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IMPERIAL PALACES AND HEAVENLY JERUSALEMS:
REAL AND IDEAL PALACES IN LATE ANTIQUITY

In the fourth century, celebrating the splendour of Antioch, Libanios affirmed that it was impossible to describe the imperial palace in detail¹. The imperial palace of Antioch was in fact so huge and marvellous that it could not be described in a single passage: it needed an entire oration. Similarly, in the sixth century, Prokopios wrote that the imperial palace of Constantinople, as it was rebuilt by Justinian after the Nika riot (532), could not be described in words².

The impossibility of describing the imperial residence seems a general trope for court writers, across the empire and the centuries. It could be considered a *topos* in Late Antiquity. *Topoi* should not be dismissed as mere repetitions of a literary image or concept in different writers and genres. *Topoi* are important in their narrative context, because they are evidence of beliefs that were maintained at the time³. As we will see, the impossibility of describing the palace is linked to the sacredness of imperial power and with the ways power was exercised in Late Antiquity and Byzantium.

This paper aims at developing an understanding of the imperial palace in Late Antiquity by focussing on the written sources. The image of the palace, which appears only in a few scattered passages, seems closely connected to the image of the heavenly kingdom of God, the heavenly Jerusalem. As we will see, descriptions of the heavenly Jerusalem are of capital importance to our understanding of the conception of the palace of the Eastern Roman emperors as well as its appearance. The palace was a real place on earth that was nonetheless strongly reminiscent of an ideal place, in its architecture and décor as well as in the ceremonies that were performed inside it.

¹ *Libanios* Or. XI.205–207 / Ed. R. Foerster. Stuttgart, 1963, p. 507–508.

² *Prokopios* De Aed. I.X.10 / Ed. H.B. Dewing. London, 1954, p. 82–84.

³ As Leslie Brubaker argues, *topoi* are the evidence of a complex structure of thought peculiar to a certain culture (*Brubaker L. Perception and Conception: Art, theory and Culture in Ninth-century Byzantium // Word and Image* 5.1 (1989), p. 25).

THE IMPERIAL PALACE IN LATE ANTIQUITY: A MULTIPLICITY OF PALACES

In the third century, Cassius Dio explained that any place where the emperor resided was called *palatium*. The word *palatium* referred to the name of the first imperial residence, that of Romulus on the Palatine hill, where Caesar and subsequent Roman emperors had their palace⁴. This belief persisted across time. Prokopios repeated the argument in the sixth century, mentioning however to a different legend about the origins of the palace on the Palatine hill⁵. This shows not only that Prokopios did not borrow from Cassius Dio, but also that the conception of *palatium* does not seem to change across the empire and the centuries⁶.

In Late Antiquity the imperial palace was not a unique residence, located in one specific place: the *palatium* was every palace that came to host the emperor. This definition reflects the great number of imperial palaces spread across the empire that appeared from the age of the tetrarchs onwards. From 293 onwards, every tetrarch built an imperial palace in the capital of his territory⁷. At the same time, the emperors travelled across the empire manifesting their presence where it was needed and particularly along the borders that at that time were under threat of invasions. Accordingly, the cities located along the borders and on the major routes of the empire acquired imperial residences for the emperor⁸. This trend continued for the whole fourth century. When in

⁴ *Cassius Dio*. *Historia Romana* 53.16.5–6 / Ed. E. Cary. London, 1917, p. 234–235. On the antecedents and the mythic origins of the residence on the Palatine hill, see the panegyric of Mamertinus in honour of Maximian and Diocletian (year 289) (*Panegyrici Latini* I.2 / Ed. D. Lassandro and G. Micunco. Torino, 2000, p. 72–73 and n. 4).

⁵ According to Prokopios, the term *palatium*, indicating the area where August built his residence, derives from Pallas, the Greek who lived there before the fall of Troy in a lavish dwelling; for this reason, he continued, the Romans called the imperial palace *palatium*, as did the Greeks (*Prokopios De Bell. Vand.* III.21.3–4 / Ed. H. B. Dewing. London, 1916, p. 176–179).

⁶ For the use of the word *palatium* in Roman poetry in relation to the legends on the origins of the Palatine residence, see: *Viarre S.* ‘Palatium’ palais // *Revue de Philologie de littérature et d’histoire anciennes* 35.2 (1961), p. 241–248.

⁷ With the first tetrarchy, Mediolanum (Milan), Nikomedia (Izmit), Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovica), and Augusta Treverorum (Trier) became official capitals, each for each tetrarch, as such each was provided with an imperial palace. However, in the same years, the emperors frequently stayed also in the imperial residences of Antioch (Antakya), Nikaea (Izmit), Eboracum (York).

⁸ The Balkan area, which came to be a theatre for the struggles against the empire, was particularly rich in palaces. Beside the major imperial palaces located at Thessaloniki and Sirmium, the emperors had private imperial residences built in the area from which they descended or as places of retirement, such as Romuliana (Gamzigrad), probably Šarkamen, and Split. For the palace of Thessaloniki, see: *Croke B.* Thessalonika’s Early Byzantine Palaces // *Byzantion* 51 (1981), p. 475–483; *Rautman M. C.* Observations on the Byzantine palaces of Thessaloniki // *Byzantion* 60 (1990), p. 292–306; *Duval N.* Hommage à Ejnar et Ingrid Dyggve. La Théorie du palais du Bas-Empire et les fouilles de Thessalonique // *Antiquité Tardive* 11 (2003), p. 272–300 (with references). For a discussion on the identification of Sirmium’s palace, see: *Frova A.* Sirmium // *Milano capitale dell’impero romano 286–402 d.C.* Catalogo della mostra (Milano — Palazzo

330 Constantine inaugurated the new capital of the empire, Constantinople — New Rome, he built a palace there that was meant to be a visible symbol of the empire⁹. The palace of Constantinople did not function as a unique imperial residence at least until the fifth century, under the Theodosian dynasty¹⁰. From the time of Arcadius onwards, the emperors of the *pars Orientis* resided almost continuously in the great palace of Constantinople. Around the same time, the western court moved from Milan to Ravenna (402) and a new imperial palace was built there, which was then followed by other palaces for the members of the imperial family¹¹.

Reale, 24 gennaio — 22 aprile 1990). Milano, 1990, p. 204–206 (with references); Popović V. Sirmium. A town of emperors and martyrs // Roman Imperial Towns and Palaces in Serbia: Sirmium, Romuliana, Naissus / Ed. D. Srežović. Belgrade, 1993, p. 21–26. For Diocletian's palace at Split, see: Marasović J. and T. Le ricerche nel Palazzo di Diocleziano a Split negli ultimi 30 anni (1964–1994) // *Antiquité Tardive* 2 (1994), p. 89–106 and MacNally S. Joint American-Croatian excavations in Split (1965–1974) // *Antiquité Tardive* 2 (1994), p. 107–122 (with references). For the palace of Galerius at Romuliana, see: Srežović D. 'Felix Romuliana' The Ideological Testament of the Emperor Galerius // Roman Imperial Towns and Palaces in Serbia: Sirmium, Romuliana, Naissus / Ed. D. Srežović. Belgrade, 1993, p. 31–53; Srežović D. and Vasić Č. Emperor Galerius' buildings in Romuliana (Gamzigrad, eastern Serbia) // *Antiquité Tardive* 2 (1994), p. 123–130 and 141 (with references); Čanak-Medić M. Spatial development of Romuliana within the late Roman court architecture // The Age of the Tetrarchs / Ed. D. Srežović. Belgrade, 1995, p. 1995. For Maximinus' palace at Šarkamen, see: Popović V. and Tomović M. Golden jewellery from the imperial mausoleum at Šarkamen (eastern Serbia) // *Antiquité Tardive* 6 (1998), p. 289–293 (with references). In addition, emperors had private properties and countryside villas, such as the villa *Pistrensis* near Sirmium, which Ammianus Marcellinus mentioned in relation to Constance's daughter (*Ammianus Marcellinus* Hist. 29.6.7 / Ed. G. Sabbah. Paris, 1999, p. 53). Located on an important strategic position on the way to the Italian peninsula, Aquileia possibly had an imperial palace that, according to an anonymous panegyrist of Constantine, was adorned with beautiful paintings (*Panegirici Latini* VI.6.2 / Ed. D. Lassandro and G. Micunco. Torino, 2000, p. 200–203). For a discussion on the imperial residence at Aquileia, see: Sotinel C. Identité civique et christianisme. Aquilée du IIIe au VIe siècle. Rome, 2005 (Collection des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 324), p. 17–24 (with references). Located outside the Balkan area on the crossroads of Bithynia, also Nicaea had an imperial palace that occasionally hosted the emperors (*Foss C. Nicaea* // *ODB* II. Oxford, 1991, p. 1463–1464). The existence of imperial palaces at Arles, York, and Serdika is much debated. There the emperors probably resided in residential areas within the *praetoria*, provincial governors' palaces. The debate about these Late-antique military and administrative structures and their residential use is still very lively among scholars. For a catalogue, see: Lavan L. The Residences of Late-Antique Governors: a Gazetteer // *Antiquité Tardive* 7 (1999), p. 135–164. For the meaning of *praetoria* as opposed to *principia*, see: Bavant Identification et fonction des bâtiments // Caričin Grad II. Le quartier sud-ouest de la ville haute / Eds. B. Bavant, V. Kondić, J.-M. Spiesier. Belgrade — Rome, 1990 (Collection de l'École Française de Rome 75), p. 123–160, 162; see also: Lavan L. The 'Praetoria' of Civil Governors in Late Antiquity // Recent Research in Late Antique Urbanism / Ed. L. Lavan. Portsmouth, 2001 (JRA. Supplement 42), p. 39–56.

⁹ Dagron G. Naissance d'une capitale. Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451. Paris, 1974, p. 77–102, esp. 94.

¹⁰ In this respect, see list of the emperors' travels: Dagron (as in f. n. 9), p. 84–86.

¹¹ The exact location of the first imperial palace in Ravenna is still debated, however the existence of imperial residences in the south-eastern area of the city is confirmed by both written

Due to robberies and destructions, nowadays the archaeological evidence for the imperial palaces does not allow a clear understanding of their ancient appearances. Only scattered fragments of these residences are currently visible in the modern layout of the cities and unfortunately these are often too little for the comprehension of the palatine buildings in their entirety¹². The great bulk of the structures lay buried under modern urban districts, thereby preventing any archaeological investigation¹³. In the majority of cases the remains have not been scientifically excavated¹⁴. On the basis of this partial archaeological evidence, scholars have long argued over the general appearance of late-antique imperial palaces, failing how-

sources and local toponyms. On the palaces of Ravenna, see: *Farioli Campanati R.* La topografia imperiale di Ravenna dal V al VI secolo // CARB. Corsi di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina 36 (1989), p. , 142–145; *Ortalli J.* L'edilizia abitativa // Storia di Ravenna II.1 Dall'età bizantina all'età ottoniana / Ed. A. Carile. Venezia, 1991, p. 171–172 (with references). On that area, in the sixth century Theoderic, ruling in behalf of the Byzantine emperor, had his residence, the remains of which were identified with those of a large late-antique residential complex. On the so-called palace of Theoderic, see: *Augenti A.* Archeologia e topografia a Ravenna: il palazzo di Teodorico e la moneta aurea // Archeologia medievale 32 (2005), p. 7–33 (with references and discussion).

¹² For instance, at Milan and Sirmium the palatine structures has been only partially excavated: the great bulk of the remains probably lay buried under the modern setting of the city. For an overview of the remains at Milan, see: *Lusuardi Siena S.* Il palazzo // Milano capitale (as in f. n. 8), p. 99; *Baldini Lippolis I.* La 'domus' tardoantica. Forme e rappresentazioni dello spazio domestico nelle città del Mediterraneo. Bologna, 2001 (Università degli Studi di Bologna. Studi e scavi 17), p. 223–224 (with references). For reflections on the palace of Milan in relation to other late-antique residences, see: *Duval N.* Le palais de Milan parmi les residences imperiales du bas-empire // 'Felix temporis reparatio' Atti del convegno archeologico internazionale. Milano capitale dell'impero romano (Milano, 8–11 marzo 1990) / Eds. G. Sena Chiesa and E.A. Arslan. Milano, 1992, p. 138–146; *Scagliarini Corlaita D.* 'Domus, villae, palatia'. Convergenze e divergenze nelle tipologie architettoniche // Abitare in città. La Cisalpina tra impero e medioevo (Convegno tenuto a Roma il quattro e cinque novembre 1999) — Leben in der Stadt. Oberitalien zwischen römischer Kaiserzeit und Mittelalter (Kolloquium am vierten und fünften November 1999 in Rom) / Eds. J. Ortalli and M. Heinzmann. Wiesbaden, 2003 (Palilia 12), p. 153–156; *Augenti A.* Luoghi e non luoghi. Palazzi e città nell'Italia tardoantica e altomedievale // Le palais dans la ville. Espaces urbains et lieux de la puissance publique dans la Méditerranée médiévale / Eds. P. Boucheron and J. Chiffolleau. Lyon, 2004 (Collection d'histoire et d'archéologie médiévales 13), p. 20. For an overview on the archaeological remains of Sirmium's palace, see above n. 8.

¹³ For example, under the modern district of Sultanahmet in Istanbul, the existence of inaccessible chambers and corridors give evidence of the substructures of the palace of Constantinople. However, the highly populated and touristic area built on the top of it prevents any archaeological excavation.

¹⁴ In the area of the palace of Thessaloniki and in the 'palace of Theoderic' in Ravenna for instance, the excavations were carried out at the beginning of the last century. At Thessaloniki the researches in the area have continued until the present time allowing a better understanding of the structures. At Ravenna a new stratigraphic investigation of the palace area could provide new data and contribute to solve the discussion on the identification of the site.

ever in finding typologies or defining categories¹⁵. The scholarly debate on palaces continues. It currently concerns theoretical issues and has determined rigid positions limited to the understanding of either the structures' functional or connotative role, and thus it can hardly be resolved¹⁶. A complete monograph on late-antique palaces has not appeared since the third edition of Swoboda's work in 1969, and so there is no comparative and comprehensive study on the major evidence for late-antique palaces that came to light after that date¹⁷. Clearly an attempt at understanding the significance of the palace in Late Antiquity cannot focus on the study of the archaeological remains alone. Given the impossibility of considering the archaeological evidence for late-antique palaces in the space of an article and the different purpose of this contribution, here we will primarily concentrate on the literary evidence.

The imperial palace as a whole was never described in orations or passages. The written sources give glimpses of the imperial residence, mentioning it in relation to the emperor, or to the city, or vaguely mentioning its décor while speaking of other events. Nonetheless, meagre allusions to the palace and its rooms give us bits of information that pieced together can help us to understand both why the palace was never described and how contemporaries conceived of this architectural structure.

In the written sources, the palace was mostly mentioned in relation to an emperor or his stay in a city. For instance, when in the fourth century Am-

¹⁵ For the question of late-antique palaces, see: *Duval N.* Existe-t-il une 'structure palatiale' propre à l'antiquité tardive? // *Le système palatiale en orient, Grèce et à Rome. Actes du Colloqui de Strasbourg 19–22 juin 1985 / Ed. E. Lévy.* Leiden, 1987, p. 463–490 and *Duval* (as in f. n. 12); *Ćurčić S.* Late-Antique Palaces: the Meaning of Urban Context // *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993), p. 67–90.

¹⁶ Until recent years the scholarship have emphasized the role of the palatine architecture as an expression of power. Duval has severely opposed this attitude without however solving the problem of the interpretation of palatine architecture. For a summary and a discussion of earlier theories, see: *Duval* (as in f. n. 8), p. 273–276. Assuming that architecture is a representational system with a primary functional aim but with a symbolic content and defined meanings — approach influenced by semiotic theories that had a great impact on the architecture historiography that Duval has opposed — then an understanding of the palatine architecture should consider both the denotative and connotative value of the structures. Unfortunately, lacking clear and comprehensive evidence of late-antique palace architecture the debate will continue without finding a solution.

¹⁷ *Swoboda K. M.* Römische und romanische Paläste: eine architekturgeschichtliche untersuchung. Wien, 1969 (3rd edition). In recent years studies on Roman and late-antique domestic architecture have proliferated. Unfortunately they do not concentrate on the study of imperial palaces and often their regional character limits a wider view. For a catalogue of late-antique Mediterranean *domus*, with discussion and definitions of various architectural typologies, see: *Baldini Lippolis* (as in f. n. 12). For the Balkan area, see: *Mulvin L.* Late Roman villas in the Danube-Balkan region. Oxford, 2002 (BAR International Series 1064). For the region of Aquitaine, see: *Balmelle C.* Les demeures aristocratiques d'Aquitaine. Bordeaux — Paris, 2001 (Ausonius — Aquitania. Supplément 10).

mianus Marcellinus described the *adventus* of Julian, he said that the emperor was accompanied to the palace of Sirmium, the final stop of the ceremony¹⁸. In numerous other passages the author briefly mentioned the palace as the place where the emperor resided in his travels across the empire. As it appears in the written sources, the palace was the location where the emperor resided, even for brief periods. It was a natural attribute of the imperial figure in his stay in the various cities of the empire. An anonymous fourth-century orator writing in praise of Constantine clearly stated that for the emperor to abandon the palace meant to renounce the empire¹⁹. Later, in the sixth century, Prokopios reaffirmed the same idea. In his account of the events caused by the Nika revolt at Constantinople (532), the author expressed this concept in a speech attributed — probably incorrectly — to the empress Theodora²⁰. Thus, the palace appears as a symbol of the imperial power itself. It was the visible expression of the power of the emperor, with whom it formed a compound, a *hendiadis*.

Writing about the imperial palace of Nikomedia, Lactantius reported that it was built by Diocletian, along with the circus, the mint, and a weapons factory²¹. In the fourth century, when the poet Ausonius, intellectual and teacher at the court of Valentinian, celebrated Milan, he mentioned the palace along with the hippodrome, the city-walls, the mint, and the baths as the splendour of the city²². Likewise, as we have seen, in his apology of Antioch, Libanios emphasized the role of the palace in the city, as the element that by its presence enhanced the meaning of the city itself²³. Thus the palace was considered as one of the most important monuments of the city. It was mentioned along with other monuments that for their size and decoration were outstanding in the cityscape. Furthermore, these monuments were all patronized by the emperor or the imperial administration. Thus they functioned as bearers of their imperial patrons' power and were visible manifes-

¹⁸ *Ammianus Marcellinus* Hist. XXI.10.1 / Ed. J. Fontaine. Paris, 1996, p. 64: there the palace of Sirmium is defined as *regia*.

¹⁹ *Panegirici Latini* IX, 18.6 / Ed. D. Lassandro and G. Micunco. Torino 2000, p. 312–313: *cum excedendo palatio iam se abdicasset imperio* ('by leaving the palace he had already renounced the imperial power').

²⁰ *Prokopios* De Bell. Pers. I.24.36 / Ed. H. B. Dewing. London, 1914, p. 230–233. On this passage, with particular attention to the role of the empress, see: *Brubaker L.* The Age of Justinian: Gender and Society // *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* / Ed. M. Maas. Cambridge, 2005, p. 429–430.

²¹ *Lactantius* De Mort. Pers. 7.8–10 / Ed. J. Creed. Oxford, 1984, p. 12–13. For an overview of the city in Late Antiquity, with special reference to its relationship with the capital, see: *Foss C.* Nicomedia and Constantinople // *Constantinople and its Hinterland. Papers from the Twenty Seventh Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, April 1993) / Eds. C. Mango and G. Dagron. Aldershot, 1995, p. 181–183.

²² *Ausonius* Ordo VII.3–7 / Ed. H. G. Evelyn White. London, 1961, vol. II, p. 272–273.

²³ *Libanios* Or. XI.205–207 / Ed. R. Foerster. Stuttgart, 1963, p. 507–508.

tations of the glory of the empire within the urban setting of the city²⁴. The visibility of these monuments within the streets of the ancient city had as a consequence the recognition of the empire by the people coming to the city or by the citizens who, on a daily basis, saw these outstanding buildings on their way through the city. Their construction and exceptional appearance were visible signs of the power of the imperial administration. These edifices, glory of the empire, transformed a city into an imperial city²⁵.

The palace was most often mentioned alongside the hippodrome. This is apparent from the passages mentioned above, but it is far more evident in the accounts on the foundation of Constantinople. In the fifth century, Sozomen wrote that Constantine built the city-walls and magnificent dwellings, and listed the hippodrome, the fountains, the porticoes, the senate house, and the churches among his greatest buildings²⁶. Later, Zosimos considered the forum, the city-walls, and the hippodrome along with the palace, as being scarcely inferior to the palace of Rome²⁷. When in the sixth century John Malalas described the city of Constantinople as it was built by Constantine, he wrote that the emperor built a great palace (*παλάτιον μέγα*) there such as the one in Rome, and listed it together with the hippodrome among the great achievements of Constantine in the city²⁸. The *Chronicon Paschale* cited the city-walls, the palace, and the hippodrome, emphasizing the architectonic connection between the residence and the imperial lodge in the hippodrome (*kathisma*) through a spiral stairway (*kochlias*)²⁹. Beside the palace and the

²⁴ Eusebios had already expressed the value of urban monuments as bearers of Constantine's glory (*Eusebios De laudibus Constantini* XI.9 / Ed. I. A. Heikel. Leipzig, 1902, p. 226).

²⁵ Within the huge bibliography on the city in Late Antiquity, see with references: *Cracco Ruggini L.* La città imperiale // *Storia di Roma*. IV. I caratteri e le morfologie. Torino, 1989, p. 256–266; *Liebeschuetz W.* The end of ancient city // *The City in Late Antiquity* / Ed. J. Rich. London, 1992, p. 1–49; *Brogiolo G. P.* and *Ward-Perkins B.* Introduction. and *Haldon G. F.* The idea of the town in the Byzantine Empire. // *The Idea and Ideal of Town in Late Antiquity and early Middle Ages* / Ed. G. P. Brogiolo. Leiden — Boston — Köln, 1999, p. I–XIII and 1–24. For the expressions of Christianity within the late-antique city, see: *Orselli A. M.* Simboli della città cristiana fra Tardoantico e Medioevo // *La città e il sacro* / Ed. F. Cardini. Milano, 1994, p. 421–450; *Orselli A. M.* L'idée chrétienne de la ville: quelques suggestions pour l'antiquité tardive et le haut moyen age // *The Idea and Ideal...*, p. 181–193; *Orselli A. M.* 'Imagines Urbium' alla fine del tardoantico // 'Imago urbis'. L'immagine della città nella storia d'Italia. Atti del convegno internazionale (Bologna, 5–7 settembre 2001) / Eds. F. Bocchi and R. Smurra. Milano, 2003, p. 233–250; *Orselli A. M.* Lo spazio dei santi // *L. Settimana di Studio del CISAM* (Spoleto, 4–9 aprile 2002). Uomo e spazio nell'Alto Medioevo. Spoleto, 2003, p. 855–890.

²⁶ *Sozomen Hist. Eccl.* II.3 / Ed. J. Bidez. Paris, 1983, p. 237–241.

²⁷ *Zosimos Hist. Nova* II.30–31 / Ed. F. Paschaud. Paris, 2000, vol. I, p. 102–105.

²⁸ *Malalas Chron.* 13.7 / Ed. J. Thurn. Berlin, 2000, p. 246–247.

²⁹ *Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 328 / Ed. J.-P. Migne // *PG*, XCII.708–709, see also commentary in *Whitby M. and M.* *Chronicon Paschale 284–628 AD*. Liverpool, 1989 (Translated Texts for Historians 7), p. 15–17 n. 53–54; *Malalas Chr.* 13.7–8 / Ed. I. Thurn. Berlin, 2000, p. 245–246.

hippodrome, it also mentioned the forum of Constantine, the *regia*, the senate house, the *Augusteion* square with its monuments, and the bath of Zeuxippos. The scholarly debate about the topographical relationship between palace and hippodrome notwithstanding here³⁰, the connection between palace and hippodrome reflects the symbolic role of these monuments, which involves the display of the *basileia*³¹. In the hippodrome the emperor showed his philanthropy towards the citizens by hiring races and promoting shows. It was there that he manifested himself, appearing in public and communicating with the citizens through the members of the circus-factions³². In contrast, in the palace the emperor manifested himself to his court or ambassadors, following a strict ceremonial and rules of precedence. Strangers were not admitted into the palace of the emperors. The palatine gates were guarded by troops of special soldiers who restricted entrance to a select group of dignitaries³³. As Teja has emphasized, the palace and the hippodrome respectively represented the closed and open space of the manifestation of the empire³⁴.

³⁰ Frazer claimed that palace, hippodrome, and imperial mausoleum had a topographical link, which reflected ideological conceptions. Its first expression was visible in the palatine complex of Maxentius in Rome (*Frazer A.* The iconography of the Emperor Maxentius' Buildings in Via Appia // *The Art Bulletin* 48.3/4 (1966), p. 385–392). His theory was severely criticized by Duval (*Duval* as in f. n. 8, p. 273–276: with previous bibliography). While the connection of palace and hippodrome with the imperial mausoleum does not seem to follow any fixed rule, that between palace and hippodrome is confirmed for many late-antique cities, both on archaeological grounds and, as we have seen above, in the written sources.

³¹ Between the fourth and the fifth century, the imperial palace was located in the very vicinity of the hippodrome at Thessaloniki, Antioch, Ravenna, Constantinople — where palace and hippodrome were structurally connected. At Sirmium a palatine building excavated near the hippodrome has been tentatively recognized as the palace, however nor the written sources or the archaeological data confirm this hypothesis (*Frova* as in n. 8). At Trier the hippodrome was located between the palace and the city-walls: although the hippodrome was never properly excavated and very little is known of the palace, these monuments were possibly linked. For the palace of Trier, see with references: *Fontaine T. H. M.* Ein letzter Abglanz vergangener Kaiserlicher pracht zu ausgewählten archäologischen Befunden aus dem Areal der römischen Kaiserresidenz in Trier. and *Kuhnen H. P.* Die Erforschung des antiken Kaiserpalastes in Trier. // *Palatia. Kaiserpaläste in Konstantinopel, Ravenna und Trier* / Eds. E. Bolognesi Recchi Franceschini and M. König. Trier, 2003, p. 130–161 and 162–173.

³² For the role of the circus faction in Byzantine ideology, see: *Carile A.* Il circo-ippodromo e la città // *La città gioiosa* / Ed. C. Bertelli. Milano, 1996, p. 126–130. For a clear summary and discussion of the scholarship on circus factions, see: *Vespignani G.* Il circo di Costantinopoli nuova Roma. Spoleto, 2002, p. 22–42.

³³ For the troops at the Byzantine imperial court, see with references: *Haldon J. F.* Byzantine Praetorians. An Administrative, Institutional and Social Survey of the Opsikion and Tagmata, c.580–900. Bonn, 1984 (Freie Universität Berlin, Byzantinisch-Neugriechisches Seminar, ΠΟΙΚΙΛΙΑ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΑ 3), p. 119–141.

³⁴ For the palace as a close and separated reality, see: *Teja R.* Il cerimoniale imperiale // *Storia di Roma. III. L'età tardoantica. 2. I Luoghi e le Culture.* Torino, 1993, p. 613–642; *Carile A.* (as in f. n. 32), p. 111; *Carile A.* Il Sacro Palazzo di Costantinopoli Nuova Roma //

At Constantinople the palace was structurally connected to the hippodrome through a series of rooms, corridors, and staircases that led to the imperial lodge on the hippodrome, the *kathisma*. This complex was sometimes called as ‘the palace of the *kathisma*’, and thus it constituted a sort of a palace in the greater context of the imperial palace itself³⁵. The structural link between the imperial palace and the hippodrome of Constantinople translated in architectonic — and visual — terms the connections between the opposite poles of display of the *basileia*, its closed-private (in the palace) and open-public (in the hippodrome) dimensions. The hippodrome and the palace respectively represented the outer and inner, the visible and invisible aspects of imperial display. As such, they were opposite but connected: thus the written sources cited one along with the other one, rendering in words a visual and symbolic relationship. The palace and the hippodrome displayed the imperial power and the ways it manifested itself in the cityscape: thus they have been significantly defined by Vespignani as ‘strong spaces of power display’, indeed the major symbols of imperial authority within the city³⁶.

Within the context of the late-antique city, the imperial palace has to be considered as a complete unit in itself, like a city within the city³⁷. Its location depended on two main factors both linked to the visibility: the possibility of having a picturesque view of the landscape around or of the city from the palace and the possibility for the palace to be seen in the cityscape. The view of a pictorial landscape was mostly appreciated in antiquity and was one of the major characteristics of the Roman suburban villas³⁸. A wonderful view on the countryside was a prominent factor in choosing the location of the imperial palace itself, which, as Libanios reports for the palace of Antioch, had at least one side facing the landscape³⁹. On the other hand, as we have seen, the palace was an urban symbol of imperial authority. Its visibility — or at least that of its external structures, such as walls, entrance, and roofs — had an important impact on the appearance of the city itself⁴⁰. Fur-

Quaderni di Scienza della Conservazione II (2002), p. 15–19; Carile A. La prossemica del potere: spazi e distanze nei cerimoniali di corte // L. Settimana di Studio del CISAM (as in f. n. 25), p. 603–604.

³⁵ Guillard R. Τὸ Παλάτιον τοῦ καθίσματος // ByzantinoSlavica 18 (1957); Janin R. Constantinople Byzantine. Développement urbain et repertoire topographique. Paris, 1964, p. 188–189.

³⁶ Vespignani (as in f. n. 32), p. 81–82; Carile A. (as in f. n. 32), p. 111–126; Carile A. La prossemica (as in f. n. 34), p. 645–653 (in relation to the ceremonies performed in the hippodrome).

³⁷ Ćurčić (as in f. n. 15).

³⁸ Plinius the Younger cites the wonderful view of his villa in Tuscany, for instance (*Plinius* Epist. V.6 / Ed. W. Melmoth. London, 1969, p. 212–213).

³⁹ Libanios Or. XI.206 / Ed. R. Foerster. Stuttgart, 1963, p. 507–508.

⁴⁰ In Latin poetry the use of *limina* (threshold), *tecta* (roofs), and *atria* (courtyard) as a periphrasis to indicate the palace has a long tradition. This could be due to literary conventions and, thus, could be considered just as a rhetoric expression. However, if we consider that

thermore, triumphal ways had the palace as point of arrival or departure, emphasizing its location within the city⁴¹.

As Ćurčić has demonstrated, the architecture of the palace in Late Antiquity reproduced on a smaller scale that of the city itself, with fortified walls, protected gates, baths, colonnades, and open courts⁴². The palace was like a city in the city, a complete unit in itself reproducing the late-antique model of a fortified city in its appearance. However, the ‘urban character’ of the palace is also evidence of the symbolic value of the palace within the city. As the Eastern Roman emperor ruled the earthly cosmos — indeed an empire made of cities, where economic, civic, and religious activities developed — his residence reproduced on a smaller scale the smallest cell of the empire, the city itself. In Late Antiquity, while the ways of the empire were becoming increasingly unsafe, fortified walls were built around the cities⁴³. The palace’s structures, which were also surrounded by high walls, reproduced a city in their features, thereby becoming a symbol of the city itself.

The imperial palace as a city in the city was a compound of many different buildings, each of them used for different purposes, where private, ceremonial, and administrative activities took place. Beside the private cham-

the palace (as the house and villa) were private spaces, these elements — thresholds, roofs and courtyards — were visible from outside, to most people’s eyes, thus they were the most accessible ones. Therefore they cannot only be considered as synecdoche: they also expressed what was actually visible of the greater context of the palace. For instance, for the use of *tecia*, see: *Virgil* Aeneid VII.170 (palace of Latinus); *Claudian* De rap. Pros. I.237 (palace of Ceres); for *limina*, see: *Valerius Flaccus* Arg. V.426 (407) (palace of Aetes); for *atria*, see: *Claudian* Carmina IX.85 (palace of Venus).

⁴¹ *MacCormick M.* *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West.* Cambridge, 1990, p. 131. For instance, Libanios reports that a porticoed way and a *tetrapylon* preceded the entry to the imperial palace (*Libanios* Or. XI.205–206 / Ed. R. Foerster. Stuttgart, 1963, p. 507–508). At Constantinople the *regia*, a monumental street, led to the entrance of the palace in the *Augusteion* square that soon was adorned with honorific columns and works of art celebrating the emperors and thus increasing its monumentality. For the statues of the *Augusteion*, see: *Mango C.* *The Brazen House. A study of the vestibule of the imperial palace of Constantinople.* Copenhagen, 1959, p. 42–47, 56–60; *Mango C.* *Le développement urbain de Constantinople, IVe- VIIe siècles.* Paris, 1990 (Travaux et mémoires du Centre de recherche d’histoire et civilisation de Byzance. Monographies 2), (2nd edition), p. 26–27; *Basset S. G.* *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople.* Cambridge, 2004, p. 89–92 (with reference to the appearance of the square in the fifth-century, not however fully considering the high ideological value of the statues displayed in the square).

⁴² Ćurčić (as in f. n. 15).

⁴³ The city-walls had such an important symbolic value for the late-antique city, that became the iconic image of the city in manuscript illumination and works of art (*Cavallo G.* *Il segno delle mura. L’iconografia della città nel libro antico // Storia di Roma. IV. I caratteri e le morfologie.* Torino, 1989, p. 267–300; *Orselli A. M.* *Simboli* (as in f. n. 25), p. 426–427; *Orselli A. M.* *L’idée* (as in f. n. 25), p. 186–187; *Orselli A. M.* *Imagines* (as in f. n. 25), p. 234–235; *Orselli A. M.* *Lo spazio* (as in f. n. 25), p. 860–861).

bers of the emperor and the imperial family, courts and audience halls, used for the imperial appearances and for administrative purposes, alternated with gardens and *triklinia*. The great extension of the palace can be partly justified by the necessity of a large range of rooms that responded to different functional needs. At Constantinople, the palatine area linked with the hippodrome was called ‘palace of the *kathisma*’. This is evidence of the great size of this building and of the understanding of each edifice of the palace as a palace itself. Beside the multiplicity of palaces spread in the Roman empire in Late Antiquity — a constellation of palaces indeed — the imperial palace itself should be seen as a multiplicity of smaller palaces, alternating with gardens and surrounded by the walls of the greater imperial palace.

In the fourth century Libanios wrote that the palace of Antioch was so huge and beautiful that it could not be described in a single passage but needed an entire oration⁴⁴. This was partially due to the great extent of the building. However, the impossibility of describing the palace may find a different explanation. While the palace was never described in its entirety, the sources do provide a few descriptions of its main entrance. Libanios wrote about the colonnade street that, as a triumphal entrance, reached the palace from the central *tetrapylon* of the Orontes Island⁴⁵. Cassiodorus and Prokopios, sixth-century intellectuals and writers at the court of Theoderic and of Justinian respectively, described the main entrance of the palace⁴⁶. Celebrating the *Chalké* of Theoderic’s palace in Ravenna, Cassiodorus clarifies that the entrance of the palace conveyed in its architecture and decoration the grandiosity and wealth of the patron⁴⁷. Prokopios reaffirmed the same concept in relation to the *Chalké* of Constantinople, as it was rebuilt by Justinian after the Nika revolt (532)⁴⁸. Then Prokopios described the building, giving details of its architec-

⁴⁴ *Libanios* Or. XI.205–207 / Ed. R. Foerster. Stuttgart, 1963, p. 507–508.

⁴⁵ *Libanios*, Or. XI.205–207 / Ed. R. Foerster. Stuttgart, 1963, p. 507.

⁴⁶ *Cassiodorus* *Variae* VII.5 (especially VII.5.1) / Ed. T. Mommsen. Berlin, 1894, p. 204–205; *Prokopios* *De Aed.* I.10.11–20 / Ed. H.B. Dewing. London, 1940, p. 84–85.

⁴⁷ The main gate of Theoderic’s palace in Ravenna was called *Chalké* in reference to the main entrance of the imperial palace of Constantinople. The use of the same lexicon for the palace of Constantinople and that of Ravenna is further evidence of the imitation of Constantinople’s court at Ravenna; this is a significant aspect of Theoderic’s ideological programme.

⁴⁸ *Prokopios* *De Aed.* I.X.11 / Ed. H.B. Dewing. London, 1940, p. 84–85. For the various phases and appearance of the *Chalké*, see especially: *Mango C.* The Brazen house (as in f. n. 41), p. 21–35. See also: *Janin R.* (as in f. n. 35), p. 110–112; *Müller-Wiener W.* *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls. Byzantion, Konstantinupolis, Istanbul bis zum Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts.* Tübingen, 1977, p. 248–249; *Zervou Tognazzi I.* *Propilei e Chalké, ingresso principale del Palazzo di Costantinopoli // Bisanzio e l’Occidente: arte, archeologia, storia. Studi in onore di Fernanda de’ Maffei.* Roma, 1996, p. 33–59; *Brubaker L.* The *Chalké* Gate, the construction of the past, and the Trier ivory // *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999), p. 258–285.

ture and precious ornamentation in a passage that still inflames scholars in their attempts to reconstruct the appearance of the building⁴⁹. Although, as it is known from other sources, in the age of Justinian the *Chalké* of Constantinople was a compound of many different rooms, linked to churches and other areas of the palace, the description seems to focus on the main room, where a dome was probably supported on four arches. Prokopios' main interest was not to give a complete and clear description of the building's architecture: the passage pays far more attention on the mosaics and colourful marbles that adorned the space. While the mosaics' themes celebrated Justinian, Theodora, and their court, the colourful mosaic cubes and marbles conveyed the power and wealth of the emperor⁵⁰. The text clearly states the importance of the vestibule in rendering the grandiosity of the palace itself⁵¹. The main entrance of the imperial residence seems to be the only area of the palace that could be described in the written sources. It was meant to convey the importance of the whole palace. Thus, in the narratives the main entrance acted — and was conceived — as a synecdoche of the palace.

The main entrance was also the only part of the palace visible to everyone's eyes, with the exception of the palatine walls. To the opposite, the palace was a closed space that only the imperial court could enter, following fixed rules of precedence. The palace's gates were continuously guarded by soldiers, who significantly had their headquarters (residential areas) next to the *Chalkè* at Constantinople⁵². The great bulk of the palace structures developed behind the main entrance: the palatine buildings were protected behind the walls, thus they were separated from the outside world, inaccessible and hidden. The vestibule was actually the only part of the imperial palace visible to the eyes of the common people. The visibility of this area allowed court writers to describe it without violating the secret of the palace interior.

Yet, the palace walls and its protected gates were visible evidence of the understanding of the imperial residence as a closed and apart reality, far from the everyday life⁵³. Beside their practical function, linked to the security of the imperial palace and the emperor, walls and guarded gates were concrete elements representing the deepest character of the *basileia* as a sa-

⁴⁹ Prokopios De Aed. I.X.11–20 / Ed. H. B. Dewing. London, 1940, p. 84–87.

⁵⁰ Prokopios De Aed. I.X.18–20 / Ed. H. B. Dewing. London, 1940, p. 86.

⁵¹ Prokopios De Aed. I.X.11 / Ed. H. B. Dewing. London, 1940, p. 84–85: 'ὡςπερ δέ φασι, τὸν λέοντα ἐξ ὄνυχος ἴσμεν, καὶ τούτων δὴ οὕτω τῶν βασιλείων τὴν δύναμιν ἐκ τοῦ προτεμενίσματος οἱ τὰδε ἀναλεγόμενοι εἴσονται' ('We know the lion, as they say, by his claw, and so those who read this will know the impressiveness of the Palace from the vestibule' trans. H.B. Dewing).

⁵² Guillard R. Études de topographie de Constantinople Byzantine. Berlin — Amsterdam, 1969 (Berliner byzantinische Arbeiten 37), p. 42 and 26–27.

⁵³ For the palace as an 'apart space of initiation', see: Carile A. (as in f. n. 32), p. 111; *Idem*. La prossemica (as in f. n. 24), esp. p. 603–604.

cred power. The inaccessibility of the palace was in fact due to the need of maintaining the secret of the imperial power that was displayed inside its walls in private ceremonies. The imperial palace in Late Antiquity was a *sacrum palatium*: the understanding of the palace as a sacred space is due to the conception of the *basileia* as a holy power endowed by God to the emperor⁵⁴. In the palace the earthly power of the emperor enacted in private ceremonies that had a deep religious content: they in fact continuously referred to the Christian character of the earthly *basileia* that was legitimized by God, who bestowed it on the emperor⁵⁵. Thus, the imperial palace represented the bridging point between the earthly cosmos and the heavenly cosmos of God. While its architecture and structures recalled a city, its function as the residence of the minister of God on earth transformed it into a sacred place and gave it a mystic character.

In Late Antiquity the lack of descriptions of the imperial palace is counterbalanced by brief mentions and allusions that are however meaningful of the role that this structure played in the common imagery. The impossibility of describing the palace was due not only to its enormous dimensions and splendour, but also to its main characteristics, its impenetrability and sacredness. As we will now see, these are prominent features of the real imperial palace as well as of the ideal heavenly palace.

IDEAL PALACES: THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM

An important source for the understanding of the imperial palace in Late Antiquity is the model of the heavenly kingdom of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, as it appears first in the Bible and in late-antique saintly visions.

The image of the heavenly kingdom of God is a very intricate point that concerns the understanding of paradise. In Late Antiquity and early Byzantium, the paradise was visualized in different ways. As it appears in the Bible, and specifically in *Genesis* (*Gen.* 2), the primordial paradise (Eden) was located on earth in the easternmost regions⁵⁶. It was a wonderful garden, irrigated

⁵⁴ For the sacredness and impenetrability of the imperial palace, see: *Panegirici Latini* IX.18.5 / Ed. D. Lassandro and G. Micunco. Torino, 2000, p. 312–313; *Eusebios De laudibus Constantini* prologue. 4 / Ed. I. A. Heikel. Leipzig, 1902, p. 195.

⁵⁵ *Eusebios De laudibus Constantini* III.5, VII.12 / Ed. I.A. Heikel. Leipzig, 1902, p. 201, 212. In the sixth century the deacon Agapetos similarly described the nature of the *basileia* of Justinian (*Agapetos the deacon* ΕΚΘΕΣΙΣ 37, 46, 61 / Ed. J.-P. Migne // *PG*, LXXXVI. 1176, 1177, 1181).

⁵⁶ The earthly location of heaven has been the subject of a lively debate (*Auffarth C.* Paradise Now — But for the Wall Between. Some Remarks on Paradise in the Middle Ages. and *Hilhorst A.* A visit to paradise: *Apocalypse of Paul* 45 and its background. // *Paradise Interpreted. Representations of Biblical Paradise in Judaism and Christianity* / Ed. G. P. Luttikhuisen. Leiden – Boston – Köln, 1999 (Themes in Biblical Narrative. Jewish and Christian Traditions 2), p. 171–172 and 130; *Bremmer J. N.* The vision of Saturus in the ‘Passio Perpetuae’ // *Jerusa-*

by four rivers, with every sort of tree giving fruits, among which are the tree of life and the tree of knowledge⁵⁷. This was the primordial paradise before the Fall and it had a purely archetypal significance. The concept of paradise as a garden was extensively developed in Jewish and Christian literature⁵⁸. In the writings of the Church fathers it further acquired the dimension of an actual paradise, visible and real. It was, in fact, usually associated with the Christian church and, more generally, with Christianity⁵⁹. Beside this model of paradise, the image of a new city-temple-palace also appears in the Bible⁶⁰. A few passages of the New Testament mention the heavenly kingdom of God, which will appear at the end of days with the last judgement⁶¹. This heavenly realm is specifically called the 'new Jerusalem' only in *Revelation*. The canonicity of *Revelation* notwithstanding here⁶², this text describes the heavenly paradise as a bright dwelling made of gold and precious stones. This kingdom with perfect dimensions has gemmed walls and gates protected by angels. Inside it, God manifests himself on a throne of glory, in the middle of a garden where a pure river flows, while His court of angels surrounds him and angelic songs echo (*Rev.* 21–22). The new Jerusalem of *Revelation* is a city-temple-palace: its name, new Jerusalem, immediately recalls the earthly city that played a promi-

lem, Alexandria, Rome: Studies in Ancient Cultural Interaction in Honour of A. Hilhorst / Eds. F. G. Martínez and G. P. Luttikhuisen. Leiden, 2003, p. 59 n. 17).

⁵⁷ The word 'paradise' derives from a Persian word that meant 'garden'. Bremmer J. N. Paradise: from Persia, via Greece, into the 'Septuagint' // Paradise Interpreted (as in f. n. 56), p. 1–20; *Idem*. The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife. London — New York, 2002, p. 109–127).

⁵⁸ A summary on the history of the paradise in biblical and apocryphal texts until the third century, with particular reference to the image of paradise in the apocryphal *Revelation of Paul*, draws three primary models of paradise: the earthly paradise as the abode of Adam and Eve, the earthly paradise after the fall, and the heavenly Paradise (*Hilhorst* (as in f. n. 56), p. 128–139).

⁵⁹ *Delumeau J.* History of Paradise. The Garden of Eden in Myth and Tradition. New York, 2000, p. 15–22 (with references). For the developments of this concept in the Middle ages, see: *Auffarth* (as in f. n. 56), p. 167–179. The Christian church has often been associated also with the heavenly Jerusalem (*Carozzi C.* Dalla Gerusalemme celeste alla Chiesa. Testo, Immagini, simboli // *Arti e storia nel Medioevo*. III. Del vedere: pubblici, forme e funzioni / Eds. E. Castelnuovo and G. Sergi. Torino, 2004, p. 85–143: with particular reference to the medieval Europe).

⁶⁰ The image of a new Jerusalem first appears in the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel (*Isaiah* 1.26, 2.1–5, 60.1–22; *Ezekiel* 40–48).

⁶¹ *Matthew* 4.17; 24.30–31; *Luc* 4.43; *John* 18.36.

⁶² Although the legitimacy of John's *Revelation* has been much debated, this work had a great impact in Late Antiquity (*Mazzucco C.* La Gerusalemme celeste dell'Apocalisse nei Padri // 'La dimora di Dio con gli uomini' (Ap.21,3). Immagini della Gerusalemme Celeste dal V al XIV secolo / Ed. M. L. Gatti Perer. Milano, 1983, p. 52–53). The imagery of *Revelation* is prominent in the early pictorial programmes of Rome and Ravenna (*Engemann J.* Images parousiaques dans l'art paléochrétiën // L'Apocalypse de Jean. Traditions exégétiques et iconographiques (IIIe–XIIIe siècles). Actes du colloque de la Fondation Hardt, 29 février — 3 mars 1976 / Ed. R. Petraglio. Genève, 1979, p. 73–107).

ment role as the political and religious capital of the Jews. The new Jerusalem of *Revelation* is a holy city, for it is the kingdom of God that will open his doors to the elect at the time of the last days. It is the heavenly dwelling of God, His eternal residence, and it is a sacred temple: God, by His presence, ensures its sacredness and there he manifests Himself transforming it into temple. This new Jerusalem is a heavenly reality, coming from the sky and visible only in a heavenly vision. It has a strong eschatological and heavenly character that differentiate it from the historical Jerusalem and from the future Jerusalem of prophets⁶³.

The model of paradise as heavenly palace-city-temple had an impact in Late Antiquity⁶⁴. In saintly visions, the image of the heavenly Jerusalem was enriched with features that recall the earthly imperial context. From the third to the sixth centuries, a few visions of saints present the heavenly kingdom as a palace with characters that are more or less featured on the new Jerusalem of *Revelation*. Here we will consider a few significant texts that appeared in different times and different geographical areas within the Mediterranean. We will present some evidence without however concentrating on their development, which will be treated elsewhere.

The image of heavenly kingdom as a palace appears in the visions of Saturus (203), Apa Matthaëus the Poor and Dorotheos (fourth century), St. Salvius bishop of Albi (sixth century), St. Martha (late sixth or early seventh century). The authorship and history of these texts is most of the times very obscure and, at the actual state of scholarship, is impossible to state influences between one another or establish secure links with intellectual circles and political circumstances⁶⁵. The vision of Saturus is inserted in the *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*⁶⁶. This text, telling of the martyrdom of a few African saints, was attributed to Tertullian and ascribed to 203⁶⁷. The vision of Apa

⁶³ As we have explained elsewhere, the heavenly Jerusalem of the New Testament and *Revelation* should not be confused with the historical Jerusalem, a real city with a community of citizens and a political importance, or with the new Jerusalem of the Prophets, a new city with a temple house of the God of Israel that will replace the earthly Jerusalem (Carile M. C. Constantinople and the heavenly Jerusalem?: Through the Imperial Palace // *Bizantinistica. Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi, Serie 2, VIII* (2006), p. 85–104.

⁶⁴ Although *Revelation* is the primary text for the imagery of heaven as a palace-city-temple, paradise is depicted as a palace in a number of apocryphal texts. For a summary, see: *Hilhorst* (as in f. n. 56), p. 136–139.

⁶⁵ The most ancient version of these texts was variously written in Latin, Greek or Coptic and then translated in other languages. This does not prevent a discussion of these sources in the present contribution. These texts in fact find their roots in the Mediterranean area that was all influenced by the Roman empire and shared common culture and traditions while maintaining different languages.

⁶⁶ From now on, see: *Passio Perpetuae* 11–12 / Ed. H. Musurillo. Oxford, 1972, p. 120–121.

⁶⁷ For a summary of the wide literature on the *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, see: *Bremmer J. N.* (as in f. n. 56), p. 55–73. In a recent contribution, Timotin read the representation of heaven in

Matthaeus the Poor is an anonymous Coptic text dated at the fourth century, which presents a syncretistic view of the afterlife, mixing the imagery of *Revelation* with Egyptian traditional themes on the otherworld⁶⁸. Although much debated among scholars, the vision of Dorotheos is a very intricate text, probably written in an Egyptian Gnostic circle sometimes in the second half of the fourth century⁶⁹. The vision of St. Salvius, bishop of Albi who died in 584, is the only text of certain authorship and also the only text written outside the area under the Eastern Roman influence⁷⁰. It was created in the sixth-century Merovingian Gaul as part of a much greater work on Franks' history written by Gregory of Tour. The vision of St. Martha, mother of the stylite St. Symeon the Younger was probably written at the end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century in the monastic circle of St. Symeon⁷¹.

In all of these texts the image of the heavenly kingdom as a bright palace appears without finding secure routes in *Revelation*⁷². The influence of

the vision of Saturus merely as a garden (*Timotin A. Le paradis vue par un Byzantin* (abstract) // Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies (London, 21–26 August 2006). III. Abstracts of Communications. / Ed. E. Jeffreys. Padstow, 2006, p. 103–104; full version of the paper at the webpage: www.byzantinecongress.org.uk/comms/Timotin_paper.pdf, last accessed: 23.07.2007). However, in the text a door marks the transition between the garden and the space 'built of light' where God manifests Himself on a throne, clearly differentiating this space from the outside garden.

⁶⁸ From now on, see: *Vita Apa Matthaei* / Ed. W. Till. Rome, 1936, p. 20–21. For the vision of Apa Matthaeus the poor and bibliography on his Coptic saint life, see: *Sauget J. M. Matteo il povero* // *Bibliotheca Sanctorum IX*. Roma, 1967, c.148; *Kákosy L. Heaven as a Palace. Some Problems of Coptic Funerary Beliefs* // *Coptology: Past, Present, and Future. Studies in Honour of Rodolphe Kasser* / Eds. S. Giversen, M. Krause, P. Nagel. Leuven, 1994 (*Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 61), p. 100–102 and nn. 13–16.

⁶⁹ For the vision of Dorotheos, see: *Hurst A., Reverdin O., Rudhardt J. Vision de Dorotheos*. Coligny — Genève, 1984; *Kessels A. H. M. and Van Der Horst P. W. The vision of Dorotheus* (Pap. Bodmer 29) edited with introduction, translation and notes // *Vigiliae Christianae* 41 (1987), p. 313–357 (with text and translation); *Livrea E. (Review) 'Vision de Dorotheos. Édité avec une introduction, une traduction et des notes par A. Hurst, O. Reverdin, J. Rudhardt. En appendice: Description et datation du Codex des Visions par R. Kasser et G. Cavallo, Coligny — Genève 1984'* // *Gnomon* 58 (1986), p. 687–711 (with textual and historical comments); *Bremmer J. N. The Vision of Dorotheus* // *Early Christian Poetry. A Collection of Essays* / Eds. J. den Boeft and A. Hilhorst. Leiden — New York — Köln, 1993, p. 253–261; *Bremmer J. N. The Rise* (as in f. n. 57), p. 128–133. For a discussion on its date, see: *Bremmer J. N. An Imperial Palace Guard in Heaven: the Date of the Vision of Dorotheus* // *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 75 (1988), p. 82–88; *Livrea E. Ancora sulla visione di Doroteo* // *EIKΑΣΜΟΣ* 1 (1990), p. 145–156.

⁷⁰ From now on, see: *Gregor. Tur. Hist. Franc. VII.1* / Eds. B. Krusch and W. Levison. Hannover, 1951, p. 325–326.

⁷¹ From now on, see: *Vita S. Marthae* 17 / Ed. P. Van Den Ven. Brussels, 1962, p. 206.

⁷² The heavenly palace of Saturus' vision has been carefully compared to the heavenly Jerusalem of *Revelation*. Both the texts present an image of a bright heavenly palace, however *Revelation* does not seem to have directly influenced the vision of Saturus. See: *Mazzucco*

Revelation on the passages is certain only for the vision of Apa Matthaëus the Poor, who claims to have seen the ‘heavenly Jerusalem’ in a dream⁷³. In these texts, the residence of God always appears to the saints as a bright building — indeed a palace with gates and in halls — in a heavenly vision. It is always located in the sky — in the highest heaven — where the saint is guided by an angel or another saint.

The representation of the palace varies from text to text, but there are a few constant features: bright walls, guarded gates, a court where God manifest himself⁷⁴. The image of the wonderful garden is sometimes associated to that of the palace. In the vision of Satorus, the palace is built inside a marvellous garden where the blessed saints live in the eternal peace; while in the vision of Apa Matthaëus the Poor a garden is located inside the walls of the palace. God manifests Himself to the saint in the middle of a court that sometimes seems an open space — as a garden — and some other times appears as a palatine hall⁷⁵. The texts do not describe the palace of God at length: they only give some information to depict the buildings. The vision of Dorotheos is very different from the other ones in this respect. There the palace is described as a huge complex: a compound of walls, gates, halls, porticoes, and courtyards. The text seems highly influenced by Gnostic and Jewish conceptions on the otherworld: Dorotheos should overcome terrible proofs to enter inside the palace and to be admitted to the vision of God. The text presents a complex image of the palace, abounding in details and depicting a huge building with a spatial development that is strongly reminiscent of an imperial palace. For this and other reasons, the vision of Dorotheos is a text of capital importance for our understanding of the imperial palace.

In the vision of St. Martha the palace of God becomes a compound of many different palaces. There paradise is represented as a complex of palaces, each given to a saint as a reward for his or her saintly life. These palaces, not made by human hands, are visible symbols of sanctity and represent concrete images of the glory that each saint reaches in the kingdom of God. In the great palace of God all of the saints have their own palace. As we will see, the ideal palace of St. Martha’s vision seems modelled on the real palace of the eastern Roman emperors.

(as in f. n. 62), p. 67–70; *Petraglio R.* Des influences de l’Apocalypse dans la ‘Passio Perpetuae’ 11–13 // L’Apocalypse de Jean (as in f. n. 62), p. 15–29.

⁷³ Apa Matthaëus the Poor saw the heavenly Jerusalem as a huge gate made of gold and colourful precious stones. As Kákosy noted, the two texts however differ in the general description of the city, which in the Coptic text is much less detailed, see: *Kákosy* (as in f. n. 68), p. 101–102.

⁷⁴ The throne is another important element that accompany the manifestation of God in most of these texts (see below).

⁷⁵ For instance, a garden appears behind the bright walls in the vision of Apa Matthaëus the Poor; while God manifest Himself into a hall in the vision of Satorus and St. Salvius.

Inside the heavenly palace God manifests Himself in the middle of the court, either as a voice coming from above, or as an old man seated on a throne⁷⁶. The image of the heavenly audience hall is developed in different ways and it is often enriched with the presence of a throne in the texts. In the vision of Satorius, God is seated onto a throne in the middle of a hall. In the vision of Apa Mattheus the Poor, the saint sees a group of saintly monks seated on thrones. In the palaces of St. Martha's vision, thrones are located in palatine halls, again as rewards of the saints' sanctity. In the Bible, the throne of Salomon represents the kingship in the name of God (*Kings* 10.18). In the gospel of Mathews (*Mat.* 19.28) the heavenly court of God and the apostles are represented as seated on thrones in the judgement. The throne is one of the major symbols of kingship and imperial insignia⁷⁷. In these representations, the throne symbolises the eternal kingship of God: even when it is empty, it stands for the authority of God and it forms a compound with the palace in the representation of God's power⁷⁸.

As the saints are admitted to the presence of God, His heavenly court is displayed around His throne. The court of God is variously compounded by elders (vision of Satorius), angels (vision of Dorotheos), monks known during the saint's life (vision of Apa Mattheus the Poor and St. Salvius). The vision of Dorotheos adds important details to our understanding of the image of God's kingdom. There, the same titles and dignities of the contemporary earthly imperial court are applied in the representation of the court of God⁷⁹. This is extremely important in the context of the present study because it is evidence that, as early as the fourth century, the heavenly kingdom of God was visualised — and thus conceived — by means of the contemporary imperial imagery. Thus the palace of God had the characters of an imperial palace, and the court of God was ranked according to the contemporary imperial titles and dignities. Moreover, the text shows an incorrect use of court titles, demonstrating that probably the author was not very familiar with the real imperial court, thus probably was not a high official⁸⁰. Therefore, in fourth-century

⁷⁶ God is seated on His throne of glory in the vision of Satorius. The voice of God comes from above in the visions of Dorotheos and St. Salvius. In the visions of Apa Mattheus the Poor and St. Martha thrones are attributed to the blessed as rewards for their saintly lives.

⁷⁷ For the importance of the throne in the Byzantine imperial ideology, see: *Carile A.* *La prossemica* (as in f. n. 24), p. 606–618.

⁷⁸ For the symbolism of the empty throne in Late Antiquity and Byzantium, see: *Bezzi M.* *Iconologia della sacralità del potere: il tondo Angaran e l'etimasia*. Spoleto, 2007, p. 71–182.

⁷⁹ On the basis of the court dignitaries' titles a very lively debate on the text's date inflamed between Livrea and Bremmer (*Bremmer J. N.* *An Imperial Palace Guard* and *Livrea E.* *Ancora* as in f. n. 69).

⁸⁰ Information coming from Gianfranco Agosti, who is a prominent scholar of late-antique poetry and has long studied the vision of Dorotheos. I would like to thank him very much for his kindness in discussing with me about this vision.

Egypt, even writers unfamiliar with the imperial court visualized the kingdom of God as an imperial palace. Conversely, they also conceived the imperial palace as a visible representation of the heavenly kingdom.

The bright light is one of the major features of the kingdom of God. In the Old Testament light and flames always accompanied heavenly appearances⁸¹. Indeed, God is light as pure logos (*John* 1), as such His kingdom is made of bright light. The palaces of the visions of Dorotheos and St. Martha radiate bright light. In the vision of Saturus, the heavenly palace is a building made of light. In the vision of Apa Matthaëus the Poor, the palace's gates and doors are clad in gold and colourful precious stones, an image that vividly recalls the heavenly Jerusalem of *Revelation*. St. Salvius entered a luminous heavenly building, the floor of which was shining in gold and silver. The main value of gold and precious stones in the representation of the heavenly palace is linked to their significance as outstanding symbols of wealth and power, but also to their purity and brightness. They reflect light, as such they make the heavenly palace shining of the light coming from God. Gregory of Tours describes the floor of the heavenly palace as made of pure gold and silver. This detail is significant in that it renders the brightness of the kingdom of God and translates the luminosity emanating from God into concrete terms.

The vision of God in heaven is often accompanied by heavenly songs and delicious perfumes. In *Revelation* these elements are already present in the scene⁸². Saturus hears angelic songs in heaven. St. Salvius felt a wonderful perfume pervading the heavenly residence of God. Although songs and perfumes are typical traits in saintly visions and feature the transition to the dream, they are also constant characters of the manifestation of the divine⁸³, and, as we will see, are also present in the imperial appearances.

The model of the heavenly kingdom of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, as a palace had a much greater development in Byzantium⁸⁴. Here, we argue

⁸¹ In *Revelation* the throne of God is resplendent of light (*Rev.* 4.5–8), while fire and smoke always precede heavenly appearances (see for instance: *Exodus* 19.9,19.18; *Ezekiel* 1.4–13).

⁸² *Rev.* 4.8.

⁸³ In the Bible smoke — element associated with perfume — and songs often accompany the manifestation of God (see: n. 81 and *Exodus* 29.18; *Isaiah* 6.3 and *Rev.* 4.8).

⁸⁴ The tenth or eleventh century visions of the monk Kosmas, St. Basil the Younger and Anastasia represent the heavenly kingdom as a palace or a city, which is assimilated with Constantinople. For the heavenly paradise in Byzantium, see: *Wenger A.* Ciel ou paradis. Le séjour des âmes, d'après Philippe le Solitaire, Dioptre, livre IV, chapitre X // *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 44.2 (1951), p. 560–563; *Patlagean É.* Byzance et son autre monde: observation sur quelques récits // *Faire croire: modalités de la diffusion et de la réception des messages religieux du XIIe au XVe siècle. Table Ronde (Rome, 22–23 juin 1979)* / Ed. A. Vauchez. Rome, 1981 (Collection de l'École Française de Rome 51), p. 201–221; *Golitzin A.* 'Earthly Angels and Heavenly Men': the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Niketas Stethatos, and the Tradition of 'Interiorized Apocalyptic' in Eastern Christian Ascetical and Mystical

that the model of the heavenly palace has its roots in Late Antiquity where it is first manifested in the text presented above. Although the origins of such a theme should be treated in a separate study, we will now see that the depiction of the ideal palace was probably influenced by a real model, that of the imperial palace. As in Late Antiquity a multiplicity of imperial palaces constellated the empire, the concept of paradise as a palace was developed through many similar heavenly Jerusalem.

THE IMPERIAL PALACE:
A MANIFESTATION OR A MODEL FOR THE HEAVENLY PALACE?

Writing on the accession of Justin II, Corippus described the imperial palace of Constantinople as an ‘heavenly Olympus’. Although the metaphor Olympus recalls a ‘pagan’ context, this should not mislead the reader. In the language of the late-antique court writer Olympus stands for the Christian heavenly kingdom⁸⁵. This is evidence of the continuous use of a traditional imagery in the Christian context of the sixth century court culture.

In the same passage, Corippus compared the imperial court ranked in the throne hall with the ordered stars in the sky⁸⁶. The author described the tall throne hall, where the imperial audience to the Avars was about to happen, as the most wonderful room of the palatine complex. The throne hall was the space dedicated to imperial appearances: the emperor manifested himself there in a ceremony that had the characters of an epiphany⁸⁷. The text emphasizes the bright light emanating from the room, the throne, and the ciborium, which were all clad in gold, as well as from the court’s and

Literature’ // DOP 55 (2001), p. 125–153; Maguire H. Paradise Withdrawn // Byzantine Garden Culture / Eds. A. Littlewood, H. Maguire, J. Wolschke-Bulmahn. Washington, 2002, p. 27–31; and Guran P. The Byzantine New Jerusalem in the present volume).

⁸⁵ *Corippus* In laudem Iustini III.179–190 / Ed. Av. Cameron. London, 1976, p. 66, 187–188 (commentary), see also Ed. A. Antès. Paris, 1981, p. 60. Forward in the passage, the palace of the eastern Roman emperor is clearly said to be ‘another heaven’ (see below n. 38). As it appears from *Iohannis*, in Corippus the word ‘Olympus’ stands for the heavenly kingdom of God. There a heavenly figure comes in a bright visions from the ‘lofty Olympus, clothed in a white robe of stars’ (*Corippus* Iohannis I.259–260 / Ed. J. Diggle and F. R. D. Good-year. Cambridge, 1970, p. 13, and trans. G. W. Shea. New York 1998, p. 71).

⁸⁶ From now on, see: *Corippus* In laudem III.179–244 / Ed. Av. Cameron. London, 1976, p. 66–68 and 187–191 (commentary), see also Ed. A. Antès. Paris, 1981, p. 60–63.

⁸⁷ In the throne hall, the imperial throne stand under a rich ciborium, carpets covered the floor, and curtains and hangings covered the guarded doors. For the sacred character of the imperial manifestation, with particular reference to the text of Corippus, see: Carile A. ‘Credunt aliud romana palatia caelum’. Die Ideologie des Palatium in Konstantinopel dem Neuen Rom // ‘Palatia’. Kaiserpalaste (as in f. n. 31), p. 27–32; Carile A. Il palazzo imperiale come luogo della epifania trascendente dell’imperatore // ‘Palatia’. Palazzi imperiali tra Ravenna e Bisanzio (Ravenna, Biblioteca Classense, 14 ottobre 2002–4 gennaio 2003) / Ed. A. Augenti, Ferrara 2003, p. 6–15; Carile A. La prossemica (as in f. n. 24), p. 606–612.

guards' apparel. The imperial audience happened in this amazement of bright light. Cosmic metaphors and references to the vault of the sky abound in the passage and culminate in the explicit comparison between the imperial palace and heaven⁸⁸.

Corippus' passage is among the few late-antique descriptions of palace. Although the text depicts the throne room only, it stresses its importance within the palatine complex as if that room expressed the splendour of whole palace. Thus, by describing the wonderful and glittering throne hall, the court poet intended to express the splendour of the whole palace.

The cosmic metaphors and the bright light enrich the imperial appearance with the traits of a celestial epiphany. They place the throne hall — thus the palace itself — and the imperial ceremony into a supernatural context, in a heavenly perspective.

As we have seen in the saintly visions discussed above, the most relevant traits of the heavenly Jerusalem are the audience room (hall or open courtyard), the guarded gates, the throne, and the angelic court, all shining in bright light. The heavenly appearance of God and the earthly appearance of the emperor in the sixth-century text of Corippus are described with the same main traits. The resplendent building of the saintly visions is found in Corippus' description of the throne room. The imperial hall clad in resplendent metals (gold) shines in bright light⁸⁹. The value of the precious materials in the palace's décor is linked to the power and wealth that they convey, but also to their light symbolism⁹⁰. By reflecting light, gold, marbles, and mosaic decoration contribute to the creation of the shining spectacle of the imperial epiphany. In the passage, all of the elements render the bright setting, which is a typical feature of the imperial ceremonies⁹¹. The light, shin-

⁸⁸ *Corippus* In laudem III.244 / Ed. and trans. A. Cameron. London, 1976, p. 68 and 107, see also Ed. A. Antès. Paris 1981, p. 63: *et credunt akiud romana palatium caelum*: 'an they believed that the Roman palace was another heaven' (trans. A. Cameron).

⁸⁹ *Corippus* In laudem III.191–192 / Ed. and trans. A. Cameron. London, 1976, p. 66 and 106, see also Ed. S. Antès. Paris, 1981, p. 60.

⁹⁰ Prokopios' description of the *Chalké* emphasizes the value of marbles and mosaic decoration. By reflecting light and colours, this elements played an active role in the celebration of the emperor (*Prokopios* De Aed. I.X.18–19 / Ed. H. B. Dewing. London, 1954, p. 86–87).

⁹¹ The light symbolism was always present in imperial ceremonies, inside the palace's walls as well as outside them. For instance, on the famous Trier ivory, which shows an imperial procession the occasion and date of which are still hotly debated, the light accompanying the imperial ceremony is rendered with the use of candles. There, dignitaries holding candles and people with censers accompany the imperial parade. For the Trier ivory, see: *Brubaker* (as in f. n. 48), with references. Yet, on the anniversary of the inauguration of Constantinople soldiers bearing candles escorted the procession of the gilded statue of Constantine (*Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 330 / Ed. J.-P. Migne. *PG*, XCII.709, see also commentary in *Whitby M. and M.* (as in f. n. 29), p. 17–18 n. 56; *Malalas* Chron. 13.8 / Ed. J. Thurn. Berlin, 2000, p. 247). For the use of candles in the tenth-century *Book of Ceremo-*

ing from the room's decoration, the soldiers' garments, the imperial chambers beside the room, and especially from the emperor himself, is a central element of the real imperial ceremony. However, as we have seen, it is also the primary attribute of the heavenly manifestation of God from the Bible onwards. The use of gold and precious stones and the light symbolism in the real palace is connected to the value of these materials as visible manifestations of the sanctity of the *basileia*⁹².

The throne, an important element in the visions of the heavenly Jerusalem, is also of capital importance in the imperial throne hall of Constantinople's palace. In the throne hall it has a prominent location under a ciborium that reproduces the vault of the sky. Again, the cosmic symbolism of this prominent imperial insignia enriches the imperial manifestation with a heavenly character⁹³. In the heavenly kingdom of God, the gates are guarded by angels, just as in the throne room — and at the palace entrance — imperial guards stand at the doors. The heavenly court surrounds God in his heavenly palace, in the same way — in Corippus like the stars in the sky — the imperial court surround the emperor. Furthermore, the perfumes and music that accompanied the heavenly appearance played important roles in imperial rituals and ceremonies⁹⁴.

In the earthly palace of Constantinople, the imperial appearance happened in the same way of the heavenly audience of God in heaven. Lacking clear and complete descriptions of the imperial palace, its value in Eastern Roman imagery can be understood only by details as colours, lights, imperial insignia, and the atmosphere created around the appearance of the emperor. The literary form (*ekphrasis*), utilised in the texts discussed above, contributes to the expression of the palace as a vision in which the sight and all the other senses are involved⁹⁵. As the kingdom of God was accessible only in a

nies, see: *Constantin VII Porphyrogénète Le livre des cérémonies. Commentaire (Livre I — Chapitres 1–46 (37))* / Ed. A. Vogt. Paris, 1967, vol. I, p. 75.

⁹² In the fourth century, Eusebios described the bright kingdom of God radiating light and compared it to the luminous imperial palace in a very significant metaphor (*Eusebios De laudibus Constantini I.2* / Ed. I. A. Heikel. Leipzig, 1902, p. 196–197).

⁹³ For the throne and its symbolism with particular reference to Corippus' text, see: *Carile A. La prossemica* (as in f. n. 24), p. 606–607.

⁹⁴ For the role of the music in imperial ceremonies, see: *Carile A. Le cerimonie musicali alla corte di Bisanzio // Il piacere del testo. Saggi e studi per Albano Biondi* / Ed. A. Prosperi. Roma, 2001, vol. II, p. 779–811; *Berger A. Die akustische Dimension des Kaiserzeremoniells. Gesang, Orgenspiel und Automaten // 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. 63–77.

⁹⁵ As it was demonstrated, in Byzantium *ekphrasis* is a description rendered through sensual details, in which sight has a primary role consistent with its value in ancient medicine and philosophy (*James L. and Webb R. 'To understand ultimate things and enter secret places': Ekphrasis and Art in Byzantium // Art History 14.1(1991)*, p. 4–5; *Nelson R. S. To Say and*

heavenly vision of light with perfumes and music, so was the imperial appearance in the real imperial palace.

Analogous descriptions of two events, one happening at the heavenly court of God one in the earthly imperial palace, are evidence of a common conception that links the divine and imperial spheres in the Eastern Roman Empire. The use of the imperial (and palatine) imagery in the description of the heavenly kingdom of God raises a few considerations. If the heavenly kingdom of God was visualized as the imperial palace, thus the imperial palace was evidently considered as the most perfect example of residence on earth and as a model that could be applied to visualize the heavenly kingdom. It was a secret and apart world that, as the heavenly Jerusalem, could be accessed only by few elect in a dreamt and indeterminate future. While in Late-antique literature the earthly imperial palace — a multiplication of palaces indeed — could not be described in words, the use of the palatine imagery in the visualisation of the heavenly kingdom fills the lack of descriptions of palaces. Attributing imperial characters to the heavenly kingdom of God means that, conversely, the real palace of the emperors was seen as the materialization of the ideal heavenly palace of God⁹⁶. This becomes evident in the sixth-century court poetry, when the palace of Constantinople was described with the same features of the heavenly Jerusalem. At that time, the imperial court explicitly conveyed the image of palace as a real embodiment of the heavenly palace.

As we have argued elsewhere, this was part of a process that started earlier and concerns the role of the emperor in the Eastern Roman Empire⁹⁷. The emperor was the minister of God on earth, administrating the earthly cosmos in behalf of God, who endowed on him the Christian holy *basileia*⁹⁸. As the emperor was considered like ‘an image of God’ on earth, thus his residence mirrored the heavenly residence of God in the sky⁹⁹. The sacredness of the imperial power and the palace are at the basis of the assimilation between the imperial palace and the heavenly Jerusalem.

to See: Ekphrasis and Vision in Byzantium // Visuality before and beyond Renaissance / Ed. R. S. Nelson. Cambridge, 2000, p. 143–168).

⁹⁶ Cosmic metaphors that are so often used in the narratives about the emperor’s appearance and the imperial palace make this concept explicit. It should be noted that also Prokopios’ description of the *Chalké* shows the use of cosmic metaphors: there the building walls are *οὐρανομήκειζ* (‘heaven-high’ trans. H. B. Dewing) (*Prokopios* De Aed. I.X.12 / Ed. H. B. Dewing. London, 1954, p. 84–85).

⁹⁷ Carile M. C. (as in f. n. 63).

⁹⁸ Eusebios theorized these concepts already in the fourth century. Agapetos reaffirmed them in his treatise for the good emperor, which was dedicated to Justinian.

⁹⁹ *Eusebios* De laudibus Constantini III.5 / Ed. I.A. Heikel. Leipzig, 1902, p. 201. For the imperial court as a mirror of the heavenly court in mid-Byzantine imagery, see: Maguire H. *The Heavenly Court // Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* / Ed. H. Maguire. Washington D.C., 1997, p. 247–258.

The imperial palace was considered as a *sacrum palatium* since the time of Constantine and this belief persisted through the late-antique period as well as in Byzantium¹⁰⁰. Qualifying the palace as *sacrum palatium* implies that a holy character was attributed to it. In that place every detail — from architecture and décor to furbishing, lighting, music, and perfumes — concurred to express its holiness. The palace was in fact the scenario for a divine manifestation and was meant to express its sacredness in its features. In the same way, the residence of God in the sky was a palace that the presence of God sanctified and transformed into a holy temple. As the *basileia*, a holy power derived from God, was manifested in the appearance of the emperor in the palace, so the heavenly kingdom of God was visualized as a palace and the appearance of God in the saintly visions was equally framed on an imperial model.

In this perspective, the vision of St. Martha that at the end of the sixth century described the heavenly kingdom of God as a landscape of bright and wonderful palaces, was perhaps based on the image of the contemporary palace of Constantinople. After the Nika riot, Justinian considerably enlarged the limits of the imperial palace, incorporating a former imperial property, the house of Hormisdas¹⁰¹. The palace at that time was an enormous compound of buildings, each considered as a palace itself within the huge imperial complex. Although the connection between the writer of St. Martha's life and Constantinople cannot be claimed with certainty, the image of St. Martha's heaven surprisingly recalls the real imperial palace. This demonstrates the impact on the palace imagery on the visualisation of heaven. If the ideal palace was represented by the image of the real palace of the emperor, then the real imperial palace — in the sixth century the only palace of Constantinople — was the bridging point between real and ideal spheres, indeed a real embodiment of an ideal and heavenly palace.

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ИМПЕРАТОРСКИЕ ДВОРЦЫ И НЕБЕСНЫЕ ИЕРУСАЛИМЫ:
РЕАЛЬНЫЕ И ИДЕАЛЬНЫЕ ДВОРЦЫ ПОЗДНЕЙ АНТИЧНОСТИ

Невозможность описания императорской резиденции, кажется, была тропом для придворных сочинителей, по всей империи и на протяжении веков. Дело здесь не только в *топосе*, вероятно, причина в святости им-

¹⁰⁰ In Corippus' text of the imperial chambers are *sacra loca* (holy places) (*Corippus In laudem* III.215–216 / Ed. and trans. A. Cameron. London, 1976, p. 67 and 106, see also Ed. A. Antès. Paris, 1981, p. 61).

¹⁰¹ *Prokopios De Aed. I.X.4* / Ed. H.B. Dewing. London, 1954, p. 80–81.

ператорской власти и в способах реализации власти в поздней античности и в Византии.

Цель этой публикации — углубить понимание феномена императорского дворца в поздней античности, сосредоточившись на письменных источниках. В рассматриваемое время императорский дворец был не единственной резиденцией, расположенной в одном определенном месте: *палациум* (*palatium*) — это каждый дворец, готовый к приему императора. Такое определение отражает факт существования целого ряда имперских дворцов по всей империи, которые создавались со времен тетрархов и позднее.

Образ дворца, известный лишь из редких разрозненных сообщений, представляется тесно связанным с образом небесного царства Бога, Небесного Иерусалима, каким он является впервые в Библии и в позднеантичных видениях святых. Изображения небес как идеального дворца, возможно, родились под влиянием впечатлений от реального образца, то есть императорского дворца. Поскольку в поздней античности множество имперских дворцов было рассеяно по всей империи, идея рая как дворца развивалась через сходные образы Небесных Иерусалимов.

И наоборот, императорский дворец был реальным местом на земле, которое, тем не менее, в значительной степени напоминало об идеальном месте — и своей архитектурой, и декором, и церемониями, которые в нем проводились. Это свидетельствует об общности идей, которые связывают империю и царство небесное в поздней античности и в Византии.