the order of the priest and its duties within the Byzantine Church, see *Papadakis A.* Clergy // *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 3, p. 1718.