



## Durham E-Theses

---

*Imperial ideology in middle Byzantine court culture:  
the evidence of Constantine porphyrogenitus's de  
ceremoniis*

Woodrow, Zoe Antonia

### How to cite:

---

Woodrow, Zoe Antonia (2001) *Imperial ideology in middle Byzantine court culture: the evidence of Constantine porphyrogenitus's de ceremoniis*, Durham theses, Durham University. Available at Durham E-Theses Online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/3969/>

### Use policy

---

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

Imperial Ideology in Middle Byzantine Court Culture:  
The Evidence of Constantine Porphyrogenitus's *De Ceremoniis*

Zoe Antonia Woodrow

PhD

University of Durham

Department of Theology

2001

**The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published in any form, including Electronic and the Internet, without the author's prior written consent. All information derived from this thesis must be acknowledged appropriately.**



24 MAY 2002

Thesis  
2001/  
W00

## CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Abbreviations	ii
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PART 1: RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>The order of the ceremonies and the Byzantine calendar</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Ceremonies at Hagia Sophia: the General Protocol</b>	<b>44</b>
<i>The Procession to Hagia Sophia</i>	44
<i>The Emperors in the Church</i>	79
<i>The Return to the Palace</i>	93
<b>Variations to the General Protocol, Ceremonies in the City and in the Palace</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>The Acclamations</b>	<b>105</b>
<i>The organisation of the factions</i>	106
<i>The Acclamations</i>	110
<b>PART 2: IMPERIAL RITES OF PASSAGE AND COURT PROMOTIONS</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>Imperial Rites of Passage</b>	<b>115</b>
<i>Coronation</i>	116
<i>Coronation of an Augusta</i>	146
<i>Marriage</i>	148
<i>Birth</i>	157
<i>Death</i>	160
<b>Imperial Promotions</b>	<b>162</b>
<i>Promotions to Dignity</i>	162
<i>The promotion of a Caesar and nobilissimus</i>	163
<i>The promotion of a patrician</i>	169
<i>Promotions to Office</i>	173
<b>PART 3: IMPERIAL RECEPTIONS AND HIPPODROME CEREMONIES</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>Imperial Receptions</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>Hippodrome Ceremonies</b>	<b>196</b>
<i>The reception of the Golden Hippodrome</i>	199
<i>The Golden Hippodrome</i>	201
<i>The Celebration of the Anniversary of the Consecration of Constantinople</i>	215
<i>The Votive Races</i>	227
<i>The Lupercalia</i>	231
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>237</b>

Bibliography	251
Table 1	257
Table 2	258
Table 3	259
Plan 1	260
Plan 2	261
Plan 3	262
Plan 4	263

## Abstract

Zoe Woodrow

Imperial Ideology in Middle Byzantine Court Culture: the Evidence of Constantine Porphyrogenitus's *De Ceremoniis*.

Submitted to the University of Durham in 2001 for the degree of PhD.

The subject of the thesis is the Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies*, produced during the reign of the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (945-963). Through an examination of the prescriptions for imperial ceremonies contained in the first 83 chapters of Book I of the document, it seeks to explore the way in which the Byzantine political authorities of the tenth century endeavoured to preserve state ceremonial. It argues that these rituals, divorced from the context of historical events and the constraints of performance, offer a unique insight into the preoccupations of the Middle Byzantine administration.

Dividing the ceremonies into three distinguishable groups – religious ceremonies, ‘imperial rites of passage’ and court promotions, and the entertainments of the Hippodrome – it focuses on the articulation of imperial ideology through the public presentation of the Emperor, the ritual consolidation of the contemporary court structure and the relationship of the imperial authorities to external agents, of which that with the Patriarch is of particular interest.

It attempts to show the way in which the ritual life of the Emperor and the palace, as it is presented in the treatise, reveals the concerns of the tenth-century Byzantine administration, particularly its desire to strengthen the authority of the Emperor and to regulate the conduct of the court. In so doing, it demonstrates that the prescriptive chapters of Book I of the *De Ceremoniis* present a consistent image of imperial ideology, one that serves to underpin the political system by exalting the Emperor and drawing to him a number of symbols of imperial legitimacy and by establishing him, unmistakably at the head of the political establishment.

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AHR</i>	<i>American Historical Review</i>
<i>BS</i>	<i>Byzantinoslavica</i>
<i>Byz.</i>	<i>Byzantion</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>De Cer.</i>	<i>De ceremoniis aulae byzantinae</i> , ed. J. J. Reiske, 2 vols. (Bonn, 1829-30); <i>Le livre des cérémonies</i> , ed. and French trans. A. Vogt, 2 vols, each in 2 parts [text and commentary] (Paris, 1935-39) contains Book I, cc. 1-83 only.
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>EO</i>	<i>Échos d'Orient</i>
<i>JÖB</i>	<i>Jarbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik</i>
<i>Klet.</i>	Philotheus, <i>Kletorologion</i> , <i>De Cer.</i> , II, Reiske, 702-791; ed. and trans. N. Oikonomidès, in his <i>Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX<sup>e</sup> et X<sup>e</sup> siècles</i> (Paris, 1972), 65-235.
Maguire, <i>Court Culture</i>	H. Maguire, ed., <i>Byzantine Court Culture from 829-1204</i> (Washington, D. C., 1997)
<i>REB</i>	<i>Revue des Études Byzantines</i>

## INTRODUCTION

That the court centred at the Great Palace in medieval Constantinople was the setting of highly regulated state rituals is testified in a wide variety of sources.<sup>1</sup> Visitors to the Byzantine capital regularly focussed on the ceremonies they witnessed in their reports, in which their impressions of the civilisation they encountered often converge in the relation of a particular imperial or liturgical rite.<sup>2</sup> Pictorial art and artefacts provide compelling evidence for the splendour of such events and indicate that, when they wished to portray the Emperors visually, Byzantine artists habitually drew their modes of representation from types familiar from their public appearances.<sup>3</sup> Our understanding of the decorative images in secular and church buildings can frequently be enhanced through reference to imperial ceremonies, which appear to have fundamentally influenced their content and arrangement.<sup>4</sup> In like manner, the topography of the city and the palace and the disposition of religious and imperial objects therein were designed, at least in part, to facilitate and enhance the ceremonies in which the Emperors resident there took part.<sup>5</sup>

Byzantine literature concerning imperial ceremonies provides a wealth of information and falls into two principal categories. The first is drawn primarily from narrative sources and is comprised of descriptions of particular events as they were performed on specific

---

<sup>1</sup> For a general discussion of the source material see Michael McCormick, "Analyzing Imperial Ceremonies," *JÖB* 35 (1985), 1-20.

<sup>2</sup> The most famous example is Liudprand of Cremona, whose descriptions of the ceremonies he witnessed on his visits to Constantinople provide a colourful picture of the impression such events could have on those from without the Empire: Liudprand of Cremona, *De Legatione Constantinopolitana*, cc. 9-10, and his *Antapodosis*, book VI, cc. 5-10, ed., J. Becker, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Script. rerum Germanicarum* (Hanover and Leipzig, 1915).

<sup>3</sup> This is not to suggest that Byzantine artists simply copied scenes from actual ceremonial performances. On the limitations of pictorial evidence for the history of ceremony see McCormick, "Analyzing Imperial Ceremonies," 9-10.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Henry Maguire, "The Mosaics of the Nea Moni: An Imperial Reading," *DOP* 46 (1992), 205-214.

<sup>5</sup> On the topography of Constantinople see R. Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine* (Paris, 1950); J. Ebersolt, *Constantinople* (Paris, 1951); R. Guiland, *Études de Topographie de Constantinople Byzantine* (Berlin and Amsterdam, 1969); A. Vogt, "Notes de topographie byzantine," *EO* xxxvii (1940), 78-90. On the Great Palace see, for example, Bury, "The Great Palace," *Byz.* xxi (1912), 210-225; Ebersolt, *Le Grand Palais de Constantinople et Le Livre des Cérémonies* (Paris, 1910). Works on particular structures will be noted when they appear, although Cyril Mango, *The Brazen House: A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* (Copenhagen, 1959) is of particular interest. For an interesting discussion of the disposition of holy relics in the palace see Ioli Kalavrezou, "Helping Hands for the Empire: Imperial Ceremonies and the Cult of Relics at the Byzantine Court," in Maguire, *Court Culture*, 53-79.



occasions. The second is contained in documents designed for use by the organisers of imperial ritual and is made up of information of a rather different character, by nature prescriptive and presented in an ahistorical manner. Of this second category, the tenth-century treatise, known as the *De Ceremoniis* or *Book of Ceremonies*,<sup>6</sup> preserved in a twelfth or early thirteenth-century manuscript in the university library at Leipzig,<sup>7</sup> is an indispensable source. Amongst a variety of documents, it contains numerous prescriptions for the conduct of imperial ceremonies to be observed on both religious and secular occasions. It is these that are the subject of the present study. In general terms, its purpose is to examine the way in which the ritual behaviour of the Emperor and his court, as it is presented in the ceremonial book, was stage-managed to underpin the political system, to express and strengthen imperial ideology through the formulation of a strictly regulated image of the Emperor and his relations with both earthly and heavenly agents. From the specific arena of imperial ceremony, one of a multiplicity of methods by which the Byzantine authorities sought to regulate the public perception of the Emperor, this thesis will, therefore, expand into an examination of more general issues about the formulation of imperial ideology in the period in which the ceremonial book was compiled.

The possibility of tracing developments in the political realities and theories of the Empire through state ritual is testified in a number of studies.<sup>8</sup> These have tended to focus on particular types of ceremony, for example imperial triumphs and accessions, and on descriptions from traditional narrative sources, panegyrics and pictorial evidence. They have demonstrated the variable nature of imperial ritual; successfully proving that the impression of ceremonial rigidity that has characterised much thought on the subject is not supported in the evidence. In fact, the organisers of imperial ceremonies selected from the means available to them the symbolic gestures that were most pertinent to contemporary circumstances, so that by isolating those features of a specific performance that differ from previous stagings of an event one exposes evidence that can be used to

---

<sup>6</sup> *De Cer.*

<sup>7</sup> Cyril Mango and Ihor Ševčenko, "A New Manuscript of the *De Ceremoniis*," *DOP* 14 (1960), 247.

explore developments in the society in which it took place. This concentration on ceremonial evolution as an indicator of political, social and ideological change is justified by a belief that imperial ceremonies both reflected contemporary realities and contributed to their formulation and has established imperial ritual as a fertile ground for the exploration of late Roman and Byzantine society.

Such explorations have most notably contributed to our understanding of the transition from the world of late antiquity to early medieval Byzantium and have shown that the highly ceremonial character of medieval Constantinople can be seen, at least in part, as the ultimate manifestation and formalisation of trends that emerged over a long period of ritual development. The *Book of Ceremonies* belongs to the period when the transition from late antiquity to Byzantium can be said to have been completed. A thorough examination of the ceremonies it contains should make a substantial contribution to our understanding of the society in which it was produced. Yet this important and wide-ranging document has received little in the way of sustained analysis.<sup>9</sup> The possible reasons for this apparent neglect will help to clarify the merits and objectives of the present examination, though it is worth beginning with a brief account of the contents of the treatise as it is preserved in the Leipzig manuscript and the use for which its author intended it.

The document is preserved in two parts, or “books”. Each is introduced by a preface in which the author presents his subject and reveals his motivation for the project. The preface to Book I states that the work is that of the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913-959). This attribution and the imperial origins of the document are confirmed within the text. Its author begins with an apology for his undertaking. He observes that, although others might not consider his work important, “this work is very

---

<sup>8</sup> See, in particular, Sabine MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (California, 1990) and Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (Paris, 1990).

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of the structure of the Leipzig manuscript see J. B. Bury, “The Ceremonial Book of Constantine Porphyrogenetos,” *EHR* 22 (1907), 209-227. Averil Cameron, “The Construction of Court Ritual: the Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies*,” in D. Cannadine and S. R. F. Price, eds., *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge, 1987), 106-136, is a useful introduction, but draws only general conclusions.

dear to us and worthy of our effort, and is closer to us than any other thing, since as a result of this praiseworthy order the imperial power is exposed as more majestic and awe-inspiring and for that reason is honoured both by foreigners and our own subjects.”<sup>10</sup> He goes on to warn against the dangers of allowing the ceremonies to fall into disuse, likening the disorder that would follow for the Empire to that which would result if a human body were carelessly put together. In so doing he develops a theory of ceremony in which the correct observance of imperial ritual becomes an essential feature of good government, maintaining a fundamental harmony between the human and divine spheres of activity by reflecting a divinely established cosmic order:

To avoid this [disorder] and so that we may not appear to disgrace the majesty of Empire through disorderly conduct, we have thought it necessary to gather together from many quarters the ceremonies invented by men of old, or reported by eyewitnesses, or seen by us and established in our own times and to set them out in the present work in a form that might be easily understood, to preserve for our successors the tradition of inherited customs that have come to be neglected. Culling, as it were, a bunch of flowers from the meadows, we may present it to the imperial splendour as an incomparable ornament. We may place in the middle of our palace something in the nature of a clear and polished mirror, which will show to the eye all that is proper to the imperial power and to the institute of the senate, so that we may make it possible for the reigns of authority to be managed with order and dignity... Hereby may the imperial power be exercised with due rhythm and order (ῥυθμός and τάξις) and display the harmonious movement imposed by the Creator on the universe so that [the Empire] may appear more majestic to our subjects and, therefore, more acceptable and admirable in their eyes.<sup>11</sup>

These opening remarks raise a number of interesting points. Firstly, they firmly establish the *Book of Ceremonies* as an official document of the tenth century. It was commissioned by the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, who took a personal interest in its compilation and it is universally accepted that the Emperor himself penned the preface. Bury notes the distinction made between παρ’ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ἐθεάθη and ἐν ἡμῶν ἐνηργήθη and judges it “a pretty clear discrimination of the reign of Romanus I, when Constantine was a subordinate *basileus*, from his own reign as *basileus autokrator*,”<sup>12</sup> so it is likely that he began his research during his early reign, when the ambitions of Romanus Lecapenus prevented him from taking the reigns of power, and continued it after 944 when he finally assumed sole rule.

---

<sup>10</sup> *De Cer.*, I, Reiske, 3-4; Vogt, I, 1.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, Reiske, 4-5; Vogt, I, 2.

The imperial origins of the document, then, are confirmed in its preface, which reveals the importance Constantine VII invested in the correct observance of state ceremonies. He justifies his work through reference to a number of benefits that would come from it. Here he displays a highly sophisticated appreciation of imperial ritual. For, beyond the, perhaps obvious, intention of impressing foreigner and subject alike with splendid displays of imperial power, he draws a direct correlation between the management of ceremonies and the government of Empire. The correct observance of imperial ceremonies is understood not as an addition to or distraction from the business of government, but as an integral feature of it.

Central to his thesis is the notion of order (*taxis*),<sup>13</sup> necessary for effective rulership and maintained through ceremonies, which are described as a mirror, capable, as it were, of reflecting back at their participants and audience a permanently pleasing image. He expands on this notion in two ways. Firstly, with reference to the public perception of the imperial power, he concludes that the ceremonies will inspire not only the awe of his subjects but also their affection. Secondly, with reference to the imperial authorities themselves, the ceremonies will ensure that their conduct works in harmony with a universal order established by God.

Constantine VII, therefore, embarks on his treatise with an assertion of the significance of the ceremonies he has gathered therein for the establishment of good government. It is worth highlighting that he was by education and inclination a scholar and an antiquarian and that the *Book of Ceremonies* was just one of a number of works commissioned by him.<sup>14</sup> We might expect, then, that his academic interests, fostered during the years of his minority and subsequent forced leisure, might in themselves have given rise to his compilation. However, his other works, as well as the introduction to the ceremonial book, testify to the importance he placed on research into all areas of imperial government and administration for their practical lessons: “Constantine Porphyrogenitus

---

<sup>12</sup> Bury, “Ceremonial Book,” 211.

<sup>13</sup> On the notion of *taxis* see Henry Maguire, “Images of the Court,” in Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era* (New York, 1997).

may have been academic-minded for an Emperor, but, thanks to his being an Emperor, he was practical minded for a scholar.”<sup>15</sup> In the first chapter of the *De Administrando Imperio*, a work dedicated to his son, Romanus, in which are gathered together documents primarily concerned with foreign relations as a guide to rulership, Constantine expounds the particular necessity of education for those who wield political power:

Hear now, my son, those things of which I think you *should* not be ignorant and be wise that you may attain to government. For I maintain that while learning is a good thing for all the rest as well, who are subjects, yet it is especially so for you, who are bound to take thought for the safety of all and to steer and guide the laden ship of the world.<sup>16</sup>

The *Book of Ceremonies* forms part of an ongoing project that Constantine VII set himself, to bequeath to his successors the fruits of his learning; and he evidently intended that his codification should be put to practical use by future administrations. It is worth highlighting from the start that Constantine VII's *Book of Ceremonies* does not only take its place as one of the literary works of that Emperor. Both it and they form part of a wider movement, commonly referred to as the "Macedonian Renaissance"<sup>17</sup>. It will be argued, below, that the production and content of the *De Ceremoniis* should be seen in the context of political, administrative and psychological changes that had taken place at Byzantium from its near-fatal decline in the seventh and eighth centuries to its reemergence and expansion under the Macedonian Dynasty, to which Constantine belonged. It must also be seen in the context of the cultural "renaissance" that coincided with that revival, which involved "a conscious effort to recapture learning that had been in eclipse."<sup>18</sup>

In its literary aspect, the "Macedonian Renaissance" is characterised by a proliferation of compilations, in which contemporary information is, often uneasily, combined with that gathered from ancient sources. This is certainly true of the *Book of Ceremonies* and also

---

<sup>14</sup> On Constantine VII's literary activities see Arnold Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World* (London, 1973), 575-599.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 581.

<sup>16</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Gy. Moravcsik and trans. R. J. H. Jenkins, (Budapest, 1949), 49.

<sup>17</sup> On which the standard text is Paul Lemerle, *Le Premier Humanisme Byzantin* (Paris, 1985).

<sup>18</sup> Cameron, "The construction of court ritual", 128.

of Constantine VII's other works, of which the *De Thematibus*<sup>19</sup> and *De Administrando* are equally representative examples. Of other writings, one might note the *Synaxarion of Constantinople*,<sup>20</sup> a collection of saints' *Lives*, arranged according to the calendar of saints' days. Within this collection, whose earliest sections date from the end of the reign of Constantine VII<sup>21</sup> but which was continued for many years subsequently, information is gathered from hagiographical accounts and is reworked in contemporary Greek, condensed and presented in standard format. As a compilation and in its use of contemporary Greek, the *Book of Ceremonies* has much in common with the *Synaxarion*. However, it is also true that the *Synaxarion* involves a literary reworking in a way that the *De Ceremoniis* does not, Constantine making it clear that the use of simple, easily understood writing is designed to make the rituals more readily comprehensible to those who will organise their production.

In its format, therefore, the *Book of Ceremonies* is an example of the kind of literature that flourished at the time. We have seen that Constantine VII saw in the ceremonies an essential feature of imperial government, one that he asserts, if correctly followed, will impress people from beyond the Empire, inspire the affection of those within it and allow the imperial authorities to participate in a divinely established cosmic order. Yet he goes beyond these assertions and claims for his codification another justification; namely, the revival of tradition.

We should not take too seriously Constantine's claim that ceremonies had come to be overlooked in the years before the compilation of his book. Whilst it is impossible to determine with any degree of certainty how often and with what regularity imperial ceremonies were performed at any period of Byzantine history, it is unlikely that they would have fallen into disuse for any lengthy period. Particularly from the sixth century, which appears to have been a time of considerable intensification in the area of imperial ritual at Constantinople, ceremonies played an important part in the life of the

---

<sup>19</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De thematibus*, ed. A. Pertusi, *Studi e testi*, 160 (Vatican City, 1952).

<sup>20</sup> *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae. Propylaeum ad ActaSS Novembris*, ed. H. Delehaye (Brussels, 1902)

Emperors.<sup>22</sup> Even during the darkest years of the seventh and eighth centuries they appear to have been maintained.<sup>23</sup> On one hand, Constantine's lamentation for the neglect of ceremony might be written off as a literary device. However, that he saw in the field of imperial ritual an activity that established continuity with the past is enormously significant. He lived in a period when we have said that the transition from late antique to Byzantine culture had been completed and yet, although we shall see that many features of the society that emerged from that process of transition were markedly different from what had gone before, the notion of innovation would remain anathema to the authorities stationed at Constantinople, always careful to present a picture of traditional uniformity.

There is nothing in the preface to Book I of the *De Ceremoniis* to indicate that it was envisaged as a two-part work.<sup>24</sup> It, therefore, seems that Book II was begun at a later date to complement the original manuscript and complete the codification. The preface to Book II reveals itself to be written by the same hand as its predecessor and indicates that it was intended as a continuation of the original compilation, though here, whereas the first book had contained ceremonies gathered from written sources, will be preserved those rituals handed down orally (ταῖς μνήμαις διασωζόμενα καὶ παρὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἀκολουθῶν τοῖς νεότεροις παραπεμπόμενα).<sup>25</sup>

To sum up briefly: the document known as the Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies* was drawn up in the tenth century; it takes its place as one of a number of works commissioned by the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus on the government and administration of the Empire; it was conceived of by its imperial author as a codification of imperial ritual, gathered from written and unwritten sources, to serve as a guide for future administrations, to ensure the preservation and continuation of traditional practice and the orderly conduct of imperial power, of which the ceremonies are presented as an essential

---

<sup>21</sup> See Ihor Ševčenko, "Re-reading Constantine Porphyrogenitus" in *Byzantine Diplomacy: papers from the 24<sup>th</sup> Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (Cambridge, 1990) ed. J. Sheppard and S. Franklin.

<sup>22</sup> See below, 27-28.

<sup>23</sup> Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin, eds., *Constantinople in the Eighth Century: the Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* (Leiden, 1984), 170, 209-10 and 212.

<sup>24</sup> Bury, "Ceremonial Book," 210.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

part, both reflecting an image of good government to the Empire and beyond and displaying harmony with the order established by the divine Architect of the cosmos.

However, when we turn from the two prefaces to examine the document itself, we find that, in fact, the content of the Leipzig manuscript is far less orderly or consistent than its introductions suggest it was intended to be. Book II is particularly diverse in its subject matter and shows little sign of organisation. Although we have seen that it was intended to form a continuation of Book I, according to Bury only cc. 1-25 can reasonably be regarded as a part of Constantine VII's original compilation.<sup>26</sup> The rest is a miscellany. It includes material of purely antiquarian and historical interest (cc. 26-39) as well as much which is irrelevant or only loosely connected to the subject of the work, as it is defined in Constantine's prefaces. The latter categories make up the larger part of this second book and cannot be judged to have been designed for inclusion in the treatise. Amongst those sections that are in some way pertinent to the ceremonies are cc. 52 and 53, which contain the ninth-century *Kletorologion* of Philotheus<sup>27</sup> and c. 43, which records acclamations delivered by the army at imperial triumphs. However, although these and other chapters bear a relation to the subject matter of the treatise, they do not fit easily into the orderly arrangement claimed for it in the preface. It should further be noted that Constantine's claim that this second book would record the ceremonies preserved in oral testimony is not supported by the documents contained within it, which appear to have been copied from written sources.

The number of documents that finds a place in Book II and the lack of any clear structure imposed on them suggest that the manuscript was augmented over a number of years, files being added without consideration of their place in the overall scheme of the project. Toynbee likens it to a file in a department of state "in having been always open for the addition of new material."<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, the ceremonial prescriptions of cc. 1-25 and the historical examples of cc. 26-39 mirror the arrangement of Book I and suggest that this

---

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>27</sup> *Klet.* J. B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* (London, 1911), 130-179 contains an edition of the text.

<sup>28</sup> Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World*, 601.

first portion of Book II may represent a completion of the work. Of the wealth of material added later, only two chapters date from after the reign of Constantine Porphyrogenitus,<sup>29</sup> suggesting that additions were made to it throughout his reign, but their diversity and confusion make it highly unlikely that they were ever expected to be incorporated into the treatise.

Conversely, Book I displays a more orderly arrangement. As it has come down to us, it contains 83 chapters,<sup>30</sup> Constantine VII's preface and three documents about ceremonial observed when the Emperor joined his army on active military service: τὰ βασιλικά ταξείδια.<sup>31</sup> This last, which Reiske appended to Book I of his edition of the *Book of Ceremonies*, but which in fact prefaces the main body of the text in the Leipzig manuscript, like much of Book II, is not considered to have formed part of Constantine VII's plan.<sup>32</sup> Chapters 84 (93)-95 (104) contain historical examples of particular ceremonies attributed to the sixth-century *magister officiorum*, Peter the Patrician.<sup>33</sup> Although they were probably included in the original manuscript to provide an appendix to Book I, like Book II cc. 26-39 they "are of purely antiquarian interest... [and are] an accretion, lying outside the homogeneous unity of the book,"<sup>34</sup> whilst cc. 96 and 97 are later additions to the text.<sup>35</sup>

Cc. 1-92 (83) contain information of a rather different character. Within them are found numerous prescriptions specifying the behaviour of the Emperors and their entourage that

---

<sup>29</sup> Bury, "Ceremonial Book," 218/219.

<sup>30</sup> At c. 11 the numbering of the chapters jumps, without explanation, to 20, see below, 41. I have followed Vogt in identifying each chapter according to its number in the Leipzig manuscript followed, in parenthesis, by its position in the order of surviving chapters. For example, the final chapter is designated as c. 92 (83).

<sup>31</sup> τὰ βασιλικά ταξείδια: *De Cer.*, I, Reiske, 444-508; John Haldon, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions* (Vienna, 1990) contains an edition of the texts with English translations and commentary.

<sup>32</sup> See Haldon, *op. cit.*, 35; Bury, "Ceremonial Book," 438-439; Vogt, I, *Commentaire*, xviii-xix.

<sup>33</sup> Bury, "Ceremonial Book," 212-213.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 211-212. Both cc. 96 (87) and 97 (88) appear to have been added to the text during the reign of Nicephorus II Phocas. C. 96 (87) describes his proclamation (ἀναγορεύσεις) and refers to him as "ὁ εὐσεβῆς καὶ φιλόχριστος βασιλεύς Νικηφόρος", *De Cer.*, I, Reiske, 434. This, Bury has pointed out, dates the chapter to the reign of Nicephorus II (co-emperor 963-969) and therefore after the original compilation of the *Book of Ceremonies*. Likewise c. 97 (88) must be dated after the reign of Constantine VII as it describes the promotion of a *proedros*, an office first instituted in the reign of Nicephorus II.

should be followed on a variety of ceremonial occasions. These fall into two distinct groups. The first 37 chapters describe the involvement of the imperial cortege in religious ceremonies. It begins with a general protocol for the procession of the Emperor from the Great Palace to Hagia Sophia for the celebration of the liturgy on the major feast days of the liturgical calendar.<sup>36</sup> The remaining chapters give details of the specific behaviour proper to particular religious feasts. Both the major festivals, to which many chapters are dedicated, expanding on the information contained in chapter one, and more minor ones, such as certain saints' days, are represented. Although there is evidence that the order of feasts has been corrupted in the Leipzig manuscript,<sup>37</sup> these chapters provide a comprehensive account of imperial participation in the religious celebrations of Constantinople. Their sheer number bears witness to the extensive involvement of the imperial court in the devotional life of the capital, attending services both at the cathedral and at many other churches in the city and also marking a number of occasions with ceremonies within the Great Palace itself (see TABLE 3). We should expect to find within them, therefore, much that can illuminate our understanding of the way in which the political establishment - for the *De Ceremoniis* is exclusively concerned with the behaviour of the Emperor and his court and generally passes over those parts of the rituals for which the ecclesiastical authorities were responsible - integrated its own ceremonial into that of the Church.

After the religious ceremonies, cc. 47 (38)-82 (73) describe secular ceremonies. Here are found protocols pertaining to a wide variety of occasions. It includes prescriptions for those events for which one would anticipate ceremonial activity, for example imperial coronation, marriage and death, and also for more regularly occurring moments, such as receptions in the Great Palace along with several protocols to be followed on the promotion of individuals to office and dignity within the court. In addition, the ritual surrounding the Emperor's attendance at the Hippodrome races in the great arena at Constantinople is given. In general terms, one can see that these secular ceremonies - by which one should understand those observed on occasions other than devotional feasts,

---

<sup>36</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 1, Reiske, 5-35; Vogt, I, 3-28.

<sup>37</sup> See below, 41-44.

for they each contain religious elements - encompass two types. Firstly, we have those that describe the conference of status, of which imperial coronation is the ultimate, though, with the ceremonies surrounding court promotion, we should expect to find crucial evidence about the dissemination of authority through the system. Secondly, the many celebratory occasions in which the Emperor comes together with the dignitaries of the court within the palace or processes to the Hippodrome to join with the people of Constantinople at the races.

The final chapters, 83 (72)-92 (83), do not constitute a separate order of ceremonies, but a variety of information pertinent to different occasions, which can be used to supplement that found elsewhere in the document.

It has already become clear that the first 83 chapters of the *Book of Ceremonies* contain a wealth of ceremonial descriptions. Although there is evidence, especially in the order of the religious ceremonies, that the arrangement of the chapters may have been altered in the Leipzig manuscript and at numerous points a clear reading of their contents is hampered both by the use of a highly specialised language and discontinuities and confusions within the text, this portion of the manuscript does display something of the ordered structure that Constantine VII clearly intended for his codification. Each ceremony is presented without reference to dates or the identity of individual office holders and participants in a standard formula: "Ὅσα δεῖ παραφυλάττειν. They are, in other words, offered as timeless rites, divorced from a historical context. It is these first 83 chapters, evidently designed to fulfil the objectives set out in the preface to the *Book of Ceremonies*, to provide a guide for the organisation of state ceremonies in tenth-century Constantinople and a model for their conduct thereafter, that are the subject of this study.

A cursory examination of cc. 1-92 (83) of the *De Ceremoniis* has revealed the variety of ceremonial prescriptions Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus incorporated into his treatise. The number of prescriptions and the diversity of ceremonial occasions represented within them in themselves point to the importance of the document. However, it has been

suggested, above, that they have not received the attention that they seem to warrant. That the ceremonial book is an invaluable document for understanding the Middle Byzantine court is often stated but has rarely led to an attempt to thoroughly examine its contents. Court culture is a subject that has received a great deal of attention in recent scholarship, especially in the period in which the *Book of Ceremonies* was compiled, at the beginning of what has been described as “the golden age of Byzantine court life.”<sup>38</sup> Given the current interest in matters associated with the Byzantine court, it is surprising to find that the prescriptive descriptions of *Book of Ceremonies*, so obviously pertinent to the subject, have received relatively little attention. There is no modern edition of the text and no English translation. Nor has there been any recent attempt to examine this portion of the document as a composite unit or to describe the information contained therein.

The reason behind this apparent neglect is undoubtedly connected with the haphazard arrangement of the treatise as a whole and the often repetitive nature of the contents of these prescriptive chapters. Arnold Toynbee - who typifies a dismissive attitude to imperial ceremonies, which he describes as “useless and silly” when not “positively ludicrous”,<sup>39</sup> with which few would now concur - wrote of the *De Ceremoniis*:

The set of formulae... are repeated so remorselessly that the reiteration produces a hypnotic effect on the reader. How much more potent must have been the effect on the actors, and, above all, on... the Emperor himself. Unless this nonsense happened to be congenial to an Emperor's temperament, he was bound to be irked by it, and, if he had any incompatible personal bent, he was bound to repine and - in an extreme case of uncongeniality - bound to revolt.<sup>40</sup>

However, although it is certainly true that the *Book of Ceremonies* is far from an engaging read and the repetition that characterises many of its chapters is off-putting, this aspect of the document cannot, especially given the heightened sensitivity of recent scholars to the subject of imperial ritual, account for the lack of attention paid to it.

To explain this, one must look beyond the obvious difficulties of the text to the nature of the information it contains. For, where recent scholars have highlighted the fluid nature

---

<sup>38</sup> Maguire, *Court Culture*, vii.

<sup>39</sup> Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World*, 190-191

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

of Byzantine imperial ceremonial and the potential for extensive variation within the apparently rigid framework of ceremonial prescriptions, the *Book of Ceremonies* fosters - and is designed to foster - the opposite impression. Within its pages the ceremonies are recorded divorced from historical contexts, any references to the identity of their participants has been removed, no dates are given and so the protocols do not fall easily into a framework of narrative history. Scholars are able to point forward to the *Book of Ceremonies* to highlight the intensification of certain ritual developments into the Middle Byzantine period. However, because of the ahistorical presentation of the ceremonies, many of which show signs that they were drawn up from an amalgamation of different sources, they cannot be fully integrated into examinations of the development of ceremonial types in the way in which narrative descriptions can.

Constantine VII expressly drew his information from a variety of sources from different periods of Byzantine history and he deliberately attempted to disguise the changing nature of ceremonial, the reality of which has been a particular concern in studies of late Roman and Byzantine ritual. Despite the relative clarity of the first 83 chapters of the *Book of Ceremonies*, therefore, the information they contain is of a particular kind, one that precludes them from being absorbed into a clear exposition of the development of any single ceremony, but which obviously is important in the formulation of an understanding of Byzantine public life at the time of its compilation. It is, therefore, not immediately obvious in what manner the information presented in this portion of Constantine VII's treatise should be handled and it is evident that it requires a rather different approach than the ceremonies found in traditional narrative sources.

Because the protocols were put together, in part, from written records of actual ceremonial performances, it is possible, from clues within the various descriptions, to attempt to assign them dates. In this way, one might be able to bypass the problems associated with the ceremonies as they appear within the treatise by reintegrating them into a historical framework. Many scholars have adopted this approach. For example, Vogt, in his commentary on Book I of the *Book of Ceremonies* devotes a great deal of time to suggesting particular administrations for the ceremonies, using, for example, the

titles of office they contain and the number of Emperors specified. However, as Vogt himself admits, such attempts are “aussi tentantes que séduisantes, en vérité, mais singulièrement périlleuses et, peut-être bien, passablement décevantes.”<sup>41</sup> No completely satisfactory conclusions have emerged from this approach, for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the vast majority of chapters seem to have been drawn up from numerous sources, emanating from different administrations. They frequently switch, for example, without warning or explanation, from describing the involvement of a single Emperor to that of more than one. Such inconsistencies demonstrate that Constantine VII has not been entirely successful in stripping the ceremonies of their associations with particular past performances. Nonetheless, the *Book of Ceremonies* is not a history. To begin to try to extract from the document the exact, or even approximate, dates of the ceremonies Constantine used to create his descriptions, although interesting with regard to his possible sources, is to embark on a difficult, if not impossible task. Moreover, it is one that fails to appreciate the true significance of the treatise. For the ceremonies gathered together within its pages were expressly intended to provide a guide for contemporary and future practice and, although Constantine VII can in many cases be judged to have failed to render them timeless, they are, nonetheless, primarily interesting for what light they shed on the concerns of the tenth-century administration for the ceremonies that took place at the Constantinopolitan court.

An alternative approach, therefore, might be to take the document as a simple record of the ceremonies as they were conducted in the tenth century. They were compiled for contemporary use and, therefore, invite the reader to view them as a straightforward delineation of the ceremonial life of the Middle Byzantine court. However, the quantity of ceremonies brings into doubt whether every one would have been observed in a single administration. Some make specific reference to change, for example the chapter on the ceremony for the Feast of Orthodoxy contains two protocols, one observed in former times, one more recent.<sup>42</sup> Other ceremonies reveal themselves to be extracted from earlier rites and cannot have been performed, as they appear, in the tenth century. For example,

---

<sup>41</sup> Vogt, II, *Commentaire*, 1-2.

<sup>42</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 37 (28), Reiske, 156-160; Vogt, I, 145-148.

the receptions that are described as taking place in the courtyards, or *phialae*, of the factions, which had been destroyed during the reign of Leo VI.<sup>43</sup> Constantine himself, in his preface to Book I, claims that the ceremonies had come to be neglected. Although the veracity of this claim is questionable, it indicates that the ceremonies were not invested with a uniform degree of importance under different regimes. Moreover, that Constantine had to examine ancient documents to compile his treatise is a strong indication that the ceremonies recorded there are not direct reflections of contemporary practice. It is clear that the *Book of Ceremonies* is not a simple codification. Constantine's endeavour to present an impression of immutable rites is not successful. The very attempt to fix the protocols points to their inherent fluidity and reveals the treatise to be more than a guide, or a straightforward descriptive work.

If there are questions around how far the *Book of Ceremonies* can be regarded as an account of the ceremonies as they were in fact observed, that Constantine genuinely intended his treatise to provide a practical guide for the organisers of imperial ritual is certain. He stated as much in his preface and added that, to the end that they may be easily understood, the ceremonies will be presented in clear, unaffected language.<sup>44</sup> The standard formula under which each prescription occurs and the removal of any references to particular participants reinforce the impression that Constantine's intention that the ceremonies should be reproduced is genuine. Whether or not they were ever reproduced, the types of behaviour they describe must be regarded as appropriate to the imperial court in Constantine's day. Although it would be a mistake to interpret the descriptions contained in the *Book of Ceremonies* as an unadulterated record of imperial ceremonial, therefore, one should not be tempted to dismiss them as a source for the way in which ceremonies in fact took place. Whilst always being aware that Constantine VII's treatise is not primarily descriptive, that it has a polemical aspect that should not be overlooked, he neither invented the itineraries in a vacuum, nor presented behaviour that would have been unfamiliar to those who consulted it.

---

<sup>43</sup> For example, *De Cer.*, I, 73 (64), Reiske, 284-293; Vogt, II, 94-104. The destruction of the *phialae* under Basil I is described in *Theoph. Cont.*, V, 90, 336.

<sup>44</sup> *De Cer.*, I, Reiske, 5; Vogt, I, 2.

One of the principal difficulties encountered in any analysis of Byzantine cultural history, including the history of ceremony, is the determination of the Byzantine elite to present its ideology and political system as an unchanging entity. This is demonstrably counter to the facts of the Empire's history, in the realm of ceremony as much as any other aspect of Byzantine civilisation. The judgement on Byzantium as an essentially stagnant, derivative culture has long been dismissed.<sup>45</sup> However, it is one that the *Book of Ceremonies* appears fully to endorse. By gathering together his ceremonies Constantine was engaged in more than a descriptive, practical enterprise; he was attempting to fix the ceremonies into immutable patterns. It has been suggested, above, that he was far from successful in removing the historical references from the rituals. However, the polemical dimension of the treatise should not be ignored.

The *Book of Ceremonies* presents a picture of a permanently fixed, enduring Byzantine ritual that can be revived for the tenth century and preserved thereafter. The ceremonies it contains are of a very different character from the descriptions of particular occasions that are found in narrative sources. This presents particular difficulties of analysis but it also offers a unique opportunity to examine the idealised vision of the Byzantine authorities for the ritual behaviour of the court, in which its internal and external relations, ideology and politics are revealed in a form that is certainly not divorced from the realities of government and ceremony, but in which the extensive possibilities for deviation from carefully arranged patterns of behaviour - which inevitably arise when real people and circumstances impose themselves on a model transferred from the theoretical framework of written prescription to the unpredictable arena of performance - are constrained.

Where descriptions from narrative sources tend to note the unusual features of specific performances,<sup>46</sup> in the first 83 chapters of the *De Ceremoniis* we are presented with an attempt to minimise the opportunity for variation by recording a clear delineation of each ceremony. It is impossible to judge the degree to which the treatise succeeded in

---

<sup>45</sup> On the debate over the nature of Byzantine culture and a short bibliography see Cameron, "The construction of court ritual", 106-110.

<sup>46</sup> McCormick, "Analyzing Imperial Ceremonies," 7-8.

regulating state ceremonies. However, just as descriptions of actual events must be viewed in the context of the circumstances in which they took place, so Constantine's document must be placed within the framework of the period in which it was compiled. For, although we have seen that Constantine himself claimed that his treatise constituted a straightforward record of traditional practice, it will be argued here that the protocols he set down are products of their time, that the prescriptive chapters of the *Book of Ceremonies* offer a unique insight into the preoccupations of the tenth-century authorities precisely because the behaviour they prescribe and the symbols they employ were pertinent to contemporary circumstances.

The Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus belonged to the Macedonian dynasty, founded by his grandfather Basil I, which ruled over a period of Byzantine history during which the Empire was arguably at the height of its power and prestige. These years were characterised by a level of economic and political stability, military success and cultural and scholarly productivity that had been unknown for centuries. This "golden age" of Byzantine civilisation came at the apex of a period of profound recovery and it is in the context of that recovery that the culture for which the ceremonial book was compiled must be understood. It has been suggested, above, that the *Book of Ceremonies* was produced at a time when the world of late antiquity had given way to that of Byzantium proper. The process of transition had been long and complex and it is not within the scope of the present study to provide a comprehensive history of the Empire before the tenth century. However, since it will argue that the ceremonial book is an important source for our understanding not only of the rituals themselves, but of the society in which they took place, it will be helpful to highlight some of the notable features of imperial government as it emerged in the period under discussion and to introduce some of the trends that will be explored and, as it were, provide referential grounding points for the later exploration.

The gravity of the situation faced by the imperial authorities at Constantinople in the seventh and early eighth centuries is sufficiently well known to obviate the need for much elaboration here. Over-expansion of imperial territories under Justinian (527-565) had

undoubtedly put a strain on Byzantine resources and administrative efficacy, although it was the Arab conquests of the 630s and 640s that were to prove devastating. Although it has often been pointed out that the fundamental changes in the economic, administrative and social life that occurred during the so called “dark ages” should not be entirely attributed to the Arab onslaught, for a state whose economy rested almost exclusively on taxation and whose centres of population relied on the produce of local rural agriculture the effects of the loss of large areas of land in the eastern and southern provinces and the continued insecurity of those remaining were profound. The increasingly difficult nature of communications along with temporary and permanent displacements of populations not only disrupted tax collection and agriculture - particularly harmful in areas supporting military garrisons - but also dealt the final blow to the classical cities that for centuries had provided the focus of the political, economic and social life of the Mediterranean world. Equally important, perhaps, were the implications of this situation for the ideology of Empire; an ideology in which the Emperor, as God’s image and vice-gerent on earth, ruled over His chosen people and in which military success reflected and guaranteed the orthodoxy and divine sanction of Empire and Emperor.

The contraction of the Empire was not, of course, confined to the diminution of its physical borders. The years of crisis witnessed a marked downturn in the Byzantine economy, whilst scholarly and artistic activity drew to a virtual standstill, exacerbated by the loss of great centres of learning at Alexandria, Berytus and Jerusalem. Economic and military decline had profound consequences for the capital, whose very survival was threatened by siege, both by joint Avar and Persian armies in 626 and the Arabs from 674-678 and again in 717. Although the walls of Constantinople remained secure throughout the period, it has been suggested that the profundity of the changes to life in the city led to something of a psychological dislocation in its population, by Cyril Mango, who describes eighth-century Constantinople as “a city that lay in ruins and whose inhabitants had lost all feeling of continuity with the past.”<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Cyril Mango, “The Development of Constantinople as an Urban Centre,” in his *Studies on Constantinople* (Hampshire and Vermont, 1993), 117-136, here at 129.

Despite the gravity of the seventh- and eighth-century situation, however, Byzantium did survive. The process of recovery was protracted and complicated. In general terms it can be traced in three stages.<sup>48</sup> In the field of cultural activity, the beginnings of resurgence, aided by the use of the miniscule hand in literature and the intellectual demands of the Iconoclastic controversy, are evident in the late eighth century. Improvements in the economy appear somewhat later, though the building programme of Theophilus (829-842) and the wealth of the imperial treasury at the end of his reign demonstrate that the economic revival was well underway in the early ninth century. Military resurgence took longer still. After generations of focussing on the defence of the Empire from external attack, in which the campaign of 863 has been identified as a turning point in the liberation of Asia Minor from Arab raids, it was not until the reign of Basil I that the defeat of the Paulicians “permanently altered the military balance with the Abbasid Caliphate in the empire’s favour.”<sup>49</sup>

When Constantine VII’s grandfather, Basil I, seized power in 867, therefore, the outlook for Byzantium was more positive than it had been for many years and during his reign decisive victories marked the beginnings of military resurgence that would be built upon over subsequent administrations. By the end of the reign of the last Macedonian Emperor, Basil II (976-1025), Byzantine fortunes had undergone dramatic improvement. A large proportion of lost territories had been returned to Byzantine control, its borders were relatively secure, gold reserves in the state treasuries were high and the political and ecclesiastical influence of the Empire extended far beyond its physical borders. Although the revival of the Empire, particularly its military successes and territorial expansion is most evident at the turn of the twelfth century, it was, above all, the developments that enabled the Empire to survive the crises of the seventh century that provided the foundations of the structures on which this later Empire flourished. Those structures emerged as the transition of the Empire was completed in the late eighth and ninth centuries and supported a system that was quite different - in terms both of political organisation and ideological and cultural identity - from the late antique, East Roman

---

<sup>48</sup> See Warren Treadgold, “The Revival of Byzantine Learning,” *AHR* 81 (1979), 1245-1266.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 1249.

Empire of Justinian. What emerged was the Greek-speaking, Orthodox, highly centralised Middle Byzantine State.

Over half a century ago Norman Baynes observed the centralisation that characterised the Byzantine world and differentiated it from early medieval Western states: “here... stands a highly centralized government - a government not merely centralized in administration, but centralized - obviously, unmistakably - in one single city, Constantinople.”<sup>50</sup> This centralisation and the importance of Constantinople as its focus are testified in the ceremonies laid down by Constantine VII, all of which take place in the city. They describe the Emperor’s movement through the Great Palace and its environs, where he comes into contact with monuments and symbols that serve to establish his rule within a framework of imperial legitimacy. In other words, the ceremonies, both by virtue of their limited spatial aspect and the behaviour that takes place within it, confirm the dominance of Constantinople as the imperial city *par excellence*, in which the disposition of objects, monuments and buildings - themselves both characteristically urban and imperial - are, as it were, integrated into a series of narratives which define the authority of the individual Emperor by absorbing his actions into a model governed by carefully constructed associations with concepts pertaining to imperial authority. At the same time, the ceremonial book displays a concern with the regulation of the court resident at the Byzantine capital, whose members participate in the ceremonies in a rigorously controlled manner. The importance of the court as a political institution is, of course, linked to the notion of a government centralised at Constantinople. Both are characteristic, above all, of the East Roman Empire in its Middle Byzantine manifestation. For at this time, when, as we have said, the Empire was emerging from a period of profound transition, a number of factors contributed to a concentration of power in the capital and an increasingly court-centred political system.

The process of centralisation to which the ceremonial book bears witness is characterised by two parallel developments. On one hand, alterations in the political administration of

---

<sup>50</sup> Norman Baynes, “The Byzantine State,” delivered as one of the Grey Lectures in Cambridge on 20 February 1935, published in his *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* (Connecticut, 1974), 47-66, here at 47.

the Empire clearly differentiate the late antique from the Middle Byzantine system.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, we find a process by which the Emperors came to align themselves with the urban identity of the capital, which emerges not only as the organisational centre of the Empire but also as the focus of its ideology and cultural identity.

The most obvious difference between the Early and Middle Byzantine Empire lies in the field of provincial administration. Due to the poverty of literary sources for the period, the exact history of the dissolution of the old praetorian prefectures and their replacement by military themes is far from clear, although the idea of a conscious overhaul under Heraclius has given way to that of a more organic development in which the organisation of army corps for the defence of Asia Minor is considered crucial.<sup>52</sup> The original four themes - the *Opsikion*, *Anatolikon*, *Armeniakon* and *Thrakesion* - seem to have emerged due to the stationing of troops (*themata*) in the provinces which gradually gave to those areas, which appear to correspond to existing provincial boundaries, a territorial identity. In subsequent years the theme system was consolidated throughout the Empire. In each theme military and civil authority was united in the person of the *strategos*, who was appointed by and directly responsible to the Emperor. At the same time, the huge departments of state at Constantinople, the *res privatae* and the *sacrae largitiones*, disappeared and were replaced by many smaller offices, of equal status, which now undertook the administration of the Empire. This later system was marked by a massive increase in the number of officials directly responsible to the Emperor, representing a fundamental shift from a hierarchical structure, in which a few individuals held high offices, with authority over the remaining, subordinate, officials to one in which authority was distributed widely, to individuals with limited areas of competence, who answered directly to the Emperor.

As with many features of the society that emerged from the Byzantine dark age, we should not imagine that the seventh-century crisis fell on an unchanged Roman culture. As John Haldon has observed, the cities of the Empire were undergoing a process of

---

<sup>51</sup> On the Middle Byzantine administration see Bury, *Administrative System*.

<sup>52</sup> On administrative change see, John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* (Cambridge, 1990), 173-253.

change evident before the onset of Arab raiding. Already in the early seventh century a decline in the curial order and a parallel increase in the involvement of centrally appointed officials combined to reveal the changing function of the late antique city. No longer “self-governing, economically independent, local fiscal and administrative agencies acting for the state and on their own behalf” they emerge “dependent urban centres with no real role in the imperial fiscal administration and no autonomous economic existence.”<sup>53</sup> The Arab conquests acted as a violent catalyst to this process. Cut off from the provinces, Constantinople naturally became the focus of government and the consolidation of the theme system meant that “now the whole territory of the Empire became, so to speak, a frontier zone.”<sup>54</sup> Ihor Ševčenko has demonstrated that in the Middle Byzantine age, not only was the territory beyond Constantinople a “frontier zone” with regard to its administration from Constantinople, but was also cut off culturally and psychologically, its inhabitants showing little knowledge of or concern with life at the capital.<sup>55</sup> What is significant for our purposes is that the later administrative system concentrated responsibility for the government of the Empire not only on Constantinople but also on the court.

The creation of the new administration has been described as “a reshuffling of tasks, so that they are all subject to a fundamentally civil administration based on the court.”<sup>56</sup> Both Haldon and Louth have pointed to the position of the *sakellarios* as indicative of the nature of the changes involved.<sup>57</sup> In the early Byzantine period this official, as head of the *sakellion*, had been the Emperor’s personal treasurer. By virtue of its physical proximity to the Emperor - he was part of the staff of the imperial bedchamber (*sacrum cubiculum*) - the office became increasingly important, evidence for which emerges in the later sixth and seventh centuries when there is a clear expansion of his fiscal responsibilities. By the middle of the eighth century he was one of the most important officials at court, with

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>54</sup> Cyril Mango, *Byzantium, the Empire of New Rome* (London, 1980), 46.

<sup>55</sup> Ihor Ševčenko, “Constantinople Viewed from the Eastern Provinces in the Middle Byzantine Period,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* III/IV (1979-80), part 2, 712-747.

<sup>56</sup> Andrew Louth, in his chapter on the Byzantine world in the seventh century from the forthcoming *New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 1, ed., Paul Fouracre.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. and Haldon, *Seventh Century*, 183-186.

authority over all the financial ministries.<sup>58</sup> Bury has pointed to the significance of the development by the ninth century of an office with control over the various bureaux dealing with finance and revenue.<sup>59</sup> That it was the Emperor's personal treasurer who came to undertake such a role indicates the growing importance in the Middle Byzantine system of offices close to the Emperor. Similar trends can be seen in the development of other departments and the prominence of officials of the cubiculum. The *parakoimomenos* or grand chamberlain; the *protovestarios*, head of the imperial wardrobe; and ὁ ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης, the chief of the imperial table all enjoyed an expansion of their tasks in the Middle Byzantine administration. This prominence, like the rise of the *sakellarios*, bears witness to the fact that the civil administration of the Empire was now centred on the capital and the palace. Figures whose influence might not have previously extended beyond the palace walls, who had been charged with palatine administration and care for the person of the Emperor, now headed departments of state charged with the administration of the Empire.

It has been noted that one of the preoccupations of the imperial authorities who put together the ceremonial book is a strict regulation of the behaviour of the court. Although the term senate (σύγκλητος) is frequently used in the ceremonial book, this is always in the context of the highest dignitaries of the court system,<sup>60</sup> rather than indicating a senatorial political body. It is important to be aware that at the time of its compilation the individuals whose conduct is so carefully controlled in the *Book of Ceremonies* were not simply minions of the Emperor, but many were his trusted officials with real political status and responsibility.<sup>61</sup> The Great Palace and the court centred there were where the great decisions of state took place. Somewhere in the region of two thousand men made up the court, access to which and promotion within which were relatively open and meritocratic.<sup>62</sup> The aristocratic families that would come to dominate the Byzantine elite

---

<sup>58</sup> On the history of the *sakellarios* see *ibid.* and Bury, *Administrative System*, 84-86.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>60</sup> The *Kletorologion* of Philotheus designates six titles of dignity as senatorial. See *ibid.*, 22-23.

<sup>61</sup> Although the titles at court could describe dignity unattached to office (αἱ διὰ βραβείων ἀξίαι) as well as those who carried out official duties (αἱ διὰ λόγου ἀξίαι).

<sup>62</sup> On the size of the Middle Byzantine court see Alexander P. Kazhdan and Michael McCormick, "The Social World of the Byzantine Court," in Maguire, *Court Culture*, 167-197 at 175-176. Constantine

in the eleventh and twelfth centuries had not yet been established.<sup>63</sup> Here, access to advancement lay firmly in the hands of the Emperor, both status and wealth came from service to the state and not from commercial activity and service to the state required a position at court.

The founder of the Macedonian dynasty, Basil I, had himself come from humble origins.<sup>64</sup> Arriving in Constantinople, he had been taken into service as a groom in the household of a member of the Empress's family, thereby gaining peripheral access to the court. Exactly how he first attracted the attention of the Emperor, Michael III, is unclear, though from two accounts we hear that it was by virtue of his physical strength.<sup>65</sup> What is undeniable is the swiftness with which he consolidated his position within the court and the ruthlessness with which he appropriated the imperial title. Having entered the palace he became a favourite of the Emperor and when, on the insistence of the Caesar, Bardas, the position of grand chamberlain (*parakoimomenos*) became vacant Basil received the appointment. Later, en route to Crete with an expeditionary force, responding to orders from the Emperor, Basil murdered Bardas amongst rumours of a plot by the Caesar and on their return to Constantinople was himself appointed co-emperor. In 867 he had Michael murdered and took the reigns of government for himself.

Basil's early career demonstrates the opportunity for advancement that existed within the palace and the leverage that could be gained by procuring the affections of the Emperor. It also highlights the vulnerability of the Byzantine throne. Under the Macedonians the notion of hereditary succession was greatly promoted, but it would never be officially

---

Porphyrogenitus remarks on the social mobility of Constantinople: *Vita Basilii*, 221. On upward mobility within the court see Kazhdan and McCormick, op. cit., 168-172.

<sup>63</sup> Kazhdan, "On the Emergence of an Aristocracy in Byzantine Society from the Eighth to the Twelfth Century," *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 11 (1968), 52-53.

<sup>64</sup> The history of the Emperor Basil I is shrouded in confusion, due to the attempts of Constantine VII to whiten his reputation both through the works he commissioned on him by Genesius and the anonymous author of books I-IV of *Theophanes Continuatus* and his own hagiography, the *Vita Basilii*. On the failure of his attempts to obscure the facts of his grandfather's life see Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World*, 582-598. On the rise of Basil, I here follow Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (California, 1997), 453-455.

<sup>65</sup> Genesius tells us that Basil came to prominence by beating a fearsome Bulgar in a wrestling match. The Continuator of Theophanes adds an episode in which Michael III was given an unbroken horse which all

recognised. There was no single constitutional way of becoming Emperor. Moreover, although military usurpation might still take place, it was from the ranks of courtiers that pretenders to the throne might emerge. The potential threat of ambitious men occupying positions close to the Emperor and using them as a platform to launch attempts on the imperial title was recognised, and in theory checked, by restricting their occupation to eunuchs who were precluded from the Byzantine throne. Michael III would have been wise to adhere to that restriction. Indeed Basil himself, no doubt realising this potential threat, once he had seized the throne, never appointed a *parakoimomenos*, eunuch or otherwise.<sup>66</sup>

On one hand, the centralisation of government at the palace served to increase the authority of the Emperor at its head: “The court was the human group physically closest to the emperor, a social world in which the emperor’s household and his government overlapped, and a social world structured by the emperor’s decisions.”<sup>67</sup> Advancement within the system was dependent on the Emperor. However, because of the inherently precarious character of his position, it was vital that the Emperor carefully managed his control of the palace. The ceremonies of Constantine VII can be seen as part of an attempt by the imperial authorities to strengthen that control, both by creating rituals that preserved and displayed a system in which each participant’s behaviour was dictated and restricted by his position within it and also by reinforcing the Emperor’s own authority by presenting the various symbolic foundations of his legitimacy in a clear and unified manner.

The use of ceremonial in support of the imperial government was not, of course, new in the Middle Byzantine era. Such rituals can be traced back to the Roman Empire. However, a clear intensification of state ritual took place in the late sixth century. Moreover, that intensification represents the burgeoning of a particular type of imperial government and coincided with the development of a specific urban ideology at

---

failed to control until Basil, now employed as groom to the empress’s kinsman, approached. Immediately the horse was quiet and the emperor took Basil into his service.

<sup>66</sup> *De Administrando Imperio*, 244 (Greek text); 245 (English translation).

<sup>67</sup> Kazhdan and McCormick, “The Social World of the Byzantine Court,” 167.

Constantinople.<sup>68</sup> Once again it must be highlighted that the changes that took place were complicated and it is not possible to explore them in any detail here. However, they are crucial to an understanding of the ceremonial book. For it was at this time, as classical learning began to fade and be replaced by alternative guarantees of veracity, that the Emperors at Constantinople came to incorporate, as never before, trends in the urban ideology of the city into their public life.

It is, of course, difficult to analyse trends in devotional practices, which are motivated by more than straightforward social or political concerns. However, the apparent rise in the use of religious icons in the late sixth century must be viewed in the context of contemporary circumstances. Averil Cameron has made a strong case for seeing their increased prominence at this time in terms of the collapse of classical learning and the resultant need for alternative routes to objective truth, which religious imagery came to satisfy.<sup>69</sup> As imperial authority was undermined, initially in the final years of Justinian's rule and further by the Arab onslaught, a growing psychological dependence on religious personalities can be perceived in the population of the Empire as a whole and also of Constantinople in particular. This situation might have led to a growing division between the popular consciousness and the imperial authorities. However, those authorities responded by promoting trends in the devotional life of the people and adopting the religious personalities to whom they were turning as their own. This is most clearly seen in the emergence of the notion of the Theotokos as the protector of Constantinople, which was given a direct relevance during the defence of the city from enemy siege, particularly in 626, when she appeared to the people at the walls of the city, armed against the enemy and encouraging the imperial forces.<sup>70</sup> Significantly, it was through ceremonial that the Emperor was seen to associate himself with the emerging urban ideology:

The sixth-century emperors lent their active patronage to religious developments already underway; they were quick to ally icons with imperial ceremony, and to foster the emergence of the Virgin as the protectress of Constantinople by making her their own protectress too. Their own

---

<sup>68</sup> Averil Cameron, "Images of Authority: Elites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium," *Past and Present* 84 (1979), 3-35.

<sup>69</sup> Idem., "The Language of Images: The Rise of Icons and Christian Representation," in D. Wood, ed., "The Church and the Arts," *Studies in Church History* 28 (Oxford, 1992), 1-42.

<sup>70</sup> See Cameron, "Images of Authority," 5-6.

ceremonial increased in impact and complexity, and set the imperial players in a scenario ever more religious in tone. By means of his ceremonial, with its fixed calendar of progresses through the city, now probably for the first time being regularized, the emperor took possession of his city, and the urban religious symbols which he now promoted reinforced his position at its head.<sup>71</sup>

Cameron suggests that this adoption of popular, urban cultural tastes by the Byzantine authorities played a crucial part in their survival faced with the ever more desperate situation of the seventh and eighth centuries. For our purposes it is important to note that as the Empire emerged from the period of crisis there was no diminishment in the imperial use of Christian symbols in support of the political regime. The number and variety of liturgical feasts and the highly religious tone of every ritual prescribed in the ceremonial book indicate the degree to which the tenth-century Emperors drew on their close association with religious figures in their ceremonial life. The integration of imperial ideology with the notion of divine sanction, first promoted in a self-conscious manner at the end of the sixth-century, had now become so firmly rooted in the thought-world of the Emperors at Constantinople that there is no situation in which the Emperor's appearance is divorced from references to the divine sources of his authority.

Decline in imperial authority and psychological dislocation, preceded by the loss of traditional learning and exacerbated by continued uncertainty with the upheavals of the Arab invasions, were not resolved without a struggle. The years of crisis had challenged the most fundamental bases of the East Roman thought world, undermining the long-held conviction in the universal dominion and eternal victory of the Emperor, the divine sanction of his rule and the status of his subjects as God's chosen people. Byzantium would never regain the expanse of its Justinianic territories, Rome, its ideological predecessor, was increasingly distant and a new power, the Frankish Empire and, after its tenth-century decline, a number of small states and principalities were filling the gap left by an ever more Eastern European Byzantium. In both political and ecclesiastical terms Byzantium was losing its influence in the West. Moreover, during this period, it was clear that the Muslim Empire to the east, which dwarfed its western neighbour, was to be a permanent fixture in the emerging configuration of Medieval Europe.

---

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 4-5.

The most disruptive response to the situation faced by the Byzantine authorities as they emerged from the dark-age crisis and the most important with regard to the development of its culture was the Iconoclastic controversy, in which many of the tensions of the Byzantine world as it began to come to terms with its recent failures are crystallised.<sup>72</sup> Once again, it is important to be careful when examining religious matters and it is only possible, here, to give a brief account of some of the issues involved. However, the imperial ban on figurative religious images from 726 to 787 and again from 815 to 843 quite clearly involved an attempt to impose imperial control on the devotional life of the Empire.<sup>73</sup> Although one must not dismiss the possibility of a genuinely held conviction that the idolatrous use of icons might be responsible for the dismal failures of the Empire,<sup>74</sup> that it was icons, by which men and women might gain direct access to higher realms of authority which the Iconoclast Emperors targeted, had profound implications.

In respect of the understanding of imperial rule in the post-Iconoclast Empire, the controversy and its resolution are fundamental reference points. For the debate over religious iconography involved crucial questions about the way in which Byzantine society might approach the objects of its religious devotion, the Emperor's position

---

<sup>72</sup> The literature on Byzantine Iconoclasm is vast. Iconodule arguments are comprehensively set out in John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images*, D. Anderson, trans., (New York, 1980) and Theodore the Studite, *On the Holy Icons*, C. P. Roth, trans., (New York, 1981). The sixth session of the seventh ecumenical council, Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliarum nova et amplissima Collectio*, published in 31 vols. (Florence, 1785-1798), vol. XIII:204A-380E, is translated in Sahas, *Icon and Logos: Sources in Eighth-Century Iconoclasm* (Toronto, 1988) on which see also A. Giakalis, *Images of the Divine: the Theology of Icons at the Seventh Ecumenical Council* (Leiden, 1994). The Definition of the Iconoclastic council of 815, Paul J. Alexander, ed. and trans., appears in his "The Iconoclastic Council of St Sophia (815) and its Definition," *DOP* 7 (1953), 58-60 and on Nicephorus' *Antirrheticus adv. Iconomachos* see M-J. Mondzain-Baudinet, *Nicéphore, Discours Contre les Iconoclastes* (Paris, 1989), which contains an edition of the text along with French translation and notes. Some notable secondary works are: S. Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Leo III* (Louvain, 1973) and *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Constantine V* (Louvain, 1977); Paul J. Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople: Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 1958); J. Bryer and J. Herrin, eds. *Iconoclasm* (Birmingham, 1977).

<sup>73</sup> On the social and political background to the controversy see J. Haldon, "Some Remarks on the Background to the Iconoclastic Controversy," *BS*, xxxviii (1977) and, in particular, Peter Brown, "A Dark Age Crisis: Aspects of the Iconoclastic Controversy," *EHR* lxxxviii (1973), 1-34.

<sup>74</sup> Both Nicephorus and Theophanes identify the earthquake in the Aegean in 726, which he interpreted as a clear sign of divine displeasure, as Leo III's immediate motivation for turning against the icons: *Nikephorus of Constantinople: Short History* text, translation and commentary by Cyril Mango (Washington, D. C., 1990), 129; Theophanes, *Chronicle*, De Boor, ed., 446, Turtledove, trans., (Philadelphia, 1982), 97.

within the Church, the relationship between imperial and ecclesiastical authority and, in a wider sense, the nature of the links between the Empire and its traditional past.

Firstly, the controversy was primarily religious. Although the arguments over the legitimacy of figurative religious art developed over the years, shifting from a simple charge of idolatry from the Iconoclasts to more complex Christological objections, the ultimate achievement of the crisis was to force both sides in the argument to examine and define the exact status and function of the icon. Religious images had existed from the beginning of the Empire but had not been the subject of intellectual analysis.<sup>75</sup> What emerged with the final defeat of the Iconoclasts in 843 was a theory of imagery that confirmed the importance of the religious image as a direct vehicle for access to the personality imaged and, therefore, not only involved a defence of the existence of icons but also their veneration. This produced a heightened sensitivity to religious imagery and a concern to reflect the position of divine personalities in the arrangement of their pictorial representations. Furthermore, this officially sanctioned theory opened up the possibilities of a powerful use of religious images by the imperial authorities, whose relation to heavenly agents could be presented not only in terms of a symbolic association but in the establishment of relations that were understood to confirm reality.

The potential for integrating religious imagery in the display of the Emperor was seized upon enthusiastically by post-Iconoclastic administrations. In particular, one might note the imperial art produced under Basil I, in which religious and imperial iconography are brought together with a tangible awareness of their propagandist possibilities, both for the Emperor himself and his offspring.<sup>76</sup> After 843, subsequent administrations embarked on decorative schemes within the Great Palace and the churches of the capital. Although the decoration of the buildings in which the ceremonies take place are rarely referred to in the *Book of Ceremonies* they must have contributed to their effect. Moreover, whilst we have seen that icons had been brought into imperial display from the sixth century, in the ceremonies of Constantine VII the religious images with which the Emperor can be seen

---

<sup>75</sup> For this reason the literary support the Iconoclasts gathered in support of icons was almost exclusively produced in the context of the Son as an image of the Father and not a debate over pictorial representations.

<sup>76</sup> See below, 64-65.

to interact had received a particular interpretation during the debate of the eighth and ninth centuries, in the light of which such interaction must be interpreted. On one hand, therefore, the use of religious symbolism in the tenth-century ceremonial book represents the continuance and intensification of methods of imperial display developed in the sixth century. However, that development had not progressed smoothly and the disruption in the production and use of religious art in the eighth and ninth centuries and the resultant development of a particular, officially recognised way of viewing religious images is important for an appreciation of the use of art in tenth-century ritual.

The political dimension of the controversy is at the same time both obvious and complicated. In brief: Iconoclast policy was adopted by a series of Emperors who were particularly concerned with strengthening imperial authority.<sup>77</sup> The possibilities of removing religious practices into the private arena through icons, which may be moveable, naturally aroused the authorities' concern at a time when the public spaces of the Empire, especially in the provinces, were disappearing. Where the public life of the Empire declined, so would the possibilities of promoting the imperial icon. At the same time, the use of unofficial religious imagery gains greater prominence without the balance of official secular ceremonial and iconography. By insisting on the cross, the church and the Eucharist as the only genuine icons, the Iconoclasts can be seen to be forcing the devotional practices of the population into the arena of the institutional Church. Furthermore, the Iconoclast Emperors promoted their own icons instead of those of Christ and the saints: "their own effigies, the relation of their good deeds and their horoscopes held a central position."<sup>78</sup> Therefore, Iconoclasm can be seen as part of an attempt by a series of strong Emperors - the success of the Iconoclasts, especially in the

---

<sup>77</sup> Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Leo III*, 128, observes that the *Eclogia*, whilst making no reference to icons, with its emphasis on the role of the Emperor in the implementation of divine will and "appeal to Old Testament standards of prophetic righteousness, the assertion of the unqualified necessity of fulfilling divine law, with no concession to human weakness, make quite plausible the events that did follow."

<sup>78</sup> Grabar, "Byzantine Architecture and Art," in J. M. Hussey, ed., *The Cambridge Medieval History* vol. 4, pt. 2., 327.

military field, is incontrovertible and was cited by Leo V as his motivation for adopting their policy on icons in 815<sup>79</sup> - to bolster their own authority.

The use of Christian devotional practices as a vehicle for strengthening imperial authority could not pass without objection. For the imposition of imperial directives on the institutional Church meant that the debate over icons demanded a parallel and equally difficult discussion about the Emperor's position within it. The Iconodules unsurprisingly resisted the claims of the imperial authorities to interfere in matters of doctrine.<sup>80</sup>

However, the Emperor, as God's representative on earth and guardian of His people, could reasonably claim some influence in religious matters. Like the icons themselves, the position of the Emperor in relation to the ecclesiastical authorities had remained undefined in the years before the crisis. It should be noted that the decline in imperial authority from the late sixth century was mirrored by a parallel increase in the wealth, power and influence of the Church, in particular the Patriarch of Constantinople, who, after the Arab conquests, was the only Eastern representative of the Pentarchy remaining within the Empire.

The Iconoclastic controversy not only opened up religious divisions within the Empire, but also brought to a head the uneasy balance of power between Emperor and Patriarch. In theory the two stood together at the head of society and were responsible for different aspects of its life, the one charged with care of their bodies, the other with the wellbeing of their souls. In practice, the Patriarch was always under the control of the Emperor, by whom he was appointed and could be removed. However, in the years after the defeat of the Iconoclasts, this question was repeatedly returned to. Theoretically, the two powers were understood as equal and complementary but the attempt to differentiate their areas of competence would remain problematic. It has been noted that the ceremonies of Constantine VII describe a wide variety of religious feasts at which the Emperor's entourage made an appearance and the Patriarch, on more than one occasion, is present at what are termed "secular" events. In the *Book of Ceremonies* state ritual is religious and

---

<sup>79</sup> This is reported in the anonymous chronicle, *Scriptor Incertus de Leone Bardæ*, which is discussed in J. Martin, *A History of the Iconoclastic Controversy* (London, 1930), 160-173.

<sup>80</sup> For example, John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images*, 2, c. 12, 59.

liturgical rites are adapted to accommodate the appearance of the Emperor. In this idealised image of imperial ceremonial, the Emperor and the Patriarch each occupy their spaces, which overlap in carefully conceived ways. However, it should be remembered that the harmonious relationship that is created within the prescriptions was not always maintained in reality. The Iconoclastic controversy was the starkest reminder of the potential for disharmony, although on other occasions too the relationship would become strained.

With the return of the icons the imperial authorities could claim credit for the establishment of religious harmony and promote themselves as defenders of Orthodox faith. Although a change in imperial policy took place this was no capitulation.<sup>81</sup> The defeat of the heresy was publicised as an imperial achievement. On the unveiling of the image of the Theotokos and Child in the apse of Hagia Sophia, the first icon to be erected in the church, the Patriarch, Photius stated:

If one called this day the beginning and day of Orthodoxy...one would not be far wrong. For though the time is short since the pride of the iconoclastic heresy has been reduced to ashes and true religion has spread its light to the ends of the world, fired like a beacon by imperial and divine command, this too is our ornament; for it is the achievement of the same God-loving reign.<sup>82</sup>

Although Photius, elsewhere in his homily, is reluctant to attribute the establishment of Orthodoxy to the imperial powers,<sup>83</sup> he could not deny the role of the Emperors, who he places alongside the Church in carrying out divine instruction. The ceremony for the Feast of Orthodoxy is preserved in two versions in the ceremonial book, which indicate the softening of a certain ambivalence in the Church's attitude in respect of the Emperors' role both as instigators and removers of Iconoclasm.<sup>84</sup> More generally, the ritual behaviour of both the Emperor and the Patriarch in the *De Ceremoniis* displays a deep concern about the correct interaction of the two authorities. This concern was not, of course, created during the years of Iconoclasm but reflected a potential tension between

---

<sup>81</sup> For an alternative interpretation see Thomas Mathews, "Religious Organisation and Church Architecture," in Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium*, 22.

<sup>82</sup> Photius, Homily XVII, in *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople*, English translation, introduction and commentary by Cyril Mango (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1958), 286-296, here at 291.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, esp. at 287, n. 11.

the political and ecclesiastical establishment that could not be overlooked in the light of the years of conflict over icons. The outcome of the crisis, if anything, supported the position of the Emperors who now appropriated the role of defenders of Orthodoxy, to which they gave expression through the erection of numerous pictorial schemes in both imperial and ecclesiastical edifices. By virtue of their role in the reintroduction of icons, the use to which they subsequently put them, and the theoretical understanding of such images confirmed in 843, the imperial office was ultimately strengthened.

In respect of the later ceremonies two more products of the Iconoclastic controversy should be noted. Firstly, the defence of icons rested on a conviction of the primacy of sight over the other senses:

These things [saints' lives] are conveyed both by stories and by pictures, but it is the spectators rather than the hearers who are drawn to emulation... the comprehension that comes about through sight is shown in very fact to be far superior to the learning that penetrates through the ears. Has a man lent his ear to a story? Has his intelligence visualised and drawn to itself what he has heard? Then, after judging it with sober attention, he deposits it in his memory. No less - indeed much greater - is the power of sight. For surely, having somehow through the outpouring and effluence of the optical rays touched and encompassed the object, it too sends the essence of the thing seen on to the mind, letting it be conveyed from there to the memory for the concentration of unflinching knowledge. Has the mind seen?... Then it has effortlessly transmitted the forms to the memory.<sup>85</sup>

In the light of this assertion, it is reasonable to assume that visual media other than holy icons, including imperial images and ceremonies, would have received a boost in the years after Iconoclasm. There is evidence for a sharp decline in the use of panegyric in the ninth and tenth centuries.<sup>86</sup> This is, perhaps, not unconnected to the growth in imperial ceremonies suggested by the composition of the ceremonial book. Both might reflect an increased tendency to focus on the visual display of the Emperor. It is true that the ceremonies include verbal encomia in the form of acclamations, but these do not stand alone, rather they give audible expression to notions already established in the ritual action. It is easy to imagine that the regular performance of ceremonies such as those compiled by Constantine VII, which bring together sight and sound in the comprehension

---

<sup>84</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 37 (28), Reiske, 156-160; Vogt, I, 145-148. J. Gouillard, "Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie," *Travaux et Memoires* 2 (1967), esp. 130-138.

<sup>85</sup> Photius, Homily XVII, 294.

of imperial rule, might have left traditional panegyric, to a certain extent, redundant. Both in the development of a theory of imagery and through the self-conscious preoccupation with communicating the correct messages about the person pictured through their image, in the years after Iconoclasm Byzantine society learnt how to interpret visual objects and to comprehend their meaning in the framework of an understanding which, although perhaps always implied, now received a clarity of expression and urgency it had lacked. When we come to examine the prescriptions of Constantine VII, therefore, we must be aware that the society in which they were produced was familiar with such visual communication and would have been quick to realise the messages with which they were being presented.

Secondly, the resolution in favour of divine images confirmed the validity of unwritten and well as literary support for the Empire's traditional inheritance. We have seen that Constantine VII expressly gathered his information on imperial ceremonies from both written and unwritten sources, which places him as an inheritor of the style of argument used by the Iconodules. Although both sides in the debate concentrated on gathering florilegia of Patristic writings in support of their contrary stances, the Iconodules insisted that the validity of practices need not be supported by literary exhortations, but were confirmed as in keeping with tradition by virtue of their existence.<sup>87</sup> This insistence was validated in the final outcome of the controversy and supported a complex understanding of tradition, in which written prescriptions were not necessary. Paul Alexander has examined the notion of traditional revival in the Middle Byzantine period. He observes that in the *Vita Basilii* - a largely failed attempt by Constantine VII to whitewash the more sordid aspects of his grandfather's career - where Constantine describes Basil's repairs to old buildings the language he uses emphasises the notion of rejuvenation and concludes that "Constantine Porphyrogenitus' view of the imperial mission... is essentially conservative. A good emperor such as Basil functions as the restorer of a splendid past and the strength of capital and empire lies precisely in their potential for

---

<sup>86</sup> George T. Dennis, "Imperial Panegyric: Rhetoric and Reality," in Maguire, *Court Culture*, 131-140 at 135.

<sup>87</sup> For example, John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images*, 3, c. 11, 71.

repeated imperial restorations.”<sup>88</sup> The Iconoclastic controversy had demanded an examination of the sources by which Byzantine society might identify legitimate traditions. We have seen that Constantine regarded his treatise, in part, as a restoration of traditional observances, thus according himself a place in a succession of great, restoring Emperors. At the same time, his use of both written and unwritten material reflects a concern for the dual nature of the Empire’s traditional inheritance that had been developed by the Iconoclasts and verified by their victory.

It is, obviously, problematic to examine a culture through reference to individual events. However, both the dark-age crisis, intensified if not caused by the Arab invasions of the early seventh century, and the Iconoclastic controversy were such monumental upheavals in the life of the Emperors at Constantinople that it is virtually impossible to approach the succeeding period without reference to them. Both events forced fundamental re-evaluation of the political system and, in their own ways, served to shape the Byzantine world as it emerged in the tenth century. Although only a cursory overview of cultural and political developments before the Macedonian era has been possible here, this background will help to give some wider context to the many themes that emerge from an examination of the *Book of Ceremonies*.

It has already been argued that the prescriptive chapters of the ceremonial book cannot be regarded as a direct record of what was actually taking place in tenth-century Constantinople, though the, apparently genuinely, horrified account by Liutprand of Cremona of an imperial procession by Nicephorus, which he witnessed during his embassy to the city in 968, demonstrates that similar rites were observed after Constantine VII. Neither is it possible to ascribe dates to the ceremonies or, by so doing, restore them into an historical framework. Rather, the treatise must be examined as what it is: a detailed account of rituals put together to meet the needs of the tenth-century imperial authorities, as they were understood by the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus. Whether the ceremonies were in fact ever performed as they are

---

<sup>88</sup> Paul Alexander, “The strength of Empire and Capital as Seen Through Byzantine Eyes,” in his *Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire* (London, 1978), 351.

described in the treatise is a matter of little concern. The *Book of Ceremonies* reveals the way in which an Emperor of the Middle Byzantine period hoped to fix the ceremonial life of his successors and is, therefore, of enormous interest for an understanding of imperial ideology in the period.

This is not to suggest that the portrait of imperial ceremonies painted by Constantine VII is an abstraction, divorced from the realities of imperial ritual duties, which had begun to be regularised from the late sixth century. The treatise must certainly be viewed as a source, if not for the exact conduct of ceremonies, for the status and function of ritual at Middle Byzantine Constantinople and the types of behaviour that characterised it.

Without anticipating the conclusions of the thesis, it is to be observed that, at least at one level, the ceremonial prescriptions serve to expose the formal relationships between the Emperors, their court and other participants in the rituals. The *Book of Ceremonies*, therefore, is an important source for our understanding of the structure of the court and relations within the Byzantine body politic. As Averil Cameron has observed, “these court rituals are as likely to tell us about the political relation between the emperor and the office-holding class as that between the emperor and God.”<sup>89</sup> As one examines the various prescriptions in the ceremonial book, one is certainly presented with an image of imperial rule that functions on two levels. On one hand, it guides the court through actions that reveal, albeit in an idealised and formal context, the way in which the palace functioned and its interaction with outside agencies, of which that with the Patriarchal court is of particular interest. On the other hand, it demonstrates the way in which the ideological foundations of imperial government, the relationship, above all, with the Emperor’s divine protectors but also with his imperial predecessors and Biblical prototypes, are incorporated into tenth-century ritual.

The formulation of these two sets of, apparently distinct, relationships, within the ceremonies brings together the disposition of their participants in a drama that combines the exposition of a contemporary political structure with that of an ideological framework, in which the imperial government is consistently exposed in relation to

---

<sup>89</sup> Cameron, “The construction of court ritual,” 122-123.

symbols of its authority, both Christian and traditional. A consideration of Byzantine ritual as a source both of political reality and theory is one that, we have seen, has been adopted in relation to ceremonial development. However, although the *Book of Ceremonies* has been used as a source for various aspects of the political reality of Middle Byzantine Constantinople, in particular the structure of the administrative system in the years after the dark age crisis<sup>90</sup> and the topography of the palace and city,<sup>91</sup> the ceremonies it contains have not been exposed as a group to an analysis that combines an examination of the political hierarchies established within them with discussion of the ideological concerns that inform them.

The period of Macedonian rule, as we have already mentioned, coincided with an upturn in imperial fortunes. These Emperors re-established a strong, autocratic government that had not been achieved, perhaps, since the Iconoclast Emperors. However, with the return of religious imagery and the resurgence of military victory, that government had been put on a new footing. The integration of imperial ideology with popular cultural trends accomplished in the late sixth-century had created a situation in which the urban identity of the population of Constantinople was inextricably linked with the court resident there. It had been developed in response to a perceived weakness in the imperial throne, whose occupants displayed their accord with emerging religious loyalties through increasingly religious public displays at the dawning of a period of fundamental instability, when the continued existence of an imperial government at Constantinople would be brought into question. The *Book of Ceremonies* has much to tell us about the directions in which a newly secure imperial regime would seek to take the ceremonies, drawing on historical records but arranging their contents in such a way that they could be advanced in support of the political authorities in contemporary circumstances, to establish stability and predictability in the ritual performances of the Emperor.

---

<sup>90</sup> For example, Bury, *Administrative System*, makes frequent reference to the ceremonial book.

<sup>91</sup> Ebersolt, *Le Grand Palais*; R. Guiland, "Autour du Livre des Cérémonies: L'Augusteus, la Main d'Or et l'Onopodion," *REB* 6 (1948), 167-180; idem, "Autour du Livre des Cérémonies: Le Grand Palais, les quartiers militaires," *BS* 17 (1956), 58-97.

Narrative accounts of ceremonies provide a wealth of information about the society in which they were produced. Constantine VII's compilation confronts us with an equally important delineation of Byzantine ceremonial norms and ideological concerns. Moreover, it is unique in presenting each protocol within the framework of alternative ceremonial types. It is important to maintain an awareness of how each individual description takes its place within the overall scheme of Constantine's project, which we have seen sought to draw together a number of ceremonies and present them in a single work, to offer a comprehensive account of correct behaviour pertaining to a wide variety of circumstances.

The following study can, perhaps, act only as an introduction to the prescriptive chapters of the *De Ceremoniis*. However, it has broader ambitions: to provide a detailed analysis of the behaviour described there, the lack of which has rendered a use of the *Book of Ceremonies* difficult and obscured its importance in relation to the imperial court at Middle Byzantine Constantinople. Its first objective is to provide a clear and comprehensive account of the ceremonial prescriptions found in the first 83 chapters of the *Book of Ceremonies*, although the number of descriptions is such that a concentration on those rituals that are particularly informative is required. To this end, it is divided into three sections, reflecting the pre-existing order of the chapters under discussion. The first deals with the religious ceremonies (cc. 1-37) and focuses on the general protocol for the Emperor's appearances at Hagia Sophia. The second section is concerned with court promotions and what are termed imperial "rites of passage". Beginning with the latter it will describe each of the occasions contained in the *Book of Ceremonies* that mark particular milestones in the life of an Emperor, including the coronation rite, the ritual surrounding an imperial marriage and the birth of a Porphyrogenitus child. It will then examine the ceremonies for promotions to office and dignity within the court. The final section will examine imperial receptions in the palace and Hippodrome ceremonies.

Each of these categories presents difficulties to the reader. It has already been mentioned that the order of religious ceremonies is in some confusion, whilst the prescriptions for Hippodrome celebrations are in such a state of disarray that at times a clear understanding

of what is taking place is elusive. Nonetheless, in each case it is possible to put together a representative account of the ceremonies that make up the group. However, the principal concern of the thesis is not descriptive. It seeks to explore the way in which the Emperor's behaviour and that of other participants is structured within the ceremonies, to examine the use of symbolic gestures and objects, processional movement and acclamation and, in so doing, to expose the way in which the often dry, repetitive protocols set out by Constantine VII in his treatise in fact illuminate a carefully constructed state ceremonial, which contributed to the stability of the political system both by imposing order on the conduct of its members and by establishing the Emperor at its head.

It will not attempt to assign dates to the ceremonies, although where there are clear indications that the protocols follow an ancient model, this will be highlighted. It is not primarily concerned with the complexities of the structure of the court, although part of its purpose is to establish the way in which relations within the court are reinforced through ritual behaviour and it will, therefore, give some account of the various titles of office that are used. Similarly, it is not concerned to provide a comprehensive description of the topography of the environment in which the ceremonies take place, although, in order to delineate the movement of the various ceremonial players some clarification of the buildings and avenues through which they move is required. Especially where the buildings and their iconography can clarify or inform the actions that take place within them this will be done. Neither will it attempt to give a complete historical background to each individual ceremony. Rather, by examining each type of ceremony, it hopes to demonstrate the way in which the rituals were stage-managed to suit the occasion of their performance while continually reaffirming the overarching realities that confirmed the legitimacy of imperial rule as a general concept and, by extension, that of the individual Emperor.

## **PART 1: RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES**

The first 37 chapters of the *Book of Ceremonies*, as it is preserved in the Leipzig manuscript, are concerned with religious ceremonies in which the imperial court took part.<sup>1</sup> The descriptions they contain give a detailed account of the processional movement of the Emperors through the palace to a number of churches in Constantinople on various dates during in religious calendar. There are, however, notable gaps and discontinuities within the text, suggesting that the original tenth-century codification of the religious ceremonies might have differed considerably from that contained in the Leipzig manuscript (TABLE 1). Before examining the content of the ceremonies it is worth addressing the problems raised by their arrangement in the document and possible solutions to them.

### **The order of the ceremonies and the Byzantine calendar**

The most prominent lacuna occurs after c. 9, on the acclamations for Pentecost. The tenth chapter is not numbered in the text and at the following chapter the numbering jumps to 20. When the tenth chapter is renumbered, therefore, it becomes apparent that nine chapters are missing from the manuscript. However, between c. (10), which gives the ceremony observed on Easter Monday, and c. 20 (11), which provides the ritual for the Tuesday after Easter, there is no hiatus with regards to subject matter. It is difficult to imagine that between the two feasts nine additional chapters could have found a place. Although the numbering of the chapters is intriguing, therefore, it is doubtful whether a major portion of the original compilation is missing.

A further break in the text occurs in c. 9. At fol. 42<sup>r</sup> the acclamations for the feast of Pentecost are abandoned and the protocol for the celebration of Easter is taken up.<sup>2</sup> Similarly in c. 1, from fol. 28<sup>v</sup>, the description shifts from a generally applicable protocol

---

<sup>1</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 1-46 (37), Reiske, 3-191; Vogt, I.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 fol. 42<sup>r</sup>, Reiske, 61; Vogt, I, 56.

for the procession from the Great Palace to Hagia Sophia to give the ceremonies for Easter Sunday, the Nativity of the Theotokos and the Annunciation.<sup>3</sup>

André Vogt, in the preamble to his commentary on the religious ceremonies, proposes that these “bouleversements” should not be regarded as isolated incidents, but rather that the entire order of ceremonial in the Leipzig manuscript has suffered under the pen of the copyist.<sup>4</sup> After the general description of the imperial procession from the Great Palace to Hagia Sophia contained at the beginning of c. 1, cc. 2-9 fol. 42<sup>r</sup> provide the acclamations which accompanied the ceremonies. These follow the chronological order of the liturgical calendar from Christmas to Pentecost: Christmas; Epiphany; Easter Sunday; Easter Monday; Sunday after Easter; Mesopentecost; Ascension; and Pentecost. The same period in the year, with additional feasts, returns from cc. 32-44 (TABLE 1). This later group, Vogt argues, should properly appear after c. 1 fol. 28<sup>v</sup>, where the general protocol for the imperial procession to the cathedral gives way to descriptions of specific occasions. C. 9 fol. 42<sup>r</sup>, which begins the cycle of paschal ceremonies, through to c. 27 (18), on the ceremony for Ascension, correspond exactly to the acclamations contained in cc. 4-9 fol. 42<sup>r</sup> and should, according to Vogt, immediately follow c. 44 (35), the ceremony for Holy Saturday. In this way the order of the descriptions conforms to the order of feasts from Christmas to Pentecost. Vogt is probably right that this was the arrangement of the chapters in the original text of the *Book of Ceremonies*, since it represents a logical sequence of festivals from the beginning of the new indiction on September 1<sup>st</sup>.<sup>5</sup>

Vogt does not specify where the information provided by c. (10), Easter Monday; c. 1, fol. 28<sup>v</sup>-29<sup>v</sup>, Easter; fol. 29<sup>v</sup>-32<sup>v</sup>, the Nativity of the Theotokos; fol. 32<sup>v</sup>-33<sup>r</sup>, the Annunciation; and c. 9, fol. 42<sup>r</sup>-45<sup>v</sup>, Easter, should lie. To complete his rearrangement,

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., I, 1 fol. 28<sup>v</sup>-33<sup>r</sup>, Reiske, 22-35; Vogt, I, 17-28.

<sup>4</sup> Vogt, I, *Commentaire*, 1-5. See also his introduction at xxii-xxiv.

<sup>5</sup> Vogt proposes that the difficulties in the Leipzig manuscript probably result from an attempt by the copyist to rearrange the ceremonies around the paschal feasts. He hypothesises that whilst the tenth-century imperial calendar began at the beginning of the new indiction (1<sup>st</sup> September) later on there may have been a desire to pivot the liturgical calendar around the paschal ceremonies, which the copyist has done badly. Further confusion may also have been caused by the unfamiliarity of the copyist with the environment in

those passages, from both cc. 1 and 9, concerned with the celebration of Easter, along with c. (10), should be inserted between c. 44 (35), Holy Saturday, and c. 20 (11), Tuesday after Easter. That portion of c. 1 detailing the ceremonial for the Annunciation should either immediately precede or follow c. 39 (30), which is concerned with the celebration of the same feast in the particular circumstances of its falling on the Sunday of the third week of Lent. The celebration of the Nativity of the Theotokos, which falls on September 8<sup>th</sup>, should precede the ceremony for Christmas, as should c. 31 (22), the Exaltation of the Cross (September 14<sup>th</sup>) and c. 30 (21), the Feast of St. Demetrius (October 26<sup>th</sup>). To make the religious ceremonies consistent with other ceremonial descriptions in the *Book of Ceremonies*, where the action of the ritual is usually followed immediately by its attendant acclamations, it is also necessary to move the eulogia of cc. 2-9 to join the ceremonies they accompany.

In this way we are presented with a chronological sequence of ceremonies from the Nativity of the Theotokos to the feast of St. Elijah. When the chapters are so rearranged (TABLE 2) it becomes clear that certain descriptions are missing. For example, there is no specific prescription for Pentecost, despite the presence of the acclamations and although it is explicitly stated that the general protocol of c. 1 is observed at this feast. Likewise, some of the summer feasts are not represented. However, Vogt's assertion that this group, whose celebration he surmises probably did not involve the imperial court, includes the Nativity of the Theotokos and the Transfiguration is false.<sup>6</sup> The ceremony for the Nativity of the Theotokos is one of the specific feast days with whose description c. 1 concludes and at the end of the general description of the procession to Hagia Sophia contained in the same chapter it is stated that this protocol is observed at the Feast of the Transfiguration.<sup>7</sup> It is possible, therefore, that the other summer feasts whose absence Vogt notes: Holy Apostles (June 30<sup>th</sup>) and Assumption (August 15<sup>th</sup>) may have involved the participation of the imperial court and have found a place in the original compilation. Nonetheless, those celebrations outside the period from Christmas to Pentecost contained

---

which the tenth-century ceremonies took place, i. e. the Great Palace, since the imperial court would by then have moved to the palace at Blachernae. See *Ibid.*, 4, especially n. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Vogt, I, *Commentaire*, 2.

<sup>7</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 1, Reiske, 22; Vogt, I, 17.

in the Leipzig manuscript have a particularly courtly character, either being celebrated within the confines of the Great Palace (see TABLE 3) or celebrating figures particularly associated with the Emperors, and may have been included on the strength of this rather than forming part of a chronological cycle of summer feasts.

There is no way of knowing to what extent the document that has come down to us resembles the original compilation. What it does contain, however, despite the evidence of corruption in the manuscript, is a wealth of information about the involvement of the imperial court in the religious ceremonies conducted at tenth-century Constantinople.

These ceremonies can be divided into three groups: those celebrated at Hagia Sophia only, involving the procession of the court from the palace to the cathedral and back; those that conduct the court further afield, to other Constantinopolitan churches and, in particular, along the Mese to the Forum of Constantine; and those that were celebrated exclusively within the palace walls. The festivals contained in the *Book of Ceremonies* are fairly evenly distributed between the three groups (TABLE 3). The most important feasts, for example Christmas and Easter, fall into the first category and it is with an examination of these ceremonies that this discussion will begin.

### **Ceremonies at Hagia Sophia: the General Protocol**

#### *The Procession to Hagia Sophia*<sup>8</sup>

As we have seen, c. 1 begins with a general protocol for the procession of the Emperors and their court from the Great Palace to Hagia Sophia. Although it is stated that this ceremony is followed on Easter Sunday, Pentecost, the Transfiguration, Christmas and Epiphany, it is applicable on any date when the imperial cortege made an appearance at the cathedral. The chapter begins with the assurance that the preparations on the day before the procession are undertaken on the eve of every solemn feast whilst a scholium at a point in the text where the Emperors pass through the bronze gate of the Chalke (3 on

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Reiske, 6-14; Vogt, I, 4-10.

PLAN 3) and are greeted by organists (οἱ ὀργανῆριοι) states that this is done “happily at many feasts.”<sup>9</sup> Indeed, this procession is not only relevant for those occasions when the ritual is restricted to the palace and cathedral, but also provides a model that might be followed on any outing of the Emperors from their palace. It is also applicable on occasions, for example at the Feast of the Annunciation when it falls on the Sunday of the first week of Lent, when the court processes from the palace to Hagia Sophia and then continues its progress along the Mese to the Forum for further ceremonial action.<sup>10</sup>

In the context of the ceremonial book itself, therefore, this first chapter is particularly important. In the wider context of this examination, which seeks to explore the Byzantine understanding of imperial power as it is formulated in the idealised ceremonial contained in the document, the procession of the Emperors from their apartments in the Great Palace to the cathedral is crucial. Dagron judges it the most significant of all the ceremonies in which the Emperor took part, a significance that is reflected in Constantine Porphyrogenitus’s decision to place it at the head of his codification:

il s’agit... du rituel le plus solennel et le plus significatif, qui, chaque fois qu’il se répète, décrit l’origine et la nature du pouvoir impérial, en confirme la légitimité et en suggère certains limites.<sup>11</sup>

The ceremony consists of two rituals: processional movement to and from the cathedral; and the Emperors’ participation in the liturgy presided over by the Patriarch. We have seen that the relationship between the Emperor, as head of the body politic, and the Patriarch, as head of the Church, was particularly sensitive. The minute detail with which the imperial procession to the cathedral, the seat of the Patriarchal court and centre of the ecclesiastical administration, is given indicates the concern of the tenth-century imperial authorities that this movement be rigorously controlled and that each participant’s behaviour in it be strictly regulated.

As the various stages of the procession are traced below, an attempt will be made not only to describe the ceremony but also to examine its implications for the theory and

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Reiske, 14; Vogt, I, 10.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 39 (30), Reiske, 162-170; Vogt, I, 151-157.

<sup>11</sup> Gilbert Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre. Étude sur le “césaropapisme” byzantin* (Paris, 1996), 106.

exercise of imperial power. It will, therefore, attempt to examine the way in which the imperial figure is presented and also to address some of the important questions that surround our understanding of the Emperors at Constantinople, not least their relation to the Church and the sacerdotal nature of their office.

The chapter opens with a description of what must be done on the eve of the procession. The *praepositi* go to the Chrysotriclinos (42 on PLAN 3), the imperial residence and central edifice of the Middle Byzantine palace, to inform the Emperors of the following day's solemnity and to receive from them instructions for its organisation. These they disseminate amongst the court, the palace guard, the faction leaders and all who will take part in the imperial cortege. In addition, the Prefect of the City (ὁ ἑπαρχος) is instructed to prepare the grounds of the palace and the route of the procession by scattering sawdust and floral decorations along the paths the Emperors will take.

The following morning, at first light, the *praepositi* return to the Chrysotriclinos, along with the entire order of the *cubicularii*, this time approaching via the *caballarios* where they wait until the porter (ὁ παπίας),<sup>12</sup> admits them to the *pantheon* (pl.3 43), which adjoined the Chrysotriclinos at its northern side.<sup>13</sup> Here further preparations are begun. The staff of the imperial wardrobe, the *vestitores*, place the Rod of Moses in the oratory of St. Theodore of the Chrysotriclinos, whilst those in charge of the ceremonial wardrobe (οἱ τῶν ἀλλαξιμῶν) take the imperial robes and crowns to the Octagonal Chamber in the Daphne Palace (pl.3 21). The imperial soldiers (οἱ βασιλικοὶ σπαθάριοι) take their arms, shields and lances to the Onopodion (pl.3 18), where they stand to await the arrival of the imperial cortege.

These preparatory rituals are of marginal interest. However, they demonstrate that in the field of state ritual, even during ceremonies for liturgical celebrations, which regularly occurred and could be readily anticipated by the court, there was a concern to establish

---

<sup>12</sup> The porter was responsible for the security of the buildings of the Great Palace and their general upkeep. See Bury, *Administrative System*, 126-127 and Oikonomides, *Listes*, 306.

<sup>13</sup> On the Chrysotriclinos, its architecture, decoration and adjoining edifices see Ebersolt, *Le Grand Palais*, 77-92. On the *caballarios* see Vogt, I, *Commentaire*, 21-22 and on the Pantheon, p.23.

the Emperors as the instigators of the court's activity. We have seen that the Middle Byzantine court was "a social world structured by the emperor's decisions."<sup>14</sup> Here we are presented with the first sign that the ceremonies of Constantine VII reinforced this structure, by expanding the arena of imperial decision making into the ceremonial realm.

Once the preparations are complete the Emperors emerge from their "sacred apartment" and pray before the image of Christ enthroned in the conch of the Chrysotriclinos, above the imperial throne. The *praepositi* enter and perform *proskynesis* before them. The Emperors put on *sagia*, bordered with gold, and leave via the *phylax* (pl.3 44). At this stage it should be noted, as it is in the text, that only the *praepositi* and the *cubicularii* escort the Emperors. At the *sigma* (pl.3 28) the Emperors receive the prayers of the *manglavion*, the *hetaireia*, the *logothete*, the chief of the *kanikleion*, the *protoasekretis* and the *protonotarios*. These military and civil officials join the cortege, escorting the Emperors as they continue their progress through the palace.

The first stations on the processional route are the three sanctuaries that lined the entrance to the Daphne Palace. The imperial entourage first stops at the sanctuary of the Theotokos (pl.3 27), where the Emperors receive candles from the *praepositi*, holding which, with an act of triple *proskynesis*, they give thanks to God. They then go to the adjoining sanctuary, dedicated to the Holy Trinity (pl.3 26), where they again give thanks to God. At this point it is stated that they "enter near the relics placed in a tight space"<sup>15</sup> where they perform the same acts of thanksgiving. Finally, they enter the adjoining baptistery (pl.3 25) "in which are found the three great and beautiful crosses"<sup>16</sup> and here, responding to a signal from the *praepositus*, *cubicularii* place candles, which are taken up by the Emperors.

After these acts of devotion, the procession advances to the Triclinos of the Augusteus (pl.3 20) where the Emperors are received by the staff of the Chrysotriclinos and

---

<sup>14</sup> See above, 25.

<sup>15</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 1, Reiske, 8; Vogt, I, 5: ἐν τοῖς ἐκεῖσε ἀποκειμένοις ἐν τῷ στενακίῳ λειψάνοις.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

members of the palace guard (οἱ βασιλικοὶ ἄνθρωποι)<sup>17</sup> who, together with the *manglavion* and the *hetaireia*, greet the Emperors. The *cubicularii* escort the Emperors as far as the Octagonal Chamber, where the imperial robes and crowns have already been placed. Here they present their homage to the Emperors, who enter the sanctuary of St. Stephen (pl.3 22), in front of the Octagonal Chamber, where, with candles and by an act of triple *proskynesis*, they offer thanks to God once more before venerating “the great and beautiful precious cross of Constantine.”<sup>18</sup> At the end of this initial procession the Emperors enter the Apartment of Daphne to await the moment when a messenger from the Patriarch will bring instructions for the religious ceremony.

This initial progress of the Emperors indicates the complex arrangement of the palace buildings (PLAN 3). By the Middle Byzantine period the Chrysotriclinos had displaced the Palace of Daphne, Constantine I’s imperial residence, as the principal structure of the Great Palace.<sup>19</sup> During this stage of the ceremony the Emperors move from the former to the latter, positioned closer to Hagia Sophia, escorted by the *praepositi* and other members of the court. The participation of the court at this stage is restricted to those who had access to the most intimate parts of the palace: the *praepositi*; the *cubicularii*; and the palace guard along with certain influential administrative figures, who, at various stations along the route, greet the Emperors and offer them their prayers.

At this stage there is no mention of the ecclesiastical authorities or the Patriarchal court and the action centres on the Emperors and the secular authorities. This early movement describes a purely palatine ceremony and it is the relationship between the Emperors and their courtiers that is its subject. Two concepts are displayed: firstly, the distance of the Emperors from their attendants; and, secondly, a close identity between the courtiers present and their rulers. Throughout, the Emperors present an image of stillness and distant calm. Where their courtiers, having prepared the way, wait at different stations to greet them there is no indication that the Emperors themselves respond in any way except to halt in order to receive their prayers. This passivity is in keeping with an ideology,

---

<sup>17</sup> See Bury, *Administrative System*, 111-113.

<sup>18</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 1, Reiske, 9; Vogt, I, 6.

<sup>19</sup> Ebersolt, *Le Grand Palais*, 77.

which goes back to the fourth century, in which the lack of imperial emotion was an important factor.<sup>20</sup> As Michael Psellos, in the eleventh century, would write to the Emperor Isaac I Comnenus:

Where is there any anger in you, where are there streams of laughter, where are there traces of rage... there are no unseemly qualities in you neither easily excited emotion... nor delight, nor any graces, nor much laughter.<sup>21</sup>

At one level the procession serves to elevate the imperial position by offering the court the opportunity to demonstrate its loyalty to the Emperors and subservience before them. Thus the correct relationship between the Emperor and courtier is established. However, it would be a mistake to view this early procession simply in terms of imperial grandeur and courtly homage. For in many ways it is marked by a relative simplicity that distinguishes it from the later part of the procession when the Emperors emerge from the palace complex.

One way in which a clear distinction between this and later stages in the ceremony is achieved is through costume. Costume was an important element in the ceremonial display of the court and the clothing of both the Emperors and their courtiers is strictly regulated throughout the *Book of Ceremonies*.<sup>22</sup> It is, unfortunately, one whose precise significance is particularly difficult to determine, not least because of a lack of detailed information about the various garments mentioned.<sup>23</sup> During this portion of the ceremony the Emperors wear their *scaramangia* and *sagia* only, and go bare headed through the palace.

---

<sup>20</sup> In the fourth century the importance of this notion is most famously exemplified in Ammianus Marcellianus's account of Constantius II's entry into Rome in 357 AD. For its use by the sixth-century panegyrist Corippus, see Averil Cameron, ed., *Flavius Cresconius Corippus, In laudem Iustini minoris libri quattuor* (London, 1976), 192. For the Middle Byzantine period see H. Maguire, "Images of the Court," in Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A. D. 843-1261* (New York, 1997), 182-192.

<sup>21</sup> Cited in *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>22</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 46 (37), Reiske, 187-191; Vogt, I, 175-179, is entirely devoted to the Emperors' ceremonial costume.

<sup>23</sup> On imperial and court costume see Elizabeth Piltz, "Middle Byzantine Court Costume," in Maguire, *Court Culture*, 39-53.

The *scaramangion* and *sagion* were important imperial garments, worn by the Emperors at a variety of occasions.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, they were also regularly worn by members of the court. The most clear and unambiguous symbols of imperial power with which an Emperor might be adorned were the purple *chlamys* and the crown (during the Middle Byzantine period a diadem). It was with these that he was invested at his coronation and which, on that occasion, were given particular significance through the prayers of the Patriarch.<sup>25</sup> That the Emperors do not adopt these insignia during their procession through the palace is significant. It has been suggested that, before his coronation, when the Emperor processed to Hagia Sophia for the ceremony to be performed, his wearing the *scaramangion* was, due to its regular adoption by higher courtiers, a sign that the yet-to-be crowned Emperor was a man like others.<sup>26</sup> A similar conclusion might be drawn here, although now it suggests that the Emperor, after his coronation, might publicly display his identification with his subjects.

Here and throughout the *De Ceremoniis* the Emperors wear comparatively simple garments within the palace, only donning their full imperial regalia at the Octagonal Chamber of the Daphne Palace; that is, at the point at which they are about to emerge from the main palace complex via the Onopodion (pl.3 18), the buildings of the *tagmata* (pl.3 4-11) and the famous Chalke gate (pl.3 3). The courtiers who participate in this part of the ceremony get a privileged glimpse of the Emperors without the most potent symbols of their imperial status. Although there can be no question of the Emperors ever abandoning the external trappings of their position to become like other men, there is here an indication that they might at some points, within the confines of the palace, present a rather more simple image of imperial status than was available to them. Moreover, the *chlamys* was a military costume, whereas the *scaramangion* is worn by the civil administration. Within the palace, therefore, the Emperors project an image of civilian imperial status, one which clearly identifies them with their audience.

---

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>25</sup> *De Cer.*, 47 (38), Reiske, 196-202; Vogt, II, 6-8.

<sup>26</sup> P. Yannopoulos, "Le couronnement de l'empereur à Byzance: rituel et fond institutionnel," *Byz.* 61 (1991), 80.

Another important aspect of ceremonial costume was the use of colour. No garment was exclusive to the Emperors and various courtiers wear the *scaramangion* and *sagion* at different occasions.<sup>27</sup> Although it is not explicitly stated, it is likely that the *sagion* the Emperors wear on this occasion was purple, the most prestigious colour for court costume.<sup>28</sup> Whereas the actual garments might have identified the Emperors with other men, their colour marked them out and confirmed the superiority of their dignity. The experience of Liudprand of Cremona when he attempted to leave Constantinople with a number of purple cloths demonstrates how preciously guarded such material was. Confiscating them, Byzantine officials make clear the extent to which ownership of such materials might crystallise ideas of Byzantine identity:

“...we think that you have bought some cloaks...[and] we order them now to be produced. Those that are fit for you will be marked...and left in your possession; those that are prohibited to all nations, except to us Romans, will be taken away and their price returned.”

Thereupon they took from me five very valuable pieces of purple cloth; considering yourselves and all Italians, Saxons, Franks, Bavarians, Swabians - nay all nations - as unworthy to appear abroad in such ornate vestments...[The official said] “As we surpass all other nations in wealth and wisdom, so it is right that we should surpass them in dress. Those who are unique in the grace of their virtue should also be unique in the beauty of their raiment.”<sup>29</sup>

These materials were, then, regarded as the preserve of the Byzantine, or rather the Roman, Empire. Extant fragments bear witness to the quality of cloth produced from the imperial workshops. Although the Emperors' clothes during their procession through the palace were not of the most aggressively “imperial” kind, they would have been fashioned from the most high quality materials. Their colour, on the one hand, ensured a certain continuity between this stage in the ceremony and the later one, when they donned the imperial purple of the *chlamys*. On the other, it established the connection between the Emperors and the Empire over which they ruled; an Empire which alone could produce such material and within whose borders it would remain.

---

<sup>27</sup> For some of the occasions on which members of the court wear these garments see Piltz, “Court Costume,” 45.

<sup>28</sup> In *De Cer.*, I, 46 (37), on imperial costume - except for Easter week, when the Emperor wears white robes - on the vast majority of religious occasions, the imperial robes (both *scaramangia* and *divitisia*) are purple.

<sup>29</sup> Liudprand of Cremona, *De Legatione*, cc. 53-54.

The importance of displaying wealth and craftsmanship through ceremonies cannot be overemphasised. For these not only added to the aesthetic of the ceremonies but must also have inspired a high level of communal civic pride amongst those who participated in and witnessed them. Perhaps more importantly, the calibre of these fabrics was evidently regarded as indicative of other qualities. As the propaganda that seems to have come so readily to the argument of the officials with whom Liudprand quarrelled demonstrates, they were promoted as part of a separatism that stemmed from the superiority of the Empire, in wisdom, in wealth and in virtue. Moreover, it was a separatism that insisted on the Empire's exclusive right to be called Roman. The particular claim of the rulers of Byzantium on their Roman heritage which had, particularly with the rise of western powers, become increasingly infringed upon by foreign rulers is a repeated reference within the Middle Byzantine ceremonies and will be returned to below.

It has been claimed, above, that the early movement of the Emperors within the palace can be distinguished from that which takes place beyond because of its relative simplicity. This claim is supported by the fact that, after their reception by the *praepositi* in the Chrysotriclinos, throughout the rest of the procession, as far as the Octagonal Chamber, there is never a question of the Emperors receiving the *proskynesis* of their courtiers, rather they pay homage, or pray to them.<sup>30</sup> Although it is not described here, elsewhere in the document this action is defined as a verbal wish for many happy years for the Emperors. The *Book of Ceremonies* is filled with acts of *proskynesis* by which, through a physical action of abasement, honour is shown by one party to another. In general, members of the court perform *proskynesis* before the Emperors while the Emperors themselves only ever do so before the symbols of divine authority.

Examination of artistic representations of *proskynesis* show that the term might be applied to a variety of behaviour and that the action did not remain consistent through time.<sup>31</sup> In contrast, the *Book of Ceremonies* is “filled with descriptions of apparently

---

<sup>30</sup> The verb ἐπεύχομαι is used consistently.

<sup>31</sup> Anthony Cutler, *Transfigurations. Studies in the Dynamics of Byzantine Iconography* (Pennsylvania, 1975), 53-110.

timeless and immutable rites.”<sup>32</sup> Although in different ceremonial contexts the act of *proskynesis* might carry a variety of messages - the symbolism of the *proskynesis* of prisoners of war before the Emperor in the Hippodrome is necessarily different from that of the Emperor before the cross or holy relics - the action itself appears to be consistent. Anthony Culter has observed that “in the *de Cerimoniis*, the term *proskynesis* indicates a range of mental attitudes - ranging from veneration to respect - as much as any physical posture. But this leaves us no wiser regarding the precise manner in which such mental attitudes were expressed.”<sup>33</sup> However, where members of the court perform *proskynesis* the protocol often specifies that they rise before the ceremony continues and at times the action is followed by the kissing of the feet or knees of the Emperors, which required the courtier to be laid low before their rulers.<sup>34</sup> On occasion it is stated that the Emperor is received without falling to the ground,<sup>35</sup> indicating that *proskynesis* generally involved prostration before the object of reverence and honour. That the courtiers at this stage in the ceremony do not perform this ritual action is a significant factor and supports an interpretation of the movement through the palace that highlights an intimate relationship between the Emperors and their court.

Given the luxury and splendour of the imperial palaces and dress and the precious objects that accompanied much Middle Byzantine imperial ceremonial, as well as the reports from foreign visitors at the Constantinopolitan court, it is easy to imagine that the ceremonies only ever accentuated the gulf that lay between the Emperors and the rest of Byzantine society. During the Emperors’ procession through the palace buildings, however, they present a less imposing image of imperial power than that which would be displayed outside the palace walls. It has already been suggested that the court-based political system that emerged in the Middle Byzantine period required the fostering of strong links of loyalty between the Emperors and their courtiers, from whose ranks there was ever a possibility of usurpation. What we are presented with here is tangible evidence for the way in which ceremonies might foster such links and at the same time

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>34</sup> This is a particular feature of promotions to imperial dignity and office, when the recipient performs *proskynesis* before the Emperors before kissing their knees. For example, below, 166.

preclude the possibility of a too human - and by implication vulnerable - imperial face being turned to those members of his household on whom he particularly relied and who had most opportunity to advance their own position at his expense.

Here it is worth examining which members of the court were present during this early, apparently less grandiose, though no less formal, procession of the Emperors. The *cubicularii* was the class of courtiers with access to the most intimate areas of the palace charged with a variety of duties within it pertaining to the service of the imperial person.<sup>36</sup> We have seen that it was members of the cubiculum who had come to dominate the administrative apparatus of the Middle Byzantine system. Here we meet some of the subgroups who made up the cubiculum, for example the staff of the imperial wardrobe, the *vestitores*, who play an important role in the ceremonies dressing the Emperor at various stages in the processions, who were under the command of their chief, the *protovestiariorum*. Likewise, the staff of the imperial table was a separate body under their chief, ὁ ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης. The staff of the imperial bedchamber itself (κοιτωνῆται) were under the leadership of the *parakoimomenos*, or Grand Chamberlain, a powerful figure at court, though one who appears not to play an extensive active role in the ceremonies.<sup>37</sup>

The most prominent figure of the *cubicularii* involved in the ceremonies is the *praepositus*.<sup>38</sup> In charge of the entire cubiculum in the fifth century, he retained control over a large proportion of it within the Middle Byzantine administration.<sup>39</sup> During the ceremonies he, along with the *master of ceremonies*, is the most important figure in communicating between Emperor and court. On the eve of the religious feasts it is the *praepositi* who receive the Emperors' orders to distribute to the courtiers and they will escort the Emperors throughout the ceremony, assist them in their acts of piety, crown them before their appearances in full imperial regalia and in general ensure their smooth passage along the route of the procession. Here, where there is more than one Emperor,

---

<sup>35</sup> For example, *De Cer.*, I, 31 (22), Reiske 126; Vogt, I, 117.

<sup>36</sup> See Bury, *Administrative System*, 120-121.

<sup>37</sup> On the *parakoimomenos* see Oikonomides, *Listes*, 305.

<sup>38</sup> See R. Guiland, "Le Préposité," *BS* 22 (1961), 241-301.

there is more than one *praepositus*. Usually it is the case of a single *praepositus*, of which it appears each Emperor would require but one. Therefore, one distinguishable group present at this stage in the procession is the *cubicularii*, who played an important role within the palace and had personal contact with the Emperor both in the daily life of the court and in the ceremonies that were regularly enacted there.

As we have seen, the first prayers delivered to the Emperors on their departure from the Chrysotriclinos are from the *manglavion* and the *hetaireia*, the *logothete*, the chief of the *kanikleion*, the *protoasekretis* and the *protonotarios*. The *manglavion* and *hetaireia* were members of the palace guard charged with the personal security of the Emperor.<sup>40</sup> The *logothete*<sup>41</sup> (ὁ λογοθέτης τοῦ δρόμου), an important figure at court and intimate of the Emperor, was in charge of the imperial post and has been described as “virtually director of political intelligence and minister for foreign affairs.”<sup>42</sup> His most important ceremonial duties appear in Book II of the *De Ceremoniis*, which describes his involvement in court promotions<sup>43</sup> and his daily meeting with the Emperor.<sup>44</sup> The *protonotarios* served under the *logothete* and might stand in for him in his absence.<sup>45</sup> The chief of the *kanikleion*, another important administrative figure, active in the production of imperial edicts, was present when the Emperor signed state documents and might act as signatory himself.<sup>46</sup> The *protoasekretis*, as head of the ἀσηκρήται, a select staff of imperial secretaries,<sup>47</sup> was also closely involved with the issue of state documents and was responsible for their drafting.

This first group to greet the Emperors was, then, in various capacities linked with the imperial persons. Both military and civilian officials are represented. Here, in the heart of

---

<sup>39</sup> Bury, *Administrative System*, 120.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 106 and 108.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 91-93.

<sup>42</sup> Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World*, 194.

<sup>43</sup> *De Cer.*, II, Reiske, 525. The promotions in *De Cer.*, I, 52 (43)-68 (59), Reiske, 217-275; Vogt, II, 26-83, do not mention the *logothete*, whose role is undertaken jointly by the *praepositus* and *master of ceremonies*.

<sup>44</sup> *De Cer.*, II, 1, Reiske 520.

<sup>45</sup> Oikonomides, *Listes*, 311.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 311, Bury, *Administrative System*, 117.

<sup>47</sup> Bury, 97-98, Oikonomides, 310.

the palace, the Emperors receive assurance of the loyalty of those individuals on whom they particularly relied in order to govern. The *manglavion* and *hetaireia* were essential to the personal safety of the Emperor. The *logothete* was a figure of paramount importance with regard to the security of the Empire and its foreign relations. Finally the leading officials of the chancellery are represented, with whom the Emperor had close contact in preparing official papers and imperial edicts.

As the Emperors continue along the route of the procession they receive further greeting from courtiers directly associated with the palace. Again *cubicularii*, now those charged with the service of the Chrysotriclinos, and members of the palace guard offer their homage. Overall, it is clear that these figures were closely involved with the Emperors on a personal level and would encounter them outside the ceremonies. This level of familiarity, perhaps, goes some way to explaining the relative simplicity of the ceremony at this stage.

In this respect, the environment in which this ritual behaviour took place should not be overlooked. The progress through the palace necessarily took place in a relatively small and enclosed space, within which grand gestures of *proskynesis* and the unambiguous signs of imperial status, the diadem and purple *chlamys*, would not have been necessary for the presentation of subservience and of the imperial figure to work. The restricted audience, made up of figures who were familiar with the individual Emperors, did not require expansive ceremonial display to express and formulate relations between itself and its rulers, especially where all present would have been able to see the smallest gesture. Moreover, the relative proximity of the court to the Emperors must also have created an impression of privileged intimacy amongst the audience of the early palatine procession and promoted a court identity focussed on the Emperor. In the Middle Byzantine court, opportunities for promotion and advancement came exclusively from the Emperor, as the Emperors make their way through the palace complex the ceremony serves to underpin this state of affairs by placing them unambiguously at the centre of the proceedings as the cause of each action.

It has been argued, above, that the Emperors themselves are passive recipients of the actions of their courtiers and present an impersonal image devoid of emotion or physical action. However, throughout this early ceremonial there is another set of personalities with which the Emperors interact. This interaction involves their more active participation and a transparent expression of the ultimate source of imperial legitimacy.

For, as well as establishing relations within the court, this stage in the ceremony involves repeated demonstrations of imperial piety through thanksgiving in the various sanctuaries that lined the route of the procession. Now the rulers of the temporal Empire, bare headed and dressed in relatively simple garments, give thanks to their heavenly supporters, communicating through the three principal avenues available to the Middle Byzantine (other than the Eucharist, which was, of course, the ultimate means of interaction between earthly and heavenly universes): the icon, the relic and the cross.

After 843, when religious images and their veneration were promoted as an integral feature of Orthodox worship, the imperial authorities were quick to capitalise on the potential to enhance the palace complex and the position of the Emperors resident there through icons. The decoration of the throne room of the Chrysotriclinos, from where the procession begins, demonstrates a masterful manipulation of such images. The association of Christ, portrayed enthroned in the niche above the imperial throne, and the individual seated upon that throne would have been immediately apparent to anyone who saw him there, whilst the surrounding imagery, which included the Theotokos over the doorway and earthly along with divine figures, created an atmosphere of divinely sanctioned imperial authority.

The reintroduction of icons, particularly their integration with imperial portraiture, opened up the possibilities of using pictorial representations to make politically charged statements and was in itself regarded as a demonstration of imperial Orthodoxy. If the involvement of the Emperors in the restoration of figurative religious art had been

hesitantly acknowledged by Photius,<sup>48</sup> within the palace it was openly proclaimed.

Around the ceiling of the Chrysotriclinos an inscription announced:

The ray of Truth has shone forth again and has dimmed the eyes of the impostors. Piety has grown, error has fallen, faith blooms and Grace spreads out. For behold, once again the image of Christ shines above the imperial throne and confounds the murky heresies; while above the entrance is represented the Virgin as divine gate and guardian. The Emperor [Michael III] and the Bishop [Photius] are depicted close by along with their collaborators inasmuch as they have driven away error, and all round the building, like guards, [stand] angels, apostles, martyrs, priests. Hence we call "the new Chrysotriclinos" that which aforesaid had been given a golden name, since it contains the throne of Christ, our Lord, the forms of Christ's Mother and Christ's heralds, and the image of Michael whose deeds are filled with wisdom.<sup>49</sup>

The lack of portable icons in the *De Ceremoniis* has been used as evidence that icons were not central to the Emperor's relations with his court.<sup>50</sup> However, the fixed decorative schemes of the palace buildings and the churches in which the ceremonies took place should not be overlooked. The interweaving of religious and imperial iconography in both the Great Palace and ecclesiastical buildings, not least Hagia Sophia, must have had a huge influence in the way in which the ceremonies were understood. The decoration of the Chrysotriclinos served to draw an analogy between the position of the Emperor and that of Christ, to illustrate the sources of his power and its heavenly guardians and to place him within a tradition of imperial orthodoxy inherited from Michael III, under whose rule the final defeat of the Iconoclast heresy had been achieved.

It also provided a focus of religious devotion within the heart of the political establishment. When the Emperors leave their private rooms they do not take the throne but rather, without an audience, they pray before the image of Christ enthroned. This act of piety which begins - and, as we shall see, concludes - the imperial procession through the palace, itself punctuated by a series of religious stations at which the Emperors pray, indicates the degree to which the imperial residence and the ceremonies that took place there were permeated by the religious understanding that underpinned political power at Byzantium. It was this understanding, which comprehended all government, both

---

<sup>48</sup> See above, 32.

<sup>49</sup> *Anthol. graeca* I, 106, translated in Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453* (Toronto, 1986), 184

<sup>50</sup> Annemarie Weyl Carr, "Court Culture and Cult Icons in Middle Byzantine Constantinople," in Maguire, *Court Culture*, 81-101.

heavenly and temporal, in terms of Empire, that explains the method of portraying Christ in the throne room of the Chrysotriclinos.<sup>51</sup> The analogy between their positions would only become visually apparent when the Emperor took his throne. Then the image established identification between the two powers, supporting the Emperor's absolute authority. Now, when the Emperors humiliate themselves before the image of Christ-Emperor, we see another way in which such iconography functioned. Not only a tool of imperial propaganda, the image serves as a vehicle by which the Emperors commune with their divine prototype, the source and guarantor of their authority. The analogy between the heavenly and earthly exercise of power is still the central element in the image, but now, rather than simply acting to exalt the imperial position, it is the focus of a genuine act of faith. As Averil Cameron has observed, one should not be tempted to view the Byzantine political authorities simply as cynical manipulators.<sup>52</sup> This first action of the Emperors, especially given the absence of witnesses and the relative simplicity of their dress, indicates the genuine religious faith that informed the way in which imperial power is conceived and exercised through ceremonial display and ritual action, a faith that neither their organisers nor participants acted without.

As the cortege processes from the Chrysotriclinos to the Daphne Palace the Emperors perform further acts of prayer and thanksgiving. These acts of piety are more public than the first prayers in the throne room and are more formally prescribed, involving the lighting of candles and three acts of *proskynesis* at each station. The initial station is the sanctuary of the Theotokos (pl.3 23). The Theotokos was an enormously important figure at Middle Byzantine Constantinople. Amongst the supernatural defenders of the Queen City, she occupied an exalted position and, from the late sixth century, the imperial authorities had actively promoted her cult.<sup>53</sup> During the crisis years of the Byzantine dark-age, the survival of the capital from enemy siege, on more than one occasion, was attributed to her intervention. This association of the Theotokos with the physical survival of Constantinople faced with external attack made her a focus not only of

---

<sup>51</sup> The notion of the earthly as an image of the heavenly Empire was first elucidated by Eusebius and remained a standard idea in Byzantine understanding of Empire.

<sup>52</sup> Cameron, "The construction of court ritual," 125.

<sup>53</sup> Cameron, "Images of Authority," 3-35.

popular piety but also of the Emperors whose imperial residence and political power had become increasingly centred at the Empire's capital city. It is, therefore, particularly appropriate that the first public act of thanksgiving should take place at the sanctuary dedicated to her.

The next acts of imperial piety are performed in an adjoining sanctuary dedicated to the Holy Trinity, after which the Emperors enter into a space where relics are deposited and perform further *proskynesis*. The imperial capital and the palace had, by the tenth century, become a major repository of relics.<sup>54</sup> Especially given the absence of Christian heritage and the lack of pre-existing association with Christian figures at Constantinople at its dedication by Constantine I as capital of a new Christian Empire in 330, that heritage and association had to be imported. One of the most tangible and effective methods of transforming Byzantium into a Christian city was through the translation of relics from elsewhere, which gave Constantinople the stamp of holiness it otherwise lacked. The legend of Helena's discovery of the true cross exemplifies the tradition of the imperial collection of relics.

The relics in the sanctuary of the Holy Trinity are not identified. A later description of the *Book of Ceremonies* goes a little further, stating that they were the relics of saints, which information leaves us none the wiser as to the figures being honoured. The location and use of some relics within the palace, for example the arms of Sts Stephen and John the Baptist, can be understood with reference to the holy figures themselves.<sup>55</sup> Here the individual saints and the particular events through which their holiness was manifested are not important. The lack of identification suggests that the number of relics had become such that information about the circumstances around their translation into the capital and even knowledge about whose remains were present had been lost. However, this loss does not preclude their use as vehicles of communication with the holy; their status as relics justifies their use as objects of imperial veneration.

---

<sup>54</sup> On the use of relics in the Great Palace see Ioli Kalavrezou, "Helping Hands for the Empire: Imperial Ceremonies and the Cult of Relics at the Byzantine Court," in Maguire, *Court Culture*, 53-79.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

Imperial collection of relics and their ceremonial translation to Constantinople is memorialised in art. For example, the sixth-century Trier ivory gives a lively portrait of the translation of relics into the capital and their reception by a Byzantine empress.<sup>56</sup> A similar, though less detailed, scene is contained in the Madrid Skylitzes where the translation of the arm of John the Baptist into the imperial palace is pictured.<sup>57</sup> Ioli Kalavrezou has noted the particular emphasis on the Byzantine capital as the centre of the Christian world following the rise of Islam and the efficacy of the collection of relics to achieve this emphasis:

These relics, amassed at the centre of political power...gave the city itself a special and privileged place in relation to the rest of the Christian world. After the rise and expansion of Islam, Constantinople saw itself as the guardian of Christianity, especially in the east. Certainly in terms of its relics, Constantinople surpassed all other Christian cities, especially after the loss of Jerusalem.<sup>58</sup>

Imperial governments were eager to capitalise on the prestige and security that could be gained through such holy objects:

These relics not only gave the Byzantine ruler who possessed them a privileged position in the Christian world but also provided a special construct for the Byzantine emperor to exercise the power of his imperial office. At certain politically stressed periods throughout Byzantine history, emperors sought to secure their position of power or establish the dynasty's legitimate claim to the throne: turning to Christian actions - building churches promoting religious cult objects such as icons and procuring relics - were some of the means to these ends.<sup>59</sup>

If the commission of ecclesiastical buildings, the promotion of cult objects and the collection of relics could serve the Emperors and help to secure the position of an individual Emperor or dynasty in politically difficult times, the ceremonies, in which they passed through those buildings and venerated those icons and relics, continued that process outside the historical circumstances that might have occasioned their promotion. Thus the prestige and divine aid embodied in these objects is eternalised and the regular association of each Emperor with them during the cycle of religious feasts established a constant bond between the Emperors, their imperial position and divine helpers. As well as a public display of imperial piety, then, religious cult objects within the palace

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., fig. 2.

<sup>57</sup> Grabar and Manoussacas, *L'illustration du manuscrit de Skylitzès*, fig. 169, reproduced in *ibid.*, fig. 7.

<sup>58</sup> Kalavrezou, "Helping Hands for the Empire," 53.

reinforced the Emperor's position and established continuity between the exercise of imperial authority from one rule to the next.

Having venerated the relics in the sanctuary of the Holy Trinity, the Emperors proceed to the baptistery, where they venerate the cross. The cross, like the icons and the relics, was a religious symbol that had particular resonance within the political establishment. First and foremost it was the symbol of Christ's passion and it is frequently referred to in the *Book of Ceremonies* as the "life-giving" cross. This symbol had been the focus of considerable attention during the Iconoclast struggle. It was through the cross, along with the church building and the Eucharist, that the Iconoclasts had endeavoured to restrict access to the divine.<sup>60</sup> Including the form of the cross amongst acceptable images exposed them to criticism from Iconodule thinkers, who pointed out a fundamental inconsistency in their thought. For example, John of Damascus includes the cross amongst "those places and things by which God has accomplished our salvation," which are due relative worship "not for their own sake, but because they are vessels of divine power."<sup>61</sup> Theodore the Studite goes further and draws a direct analogy between the relationship of the cross to its image and of divine figures to theirs:

Tell me, you over-confident man, which did [the apostle] praise, and in which did he glory, in the cross, or in a representation of the cross? Obviously in the former; but the copy shares the glory of its prototype, as a reflection shares the brightness of the light. For whatever is said about the cause, the same can in all respects be said about the effect... we call the representation "cross" because it is also the cross, yet there are not two crosses; and we call the image of Christ "Christ" because it is also Christ, yet there are not two Christs.<sup>62</sup>

However, it has been suggested that the cross might have suffered in the years after the Triumph of Orthodoxy because of its association with Iconoclastic policy.<sup>63</sup> In the light

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>60</sup> See in particular the Iconoclast iambic poems quoted by Theodore the Studite and discussed in S. Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the reign of Leo III*, 113-126, in which imperial promotion of the cross is the main theme.

<sup>61</sup> John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images*, III, c. 34, 85-86.

<sup>62</sup> Theodore the Studite, *On the Holy Icons*, I, c. 8, 28.

<sup>63</sup> In an otherwise excellent examination Leslie Brubaker states that "The cross seems to have shed its unsavoury connection with iconoclasm." Although it is evident that the cross was a particularly prized image under the Iconoclasts there is no indication that the cross itself would have been attacked as a result of this. Leslie Brubaker, "To legitimize an emperor: Constantine and visual authority in the eighth and

of such Iconodule statements and the ideas they demonstrate this appears highly unlikely. The cross and its attendant ideology were deliberately promoted during the years of Iconoclast rule. The proliferation of crosses throughout the palace and frequency with which they are the focus of imperial worship during the ceremonies of Constantine VII indicates that in the tenth century the cross continued to be promoted and was the predominant symbol through which official acts of imperial piety were directed.

However, at Byzantium the cross was not only a religious symbol but was also an important imperial sign associated with military victory and, in particular, with the first Emperor Constantine. It was the cross that had been shown to Constantine before his victory at Milvian Bridge accompanied by the heavenly guarantee “Under this sign you shall conquer,” and that had continued to be carried into battle by imperial troops on their banners and shields.<sup>64</sup>

The myth of Constantine I underwent particular development through the eighth and ninth centuries and its promotion, particularly the attention given to the cross, has been recognised as “a work of Iconoclast propaganda.”<sup>65</sup> During this period, particularly in hagiographic accounts, the cross emerged as a central element in the legend of Constantine, particularly in relation to his military success. As Kazhdan’s examination of the legend in the ninth century demonstrated, other stories associated with the cross, in particular the discovery of the True Cross by Helena, underwent comparatively little development during those years: “The theme of the discovery of the cross... did not attract the creative minds of the eighth and ninth centuries. All their creativity was funnelled toward the role of the cross as the vehicle of military success.”<sup>66</sup>

---

ninth centuries,” in Magdalino ed., *New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Cambridge, 1994), 139-159, at 145.

<sup>64</sup> On Constantine’s conversion and the introduction of the cross onto his army’s shields see McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, 101. For the use of the cross in military expeditions of the Middle Byzantine period see A. Markopoulos, “Constantine the Great in Macedonian historiography: models and approaches,” Magdalino, ed., *New Constantines*, 165.

<sup>65</sup> A. Kazhdan, “‘Constantine Imaginaire.’ Byzantine Legends of the Ninth Century about Constantine the Great,” *Byz.* 57 (1987), 196-250, at 249.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

Although the legend appears to have developed little after the ninth century, the figure of Constantine and the image of the cross loom large in the ideology of the Middle Byzantine Emperors. The illumination of the *Homilies* of Gregory of Nazianzus, Paris gr.510, produced for the Emperor Basil I at the end of the ninth century, is an important source in our understanding of the ideology promoted under the first Macedonian Emperor and, in particular, of the attempts made to associate the usurper with Constantine the Great.<sup>67</sup> That association is drawn particularly through the image of the cross and the labarum. Two of the former decorate folding leaves whilst, in the image of Basil protected by them, the labarum is shown being passed to the Emperor by Elijah as Gabriel crowns him. The facing image, also protected by the cross-bearing pages, is of the Empress Eudokia flanked by her two sons, Leo and Alexander. Leslie Brubaker has discussed the significance of the disposition of these images and the portrait of Christ at the beginning of the manuscript. She concludes:

In effect, we see Christ blessing the city and, on the following pages, Basil and his dynastic successors; Christ assures us that the empire rests in good hands, and that its noble heritage will be preserved and furthered by the new Macedonian house. Christ celebrates Constantine's foundation of Constantinople at the same time as he celebrates the successful marriage of Basil and Eudokia: he blesses Constantine's city, and the new dynasty that will ably fulfil Constantine's mission. The crosses that encase the portraits reinforce the Constantinian message, and stress the triumph of those who rule through Christ.<sup>68</sup>

In the Paris manuscript the link between Basil and Constantine is alluded to through symbolic imagery, in which the cross plays a pivotal role, forming part of an attempt to stress the legitimacy of Basil's rule and the future government of his heirs.

Contemporary understanding of the significance of the cross is illustrated in the description of the decoration of the Kainourgion palace, constructed by Basil I, in the tenth-century *Vita Basilii*. This palace contained a variety of imperial images. On one hand, the Emperor's military achievements are represented, his "Herculean labors, his toils on behalf of his subjects, his warlike exertions and the prize of victory bestowed by

---

<sup>67</sup> See especially Leslie Brubaker, "To legitimize an emperor." Also, *idem.*, *Vision and meaning in ninth-century Byzantium: image as exegesis in the homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge, 1999).

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

God.” On the other, images of the Emperor, his wife and children occupied the walls of the palace. The whole is dominated by the ceiling:

being entirely decorated with gleaming gold and exhibiting in its centre the victorious Cross made of green glass. All round the latter, like stars shining in the sky, you may see the illustrious Emperor himself, his wife and all their children raising their arms to God and the life-giving sign of the Cross and all but crying out that “on account of this victorious Symbol everything that is good and agreeable to God has been accomplished and achieved in our reign.”<sup>69</sup>

Once again Basil’s family is portrayed in connection with the cross, and the figure of Constantine I and his military victories can be discerned behind the tenth-century description. For, although the “victoriousness” of the cross might be variously interpreted - as over death, over sin, over heresy and idolatry - given the prominence of Constantine in Macedonian ideology and of the cross in his victories in the ninth-century sources, along with the military and dynastic character of the rest of the palace’s iconography, the implications of the imperial statement are clear. The words of the imperial family make clear the perceived link between the exercise of imperial authority and the symbol of the cross. In the light of such a perception the prominence of the cross in the tenth-century ceremonies is unsurprising. Through the lighting of candles and *proskynesis* before the cross, beginning within the palace at the baptistery and repeated at various stations as the cortege continues its progress to Hagia Sophia, the Emperors not only give thanks to God but are also repeatedly seen in connection with this most important of imperial symbols.

At the council of 869 the link between the founder of the Macedonian dynasty and Constantine the Great had been made more forcefully. Basil had been described as the “New Constantine,” Eudokia as the “New Helena.” Under his rule an image of Constantine was included in the decoration of Hagia Sophia and the importance of the cross is demonstrated through its dominance in the decoration of the newly erected Kainourgion palace.

However, it was under the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, author of the *De Ceremoniis*, that the symbolic associations between the Macedonian dynasty and the

---

<sup>69</sup> Translated in Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 196-199.

founder of Constantinople become a factual reference.<sup>70</sup> Constantine I is central to Constantine VII's understanding of imperial characteristics. In the famous thirteenth chapter of the *De Administrando Imperio*, which is believed to have been penned by the Emperor himself, he advises his son how to refuse foreign requests for imperial clothes, diadems or marriage alliances with the Byzantine State.<sup>71</sup> He argues that refusal should take the form of a plea to the authority of "that famous Constantine the Great, who was the first Christian Emperor" and who had forbidden such gifts and alliances. More importantly, in his *Vita Basilii*, Constantine VII makes the radical claim that his mother was directly descended from Constantine I.<sup>72</sup> From the reign of Basil I a particular emphasis on dynastic claims of legitimacy has been identified.<sup>73</sup> By incorporating the Great Constantine into his lineage, Constantine VII established a claim that had not been made since the fourth century. In doing so he shifts the emphasis of the association of contemporary rulers with their imperial prototype:

Constantine I is no longer the model to which Porphyrogenitus aspires; he is the living image which Porphyrogenitus will embrace in all its aspects... this ideology is completed by the preservation in the palace of the rod of Moses and of the most beautiful cross, symbol of the Christian religion, which once belonged to Constantine.<sup>74</sup>

We have seen that the rod of Moses featured in the preparations for the procession to Hagia Sophia, when it was taken to the sanctuary of St. Theodore in the Chrysotriclinos. Now, having venerated the crosses in the baptistery, the Emperors enter the sanctuary of St Stephen in front of the Octagonal Chamber and here they venerate the Cross of Constantine itself. If the figure of Constantine had become an increasingly important personality in the imperial ideology promoted from the Byzantine court, it was his cross that was the most frequently used image in that promotion. This cross, which it was believed Constantine had constructed after his victory at Milvian Bridge, was a central element in the development of the Constantinian legend during the ninth century.<sup>75</sup> It was of a particular type, easily recognised by its stepped base, its importance as a tool of

---

<sup>70</sup> Markopolous, "Constantine the Great in Macedonian historiography," 159-170.

<sup>71</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, 65-77.

<sup>72</sup> Markopolous, "Constantine the Great in Macedonian historiography," 163.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 159-160.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 164-165.

<sup>75</sup> See Kazhdan, "Constantine Imaginaire," 218-230.

political propaganda demonstrated by the regularity with which it appears on imperial mints.

The veneration of the crosses in the baptistery carried a variety of associations - imperial piety and triumph in war as well as the sign given by a direct act of grace from God to the first Emperor Constantine. The veneration of the very cross that Constantine had commissioned in thanksgiving for the victories that sign had prefigured transferred those symbolic associations to established fact. The veracity of that fact was preserved in the writings of the eighth and ninth-century hagiographers, one of whom had stated with pride that the cross was preserved in the palace up to his own time.<sup>76</sup> The Cross of Constantine accompanies the Emperors during their procession from the sanctuary of St Stephen and is translated to the cathedral before the Great Entrance. It was evidently a symbol that was deemed equally appropriate within the political heart of Byzantium and its ecclesiastical centre. It was an object that provided a precious physical link between the Emperors of the Middle Byzantine period and their most hallowed predecessor and encapsulated the relationship between the Empire and the divine that had been established with the events that preceded its construction. The Emperors' veneration of Constantine's cross and its continued presence in the ceremony show the interweaving of political ideology, Christianity and political history that characterised the Byzantine understanding of the imperial structure, expressed and formulated in the ceremonial life of the tenth-century court.

Part of the political use made of the image of the cross and of the figure of Constantine the Great was to establish the legitimacy of the rule of the first Macedonian Emperor and especially to reinforce the dynastic claim of his successors. Given the murky events that surrounded Basil I's rise to power the attempt to place his appropriation of the imperial title within a context of divine providence was especially important. The focus on dynastic succession identified both in Paris gr. 510 and the decoration of the Kainourgion palace, and also in Constantine VII's claim to direct succession from Constantine I, was evidently a pressing concern for the Middle Byzantine authorities. In the thirteenth

---

<sup>76</sup> This claim is made in the Guidi legend, Kazhdan, "Constantine Imaginaire."

chapter of the *De Administrando Imperio*, already mentioned, Constantine VII attacks the Emperor Romanus thus: “[He] was a common, illiterate fellow, and not from those who have been bred up in the palace, and have followed the Roman customs from the beginning; nor was he of imperial and noble stock, and for this reason in most of his actions he was too arrogant and despotic.”<sup>77</sup>

The procession to Hagia Sophia involves more than one Emperor, one or more junior and one senior. The action surrounding the early part of the cortege indicates that the ceremony provides a powerful endorsement of the future succession. That succession was ideally decided by the senior Emperor’s appointment of a co-Emperor and, although it was never a constitutional necessity, the junior Emperor was usually selected from the imperial family. It is, therefore, meaningful that, as they move through the palace, there is absolutely no distinction made between the Emperors. Together they perform each act of imperial piety and they receive the same reverence from their courtiers. In the *De Administrando Imperio* Constantine VII had drawn a direct causal link between the proper exercise of imperial authority, upbringing within the palace and the observance of customs there. By incorporating the junior Emperor into the ceremonial life of the palace he would regularly participate in practices that were considered necessary for the successful application of political power. At the same time, the future Emperor was displayed to the court over which he would rule. Thus the dynastic concerns of the Middle Byzantine Emperors find a useful outlet within the ceremony by which they conducted themselves from the palace to the cathedral.

During this early procession the Emperors establish the legitimacy of their occupancy of the imperial position and appropriate to themselves a variety of associations. The highly religious nature of their behaviour is unsurprising since the procession forms the beginning of the imperial progress to the cathedral for the celebration of a religious feast. However, the number of religious locations within the palace is striking and the objects through which the Emperors demonstrate their religious devotion are not accidental. Each has political as well as religious significance. Through acts of piety, which they alone

---

<sup>77</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, 73.

perform, the Emperors take possession of their palace and integrate into their public display the religious objects collected by successive administrations for the adornment of the imperial residence. Their pious acts are offset by the honour shown to them by their courtiers. The Emperors do not yet don their full imperial regalia, indicating that imperial ideology was not always, particularly amongst the limited circle with access to the inner realms of the palace, formulated in terms of grandeur. Simplicity, piety and humility, emphasised through action and dress, could equally characterise the Emperors. It is only once they are clothed in the imperial insignia and emerge from the palace that the more familiar image of Byzantine imperial authority is adopted.

When the instruction from the Patriarch has arrived the Emperors return to the Octagonal Chamber where the *vestitores* dress them in their *chlamydes* and the *praepositi* crown them. Thus dressed, they come out into the Triclinos of the Augusteus (Pl.3 20) where various members of the court are standing. This group consists of civil functionaries, who we have met before: the *logothete*, the chief of the *kanikleion*, the *manglavion* and *hetaireia* along with the chief of the palace guard. The Emperors stand at the Golden Hand (Pl.3 19), the passage communicating the Augusteus with the Onopodion, at the curtain of the Augusteus and, in the presence of the staff of the Chrysotriclinos, the first reception takes place.

The senior Emperor makes a sign to the *praepositus* who signals with his *chlamys* to an *ostiaros* who brings in magistrates, proconsuls, patricians, *strategoï*, those with high office (ὀφφικιάλιοι) and *clisourarchs*. Four *ostiaroi* carry sticks decorated with precious stones and introduce each rank of courtiers. It is stated that the Emperors signal in the same manner at all receptions, to the *praepositi*, who summon those who must enter. The courtiers perform *proskynesis* before the Emperors and, having arranged themselves in order of rank, the *praepositus* intones “Be Pleased!” (Κελεύσατε). They escort the Emperors as far as the Onopodion (Pl.3 18).

Here stand the *drungarios* of the city and that of the fleet with the imperial troops, who we have seen have been waiting at the Onopodion since early morning. The magistrates

and their companions, the *master of ceremonies* standing in the middle of them, again perform *proskynesis* before the Emperors. The senior Emperor signals to the *praepositus* who, in turn, signals to the *master of ceremonies* and intones "Be Pleased!" The cortege now moves to the Great Consistorium (Pl.3 15), where a cross and the Cross of Constantine have been placed. Here stand the *protoasekretis*, the *protonotarios* and various members of secretarial staff. Once again the Emperor signals to the *praepositus* who gestures to a *silentarius* and intones "Be Pleased!"

During this second imperial progress a number of new elements are introduced. The Emperors now wear the *chlamys* and the diadem they had received at their coronations. In the tenth century that ceremony was performed in Hagia Sophia and the Patriarch played an important role. His prayers, as we shall see when we come to examine the coronation ceremony, invested the insignia with the hopes of the community for the reign and called on divine intervention on behalf of the Emperor and his people. On one hand, then, the significance of the *chlamys* and the crown can be sought in the ceremony in which the Emperor receives them. For at the beginning of each reign these symbols of authority became the focus for expressing an understanding of imperial rule and the responsibilities of the Emperor invested with them.

However, these objects also placed the Emperor within a long tradition, in which we have seen the Emperor Constantine I was a fundamental reference. Constantine VII had appealed to the authority of the first Constantine in advising his son on how to refuse foreign attempts to procure imperial robes and crowns. His advice demonstrates the importance of the imperial insignia and also the way in which the myth of Constantine could be constantly reinvented to serve contemporary needs:

Should they ever...demand...that some of the imperial vesture or diadems or state robes should be sent to them in return for some service...thus you shall excuse yourself: "These robes of state and the diadems...were not fashioned by men, nor by human arts devised or elaborated, but, as we find it written in secret stories of old history, when God made emperor that famous Constantine the Great, who was the first Christian emperor, He sent him these robes of state by the hand of His angel, and the diadems...and charged him to lay them in...St. Sophia; and not to clothe himself in them every day, but *only* when it is a great public festival of the Lord. And so by God's command he laid them up, and they hang above the holy table in the sanctuary of this same church, and are for the ornament of the church... And when a festival of our Lord and God Jesus Christ comes

round, the patriarch takes up such of these robes of state and diadems as are suitable and appropriate to that occasion, and sends them to the emperor, and he wears them in the procession, and only in it, as the servant and minister of God, and after use returns them again to the church and they are laid up in it.<sup>78</sup>

The speech goes on to assert that a curse from Constantine I protects the insignia against their removal from the church or improper use. It is clear from our examination of the procession thus far that Constantine VII's claims about the storage of the insignia are entirely fictitious. They were kept not in Hagia Sophia but in the Chrysotriclinos and the Patriarch had no part in transferring them to the Emperor before the ceremony. The Emperor does not only wear the *chlamys* and diadem during religious feasts but also at a variety of profane occasions. The veracity of the imperial response to foreign demands matters little. What it demonstrates is that the Byzantine possession of these insignia was envisaged in terms of an exclusive relationship the Emperors enjoyed with God and their inheritance of a tradition from Constantine I as Christian rulers, servants and ministers of God on earth.

A second development during this stage in the procession is the division of the roles of senior and junior Emperor. The junior Emperor simply accompanies the senior. The first portion of the ceremony expressed equality between the two Emperors, their shared heritage and piety. Now the senior Emperor is singled out as the authoritative figure. It is he who signals for the introduction of the dignitaries, who would have received their office from him. Although their *proskynesis* is delivered to both rulers there is now a recognition that control lay in the hands of the ruling Emperor.

At this stage in the procession, the Emperors are presented to further courtiers as well as those we have met earlier. These are introduced in formal receptions in which, on a sign from the Emperor, they are brought in to perform *proskynesis*. It has been suggested, above, that the homage paid by courtiers reflected and supported the correct relationship between themselves and the Emperors. The receptions function in a similar way, requiring a physical demonstration of subjects' humility before their rulers, this time through the full act of *proskynesis* by which they would prostrate themselves at their feet.

---

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 67.

However, on this occasion the relationship established is not only between the Emperors and their courtiers but also between the courtiers themselves. For the order of the receptions is always carefully regulated. Here and throughout the ceremonial book there is an evident concern that the courtiers are positioned in order of rank. As well as presenting to the court an idealised view of the Emperors as they emerge in full regalia from the Octagonal Chamber, therefore, the ceremony reinforces the internal structure of the court.

The first reception involves magistrates, proconsuls and patricians. These were all titles of dignity, conferred by the Emperor and not necessarily tied to any office. The order in which they are introduced corresponds to the order of dignities in the ninth-century *Kletorologion* of Philotheus.<sup>79</sup> After them come *strategoï*, the leaders of the military districts (themes) into which the Empire had been divided from the seventh century and which had steadily increased in number as they were divided into smaller units and the Empire pursued a policy of territorial expansion in subsequent years. Bury notes the ambiguity of the term ὀφφικιάλιοι and concludes that in the ninth century “it was applied to all the functionaries holding office or command, with the exception of the *στρατηγοί*.”<sup>80</sup> Here it is evidently used to designate those holding high office. The *clisourarchs* were similar to the *strategoï* and were in charge of frontier districts that had not been raised to the status of themes.<sup>81</sup> This first reception, then, involves some of the highest dignitaries and office holders of the court who prostrate themselves before the Emperors and maintain a strict order of precedence.

The *drungarioi* of the city and of the fleet, who stand in the Onopodion with the imperial troops, were military leaders within Constantinople. The former commanded the *arithmoi*, troops stationed in the capital, and also had important duties on imperial expeditions when he was responsible for the security of the camp and receiving orders from the Emperor to be distributed there.<sup>82</sup> The latter was in charge of the naval fleet at

---

<sup>79</sup> See Bury, *Administrative System*, 22.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>81</sup> Vogt I, *Commentaire*, 43-44.

<sup>82</sup> Bury, *Administrative System*, 60-62, Oikonomides, *Listes*, 331.

Constantinople.<sup>83</sup> Both were important military leaders in the city and it is fitting that they should be present with the rest of the imperial troops when the Emperors pass. It is in the presence of these military officials that the members of the first reception perform a second act of *proskynesis* before the procession continues to the Great Consistorium where the Cross of Constantine has been erected. Here stand representatives of the secretariat along with the *protoasekretis* and the *protonotarios*.

A wider group has now been introduced into the ceremony. Once again, both civil and military figures take their place to honour their rulers. The prominence of military figures, particularly in the Onopodion where imperial troops display their arms, is particularly significant because the Emperors who took part in the ceremony would not necessarily have led their troops on campaign. Constantine VII, for example, never performed on the battlefield. It was, therefore, advantageous to establish the notion of imperial victory elsewhere. Sabine MacCormack has noted the way in which the imperial presence at the Hippodrome might have come to replace his personal involvement in military expeditions.<sup>84</sup> Here, when the Emperors appear in full imperial regalia, to be greeted in a series of receptions, an analogy might be drawn with the kind of imperial epiphany that took place when the Emperor entered a city in triumph, the traditional *adventus*.<sup>85</sup> The notion of imperial victory is transferred into the city, where the emergence from the palace is greeted like a triumphal entrance. That reference would only have been strengthened by the presence of the image of the cross and of Constantine's *ex voto* cross.

The emergence of the Emperors from the palace is not a simple process. As Dagron observes, the activity at the edge of the Daphne Palace indicates that the Emperors do not leave immediately, but pause to “recenser tous les éléments du monde palatial et parfaire l'image d'un souverain très militaire”<sup>86</sup> an image completed by the putting on of the *chlamys* and the display of arms in the Onopodion. As they prepare to come out of the

---

<sup>83</sup> Bury, *op. cit.*, 108-111.

<sup>84</sup> MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 242.

<sup>85</sup> On which see *ibid.*, 15-89.

<sup>86</sup> Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre*, p.109.

confines of the palace, therefore, a more military character replaces the image of civilian imperial power that had characterised the earlier procession.

Next the Emperors pass through the buildings of the palace guard, or *tagmata*, beginning with the Triclinos of the Candidates (Pl.3 10). Here the clergy of the nearby Church of the Lord stand and the Emperors kiss a cross held out for them. They continue to the first Schola (Pl.3 11), where they perform *proskynesis* three times before a “magnificent silver cross,” before proceeding to the Triclinos of the Excubitors (Pl.3 6). On either side of the Triclinos, standards of the four *tagmata* and Roman banners (*vela*) are arranged according to rank in anticipation of the arrival of the Emperors and they join the cortege.<sup>87</sup> On the left, members of the *tagmata* stand in three rows to deliver Latin acclamations. Having heard the acclamations the Emperors move on to the Lychni (Pl.3 8), which has been decorated by the city’s silk merchants and silversmiths, and, holding candles, they perform *proskynesis* three times before the silver cross placed there, giving thanks to God.

Standing under the vaulted ceiling (*καμάρα*) the Emperors receive the first acclamations of the factions. The acclamations are led by the claqueurs (*οἱ κρόκται*) and the ordinary faction members respond. Whilst the latter acclaim, the faction leader (*demarch*) takes the edge of his *chlamys* with which he three times makes the sign of the cross before the Emperors but when the claqueurs deliver their chants he remains still. The first reception is that of the Blues and before the acclamations the *master of ceremonies* brings their *demarch*, who is also the domestic of the *scholae*, before the Emperor<sup>88</sup> to deliver the faction’s booklet (*λιβελλάριον*). When the Emperor has received it and passed it to the *praepositus* the faction acclaims. What the booklets given by each *demarch* contained is not specified, though Vogt proposes that they contained transcripts of the acclamations and perhaps also requests from the factions.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> On military standards see Haldon, *Three Treatises*, 270-274 and Bury, *Administrative System*, 56.

<sup>88</sup> On the organisation of the factions, see below, 106-110.

<sup>89</sup> Vogt, I, *Commentaire*, 52.

At the Church of the Holy Apostles (Pl.3 5) the Emperors again give thanks to God by a triple act of *proskynesis* and the second reception, by the Greens, takes place. The third reception, by the Blues, takes place at the bronze door of the Scholae, leading to the vault of the Chalke. At the vault the Emperors are acclaimed: "May God make them happy for many and good years."

Now the final progress of the cortege takes place. The Emperors pass through the bronze gate of the Chalke, beyond which the White faction, along with the *demarch* of the Blues, receives them. They proceed to the threshold of the Augusteon, the square that occupied the space between the main entrance to the Great Palace at the Chalke and Hagia Sophia (PLAN 3), where the *demarch* of the Greens and the Red faction receive them. At the *horologion* of Hagia Sophia, by which the Emperors enter the church (PLAN 4), the final reception, that of the Blues, takes place.

The final approach of the Emperors towards the cathedral is, therefore, punctuated by a series of acclamations. The factions play a prominent role in the ceremonial book and their acclamations are an important element in this part of the procession. They are, however, not contained in chapter 1 and will be discussed separately. Without examining their content there are, nonetheless, observations that can be made about this final progress of the cortege.

It has been suggested, above, that the emergence from the palace is formulated like a triumphal entrance. In the fourth and fifth centuries imperial *adventus* involved two greetings, one short meeting outside the walls of the city and a more elaborate ceremony within, when the people would acclaim the Emperor.<sup>90</sup> When the factions, symbolic representatives of the people, acclaim the Emperors as they emerge from the military area of the tagmata, the ceremony closely mirrors traditional *adventus*. At the threshold of the palace the Emperors were received by their troops and honoured by their court and then as they continue their progress towards the church they are acclaimed. This part of the ceremony resembles the second greeting of *adventus*, that between the Emperor and the

---

<sup>90</sup> MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 20.

urban community. It, therefore, supports the understanding of the procession in terms of triumph and also integrates the people, albeit through symbolic representation, into the ceremony, where the court, the civil administration and military guard have already played their part. This final aspect of the ritual completes the imperial image by announcing the Emperors' bond not only with the court and army through whom he governed but also with the people over whom he ruled.

During this progress, imperial veneration of the cross is again a principal element. However, with the introduction of the *vela* and the Latin acclamations of the *tagmata*, a new reference is introduced to the ceremony. The procession as far as the Great Consistorium is filled with symbols of military victory and God-given imperial rule established within a tradition in which the figure of Constantine the Great is a primary reference. During this later stage in the procession more general references to the Roman past are introduced.

The insignia that accompany the formal movement of the Emperors to Hagia Sophia are diverse. On one hand, the sceptres and standards correspond to those carried by the different classes of the four *tagmata*.<sup>91</sup> However, along with these ensigns, Roman standards take their place and publicly display the Roman heritage of the Empire. The Byzantine Empire never relinquished its claim to Roman nomenclature. We have seen that the confiscation of purple cloths Liudprand of Cremona tried to export from Constantinople was defended through an appeal that they were only fit for Romans, indeed the failure of his embassy largely resulted from the refusal of the imperial authorities to accept the western ruler, Otto's appropriation of the title Roman Emperor.<sup>92</sup> The changing face of early Medieval Europe, particularly the rise of western kingdoms close to the former capital, resulted in the conscious attempt to maintain the exclusive relationship of the eastern Emperors with the Empire of the old Rome. In this development the recognition by Michael I Rhangabe of Charlemagne as *basileus* in 812

---

<sup>91</sup> See Bury, *Administrative System*, 56 and Vogt, I, *Commentaire*, 49-50.

<sup>92</sup> Liudprand of Cremona, *De Legatione*, c. 12.

stands as a turning point. From then on the Emperors at Constantinople adopt the title Emperors of the Romans:

This title the Byzantines reserved for themselves and in so doing emphasised, particularly *vis-à-vis* the West, the superiority of the one true Emperor of the Romans in Constantinople; at the same time, by the use of this symbol, they underlined the inalienable nature of their claim to world dominion as heirs of the ancient *Imperium Romanum*.<sup>93</sup>

Throughout the acclamations that accompany the ceremonies the Byzantines are referred to as Romans, their rulers as Emperors of the Romans. This title not only expressed a belief about the continuation of ancient imperial tradition at Constantinople, but also justified the increasingly problematic claim of the Emperors to universal dominion, another standard assertion of the acclamations.<sup>94</sup> The Roman standards that accompany the Emperors to the cathedral and are lowered in reverence of the new Emperor within the church at his coronation must be seen as part of this trend.

The difficulty of maintaining continuity with the Roman past at Middle Byzantine Constantinople is evident in the use of Latin acclamations with which the *tagmata* greet the Emperors at the first Schola. Usually the Emperors are acclaimed in Greek and the degree to which this had become the official language of the Empire is painfully clear in the manner of the recording of the Latin chants.<sup>95</sup> After each phrase the compilers of the ceremonial book provide a Greek translation. These Latin acclamations must be seen as an attempt to preserve, or to display contemporary practice as a preservation of, ancient custom and to present the Emperors within a framework of Roman tradition, accentuated by the presence of the Roman standards. However, the tenth-century Byzantines responsible for recording the ceremonies show the extent to which that preservation was a carefully constructed fiction. Within the ceremony the use of Latin chants delivered a powerful demonstration of Byzantine inheritance but the *Book of Ceremonies* proves how distant that inheritance had become, since it does not expect those who consult it to understand them.

---

<sup>93</sup> W. Enslin, "The Government and Administration of the Byzantine Empire," J. M. Hussey ed., *The Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 4, part 2 (Cambridge, 1967), 2.

<sup>94</sup> See, for example, below, 185-186.

<sup>95</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 83 (74), Reiske, ; Vogt, 169-170.

The procession from the Great Palace to Hagia Sophia suggests a number of ways in which the ceremonial of the Middle Byzantine court functioned. On a most basic level, the procession achieves a practical purpose: the movement of the Emperors from their imperial residence to the cathedral for the religious celebration. The importance of the manner in which the Emperors participated in the religious feasts is indicated both by the preparations begun on the previous day and the detail with which the ceremony is recorded. The organisation of the court is one concern of the organisers of the ritual, indicated throughout the ceremony where the composition of the groups who greet the Emperors is strictly defined, particularly at the reception of the high officials, who are placed in a rigid order of precedence. It is a dominant feature of both religious and profane ceremonies and this regular ceremonial enactment of the court's internal structure must have consolidated it, by defining each member's position within the whole.

On a more symbolic level, the Emperors themselves are placed within a context that serves to define their position. First, that position is placed within a political framework in which they receive the honour of the court over which they rule and in which the concept of military victory plays an important part. Second, it is placed within a cosmological framework. Repeated acts of imperial piety not only demonstrate the orthodoxy of the Emperors but also place them in communication with the divine sources of their authority, established from the outset of the procession at the Chrysotriclinos. Finally, it is placed within an historical context, establishing the Emperors' position in relation to their predecessors, in particular Constantine I, but also a more general imperial inheritance from Rome.

The processional nature of the movement not only serves to transfer the Emperors from the palace to Hagia Sophia but also allows for a series of developments. As more and more members of the court are introduced, the cortege grows as it approaches the church. The Emperors themselves become more animated as the procession moves through its environment. From a complete lack of activity within the palace, except in relation to the

divine, the Emperors emerge from the Daphne complex and begin to interact with the court, albeit through simple gestures to set in motion receptions. Their acts of piety also become more public. Whereas within the palace these had taken place within the privacy of sanctuaries, as soon as they come out into the buildings of the *tagmata* they kiss the cross held out to them by the treasurer of the Church of the Lord in the open space of the Triclinos of the Candidates. At the same time, the court's behaviour towards the Emperors becomes more expansive. Full acts of *proskynesis* are introduced and the acclamations of the factions are accompanied by the *demarchs'* gesture of making the sign of the cross before the Emperors. The adoption of the imperial insignia is the turning point that appears to precipitate this heightened activity, beginning what appears very like a traditional *adventus*, in which the city is replaced by the area beyond the palace. The acclamations of the factions ensure that the approach towards the cathedral is accompanied by a crescendo of noise in praise of the Emperors and by stationing them both outside the cathedral and inside the *horologion*, the entrance is formulated as the climax of the preceding ceremony.

### *The Emperors in the Church*<sup>96</sup>

Having heard the final acclamations, the Emperors enter the inner narthex of the church by the Beautiful Doors (1 on PLAN 4) and stand behind a curtain where the *praepositi* remove their crowns. At the door of the narthex (pl.4 2) the Patriarch stands with his retinue of clergy. The Emperors emerge from behind the curtain, venerate the cross and the Gospel held by the archdeacon and greet the Patriarch, with whom they exchange kisses on either cheek. Although it is not mentioned in chapter 1, from other chapters we learn that the greeting of the Emperor and the Patriarch in the narthex usually included an act of mutual *proskynesis*.<sup>97</sup> At the Royal Doors (pl.4 3), that is, the central doors leading into the nave, the Emperors perform their habitual act of thanksgiving with candles and triple *proskynesis*. The Patriarch says the prayer of entry and the entrance takes place. The various objects and courtiers that have accompanied the procession from the *tagmata*

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., I, 1, Reiske, 14-19; Vogt, I, 10-14.

<sup>97</sup> See, below, n. 103.

are brought into the church to stand in position where the Emperors will pass by. The sceptres and banners are placed on the right and left hand side of the nave whilst the Roman *vela* and standards are put on either side of the *solea* (pl.4 4), the passage leading from the ambo to the sanctuary. The Cross of Constantine is set up to the right of the sanctuary. The magistrates, proconsuls and the rest of the senatorial class occupy the positions reserved for them on the right side of the church.

Thus the route of the Emperors through the nave to the *solea* and the holy doors (pl.4 5) of the sanctuary, which they take together with the Patriarch, is filled with imperial insignia and members of the imperial court. The Patriarch alone enters the sanctuary and stands on the left behind the holy door in front of which the Emperors, standing on a porphyry stone, perform *proskynesis* three times with candles and enter. At the altar table (pl.4 7) the Patriarch presents them with the altar cloth to kiss. They then unfurl two white cloths and they venerate the liturgical vessels (two chalices and two patens) and the swaddling clothes of the infant Christ. Here they might also leave a bag of gold (*apokombion*). The Emperors then enter the apse behind the sanctuary (pl.4 8) with the Patriarch where they stand before a golden crucifix and, again by triple *proskynesis*, they give thanks to God. After kissing the crucifix they withdraw to their *mitatorion* at the south-east of the nave (pl.4 10). They remain here until it is time for the entrance of the mysteries.<sup>98</sup>

When the holy gifts are to be brought to the altar the *praepositi* enter the *mitatorion* and dress the Emperors in their *chlamydes*. The Emperors come out and cross the right side of the church to arrive behind the ambo (pl.4 11), accompanied by the *cubicularii* and the senate and preceded by the sceptres and banners. Here the liturgical vessels have been placed along with lighted lamps in anticipation of the arrival of the imperial cortege. The Emperors take up the lamps, the sceptres are placed in line and the courtiers walk with the Emperors as they cross the *solea*, in front of the liturgical gifts, to arrive once more at the holy doors. The senior Emperor stands on the right and the junior on the left and they

---

<sup>98</sup> On the transfer of the Eucharist, see R. F. Taft, *The Great Entrance: A History of the Transfer of Gifts and other Preanaphoral Rites of the Liturgy of John Chrysostom* (Rome, 1975).

fix their lamps to the doors of the sanctuary. The archdeacon censures the Emperors, the Patriarch and the altar and the gifts are brought into the sanctuary. The Emperors do not enter the sanctuary but bow to the Patriarch and return to the *mitatorion*.

They again approach the sanctuary for the kiss of peace, which they exchange with the Patriarch, then members of the ecclesiastical cortege and finally the Patriarch again. During this activity the Patriarch stands inside the chancel barrier and the Emperors remain outside. The Emperors step down from the sanctuary to exchange the kiss of peace with their courtiers, bow to the Patriarch and return to the *mitatorion*.

They return once more for communion. Standing to the right of a small portable table (*antimension*), they receive the consecrated bread from the Patriarch. They come down a step - that is to the level of the nave where they had exchanged the kiss of peace with members of the secular court - to eat it and then remount to receive the wine from the chalice held by the Patriarch.

Following communion, the Emperors embrace the Patriarch and once more return to the *mitatorion* where they dine with their most familiar senators. After the meal the *praepositi* enter with *vestitores*, who dress the Emperors in their *chlamydes*. The Patriarch is introduced, embraces the Emperors and accompanies them to the door of the Holy Well (pl.4 13). They stand together at the threshold of the door while the *praepositus* and a silver bearer (ὁ ἄργηρος) stand outside. Here the senior Emperor distributes *apokombia* to the archpriest, *ostiarioi*, the choirs and the guardians (προσμονάριοι) of Hagia Sophia along with representatives of the poor and orphans, while the silver bearer cries “To N. Good Emperors.” Finally, the Patriarch crowns the Emperors and gives them *eulogia* and perfumed oil, receiving, in return, ten pounds of gold. This completes the ceremony within the church and the Emperors leave the Holy Well.

Imperial participation in the liturgy was evidently a grand and solemn occasion. From its outset, when the Emperors and the Patriarch greet each other before the Royal Doors, it

involves the public co-operation of the imperial and Patriarchal courts. This ceremonial co-operation constitutes a clear demonstration of the harmonious relationship between political and ecclesiastical power, which we have seen had been a particular concern for the authorities after the disruption of the Iconoclastic controversy. Within Byzantine ideology the Emperor and Patriarch were conceived of as complementary figures, both established by God for the governance of His people. In the Middle Byzantine sources there is a concern to define and separate their roles. In the thirteenth century Theodore Balsamon, Patriarch of Antioch, would claim for the Emperor responsibility for both the souls and bodies of men and restrict the Patriarch's duties to their souls alone.<sup>99</sup> However, in the writings of the Middle Byzantine period there is never any suggestion of such an overlap in their spheres of authority. The Emperor was charged with the care of his subjects' bodies, the Patriarch with their souls. This division, which had been clearly set down in the *Novellae* of Justinian, was elucidated in the *Historia* of Leo Diaconus. After the death of the Patriarch Polyeuktus, it puts into the mouth of the Emperor John Tzimiskes these words:

"I know the one Principle, the highest and the first, which has brought the structure of the Universe, both visible and invisible, from a state of Not-being to a state of Being; and in the life and circuit of things here on earth I know two things, the power of the priesthood and that of the kingship, the one entrusted by the Creator with the cure of souls and the other with the government of bodies."<sup>100</sup>

By the correct conduct of the two figures within their respective spheres of activity, the security and peace of the Empire would be achieved. As the ninth-century Patriarch Photius stated:

Since the constitution, analogous to man, consists of parts and members, the highest and most necessary parts are the emperor and the patriarch. For this reason the peace and happiness of the subjects in soul and body lie in the agreement and harmony of kingship and priesthood in all respects.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>99</sup> *PG*, cols. 1017 and 1020, translated in Barker, *Social and Political Thought*, 106.

<sup>100</sup> Leo Diaconus, *Historia*, book VI, c. vii, ed., C. B. Haas (Bonn, 1828), translated in *ibid.*, 96-97, here 96.

<sup>101</sup> *Epanagoge Aucta*, J. and P. Zepos, eds., *Jus graecoromanum* (Athens, 1930-1931), vol. 6, 59, translated in Deno John Geanakoplos, *Byzantium, Church, Society and Civilisation Seen Through Contemporary Eyes* (Chicago, 1984), 137.

This harmony is reflected in the ceremony in a number of ways. When the Emperors and the Patriarch greet or take leave of one another they do so as equals, kissing and embracing. At the beginning of the ceremony they perform *proskynesis* to one another and together they enter the nave and cross to the sanctuary. On other occasions it is stated that the two hold hands during this movement, further reinforcing the notion of friendship and equality between them.<sup>102</sup> At the Great Entrance, the two courts together accompany the gifts along a route lined with imperial banners. Later, the harmony between the two courts is starkly expressed when the Emperor shares the kiss of peace with members of both the Patriarchal and imperial courts.

The ceremonial collaboration of Emperor, Patriarch and their courts not only reflected a theoretical relationship but also enforced a regular co-operation between the religious and political authorities that was not always easily maintained in practice. That throughout the history of Byzantium numerous attempts were made to define the respective roles of Patriarch and Emperor indicates that the differentiation was neither easily drawn nor always reflected in the exercise of the two powers. Where the speech of John Tzimisces formulated the government of the Empire in terms of two distinct powers, priesthood and kingship, that distinction was not as straightforward as it implies. Despite a theoretical limitation of the Emperor's authority to the care of bodies, the manner in which he was to exercise it brought his role firmly into the realm of the Church. For example, the *Epanagoge* states:

The Emperor is presumed to enforce and maintain, first and foremost all that is set out in the divine scriptures; then the doctrines laid down by the seven holy councils; and further, and in addition, the received Romaic laws.<sup>103</sup>

The laws that the Emperor is to maintain are not only secular but also those that emanate from Scripture and the Church councils. The difficulty of separating the political from the

---

<sup>102</sup> For example, at Christmas: *De Cer.*, I, 32 (23), Reiske, 128-136; Vogt, I, 119-129. This chapter provides a number of details that are not contained in c. 1, but appear to be designed for inclusion at each imperial appearance at Hagia Sophia, for example the mutual *proskynesis* of Emperor and Patriarch in the narthex and the distribution of imperial largess to the clergy and the poor from the Holy Well at the end of the ceremony.

<sup>103</sup> *Epanagoge*, printed in Zachariae von Lingenthal, *Jus Graeco-Romanum*, iv, 181-184, translated in Barker, *Social and Political Thought*, 90.

religious, the care of men's souls from that of their bodies, is clearly manifested in Basil I's law code. For it would be naïve to believe that the imperial power would be satisfied to enforce laws without imposing his opinion with regards to their interpretation.

Moreover, in the practical administration of the Church the Emperor had considerable influence. From the three candidates presented to him by the metropolitans he would choose the individual to be raised to the Patriarchal throne.<sup>104</sup> He might dismiss the Patriarch when relations became strained, as happened during the Iconoclastic controversy. He convened the Church councils whose decisions he enforced. Therefore, his authority could never be restricted to the purely secular and the Patriarch, due to his ecclesiastical position and his proximity to the political heart of the Empire, was inevitably also a political figure.

The most obvious example of the tendency of the imperial authorities to dictate in matters of doctrine is provided by the Iconoclastic controversy when both periods of Byzantine Iconoclasm resulted from imperial initiatives. However, this was by no means a unique manifestation of discord between imperial and Patriarchal authorities. Where friction did arise, the ceremonial meetings between the Emperor and Patriarch were important. As L. G. Westerink noted in his introduction to the letters of the Patriarch Nicholas Mysticus, whose dealings with the imperial government of Zoe's regency were often far from co-operative: "Relations between the patriarchate and the palace gradually became less strained, partly perhaps through the almost daily contact imposed by the routine of court and church ceremony."<sup>105</sup>

This direct link between Church/State relations and their ritual co-operation is, perhaps, best demonstrated by the times when it did not occur. In 906, after the fourth marriage of Leo VI to Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus's mother, Zoe, Nicholas Mysticus, who had forbidden the union as unlawful, refused the Emperor entry to Hagia Sophia for the

---

<sup>104</sup> *De Cer.*, II, 14, Reiske, 564. Pseudo-Codinus, *De Officiis*, ed. J. Becker (Bonn, 1839), 101.

<sup>105</sup> *Nicholas I Patriarch of Constantinople. Letters*, Greek text and English translation by R. J. H. Jenkins and L. G. Westerink, (Washington D. C., 1973), xxiii.

celebration of Christmas and also of Epiphany 907.<sup>106</sup> Likewise, the Patriarch Polyeuktus demanded penance from the Emperor John Tzimisces and the banishment of his mistress, Theophano, with whom he had plotted the violent overthrow of her erstwhile husband and Emperor Nicephorus Phocas, before he would admit him to Hagia Sophia and perform the coronation rite.<sup>107</sup> At times, then, the religious ceremonies could act as a vehicle through which the Patriarch could defy the Emperor and indicate to him the seriousness of disregarding Patriarchal demands.

In the idealised context of the *De Ceremoniis* this potential disharmony is not referred to overtly, although the control of the Patriarch on the imperial participation in the liturgy is displayed when the Emperors are summoned from the Daphne Palace to begin their progress to the church. Throughout the church ceremony the Patriarch is in charge, just as the Emperors were in the ritual outside. The collaboration of Emperor and Patriarch in the liturgical celebrations at Hagia Sophia described in the document reflected and reinforced an ideal situation, which was itself necessitated by the frictions that almost inevitably arose in a climate where imperial and ecclesiastical roles were not easily differentiated and their practical exercise might be disharmonious.

Beyond the general statement of co-operation between the imperial and ecclesiastical courts and of the equal and complementary status of Emperor and Patriarch further refinement of the understanding of the Emperors' position emerges from their behaviour within the church. Once again, repeated demonstrations of imperial piety characterise that behaviour and underline the relationship of the Emperors with the divine sources of their authority. Here, within the ecclesiastical heart of Constantinople, that piety is expressed within the context of the liturgy. The close involvement of the Emperors in the ecclesiastical rite highlights their unique position within the lay congregation. Indeed, much of their behaviour invites analogy with that of the officiating clergy.<sup>108</sup>

---

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., xvii-xviii.

<sup>107</sup> Leo Diaconus, *Historia*, translated in Barker, *Social and Political Thought*, 96-97.

<sup>108</sup> See George P. Majeska, "The Emperor in His Church: Imperial Ritual in the Church of St. Sophia," Maguire, *Court Culture*, 1-11.

Not only do they participate in the Great Entrance but they also penetrate beyond the chancel barrier into the sanctuary. The sanctuary was strictly off-limits to all laymen except the Emperors and their entrances there would have indicated to all present their peerless position within the court.<sup>109</sup> The movement of the Emperors as they accompany the Patriarch from the narthex to the sanctuary and their prayers at the holy doors also mimic the behaviour of officiating higher clergy. The Emperor's first appearance in the sanctuary took place after his coronation, suggesting that the assumption of the imperial position automatically confirmed ecclesiastical privilege. Furthermore, both the manner in which the Emperors communicate - receiving the bread and wine separately like the priests rather than together in a spoon as the lay congregation did - and the fact that they are censured along with the Patriarch, the altar and the gifts when the latter are transferred to the sanctuary indicate some kind of priestly status.

However, definite limits to that status are expressed within the ritual. The Emperors only ever enter the sanctuary briefly, for most of the ceremony remaining in their *mitatorion*. They remain outside the holy doors both when they receive the Eucharist and for the kiss of peace. These actions, at the threshold of the sanctuary, are significant and will be returned to below. Although there are similarities between the Emperors' behaviour and the priests who took part in the liturgy, the Emperor was never admitted to the ranks of clergy. Numerous measures sought to separate the clergy from the secular establishment; the Emperor's priesthood had been denied, for example, by Maximus the Confessor and again by John of Damascus.<sup>110</sup> After Leo VI's fourth marriage, Nicholas Mysticus attacked the union by condemning the Emperor's unlawful adoption of a priestly role at the ceremony:

The very crown was set on the woman's head, though neither I nor any other archpriest had made the accustomed prayer, the Emperor himself serving her, as he saw fit, both as bridegroom and archpriest, uttering the prayer over the crown and crowning her with it.<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>109</sup> See Taft, *The Great Entrance*, 27.

<sup>110</sup> Maximus the Confessor, *Acta*, PG, vol. 90, col. 117.

<sup>111</sup> Nicholas Mysticus, Ep. 32; Jenkins and Westerink, *Letters*, 219.

Rather than implying any meaningful recognition of imperial priesthood, it appears the Emperors' behaviour within Hagia Sophia served to highlight their close relationship with their Church and to express and recognise their unique position in relation to the divine. Within the environment of the cathedral and the context of the liturgy such messages are inevitably formulated through ecclesiastical behaviour although that behaviour should not, perhaps, be interpreted in terms of a straightforward analogy with clerical figures.

The Emperor's participation in the liturgy necessarily involved him in the ceremonial environment of the Patriarchal court. That involvement provided an opportunity for public co-operation between individual Emperor and Patriarch and a demonstration of the equal and complimentary nature of their offices. It also implies a priestly imperial role, though one which is in many respects ill defined and ambiguous. In order better to interpret his behaviour we should, perhaps, return to the Byzantine understanding of the imperial position itself. For if we are to reject the suggestion that the Emperor was priest some other explanation of his involvement in the liturgy must be sought. That explanation is provided by the relationship the Emperor enjoyed with the divine and his imperial mission in relation to the people over whom he ruled.

The relationship between the Emperors and the divine has emerged as an important feature of the ceremony. It has primarily been formulated in terms of imperial piety, although the direct analogy between the position of the Emperor and of Christ expressed in the disposition of the portrait of Christ in the throne room of the Chrysotriclinos has been noted. During the procession to the church, imperial piety is directed through the icon, the relic and the cross and, whilst each of these has particular imperial associations, none was an exclusively imperial vehicle for approaching God. However, at Byzantium the Emperor stood in a unique position in relation to Him. From Constantine the Great's vision before the battle of Milvian Bridge, God had involved Himself in the life of the Byzantine people directly through their Emperor. His earthly power was likened to that of God, the source of his authority and prototype according to whose example he directed

his actions. Eusebius was the first to set down this understanding of the political structure:

And it is from and through This Very One - who is the Lord of the entire universe... - that the emperor, the bearer of the image of the heavenly kingdom and one dear to God, directs, in imitation of the Higher Power, the helm of the earth and guides all its affairs... Thus invested with the image of the kingship of heaven, he pilots affairs on earth while looking upward in order to steer according to the pattern of his archetype... [God] has modelled the kingdom on earth into an image of that in heaven... [and] in this heavenly kingdom, the one dear to God [i. e. the Emperor] shall henceforth participate, for he has been endowed by God with natural virtues and has received in his soul the outpouring of God's favour.<sup>112</sup>

These ideas had been preserved down the centuries and in the Middle Byzantine period the Patriarch, Nicholas Mysticus expressed similar views:

And this must be the study of all those who know that they are according to the image of God, but especially of those who, not only by their creation, but also through rule over their fellow servants, are endowed with a gift more rich than those: to wear the likeness of the Creator.<sup>113</sup>

The growing tendency of Byzantine commentators from the ninth century onwards to draw direct association between the Emperor and the spiritual world has been discussed by Henry Maguire.<sup>114</sup> In visual and literary art Emperors are increasingly seen occupying the heavenly universe. In the eleventh century Michael Psellos would address himself to the Emperor Constantine Monomachos thus:

“You have outdone nature, and have become closest to the ranks of spiritual beings... How, therefore, shall we complete your portrait...? For you are to some extent a being with a body and without a body, both above nature and better than nature. We compare you, therefore, to the finest of bodies and to the more immeasurable of those without bodies.”<sup>115</sup>

Here “Psellos does not merely associate and rank the Emperor with the bodiless angels, but he implies that the Emperor's very nature partakes of the superhuman immateriality of the heavenly powers.”<sup>116</sup> The direct interaction of the Emperor and the divine is particularly well expressed through official visual art. We have seen in Paris gr. 510 and

---

<sup>112</sup> Eusebius, *Oratio de laudibus Constantini*, ed. I. Heikel, (Leipzig, 1902), 198-202, translated in Geanakoplos, *Byzantium*, 17-18.

<sup>113</sup> Nicholas Mysticus, Ep. 32; Jenkins and Westerink, *Letters*, 25.

<sup>114</sup> H. Maguire “The Heavenly Court,” in Maguire, *Court Culture*, 247-249.

<sup>115</sup> *Scripta Minora*, ed. Kurz and Drexler, I, 31.8-19, translated in *Ibid.*, 251-252.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

the decoration of the Kainourgion Palace the integration of imperial and religious images. This possibility was also realised within the sacred environment of Hagia Sophia. For example, when the Emperors entered the cathedral to celebrate the liturgy their path led them under two mosaics in which imperial figures were portrayed along with their heavenly protectors. Above the doorway by which, having removed their crowns, they enter the narthex, the Emperors Constantine and Justinian were pictured with the Theotokos and Child and, as they came through the Royal Doors they passed under the image of an Emperor prostrate before the enthroned Christ. In these images, which dominated the principal entrances to the church, Emperors communicate directly with divine figures, appearing alongside them without contradiction and without need of intermediaries.

This unique access is central to the Emperors' behaviour within the church. As Emperors, inheritors of the kingdom of heaven who governed by God's will and according to His model, they could pass between the divine realm of the sanctuary and the earthly world of the nave. In this respect their behaviour at both the kiss of peace and at communion is significant. On both occasions the Emperors stand at the threshold of the sanctuary, between heaven and earth. Here they receive the body of Christ from the hands of the Patriarch who stands within the holy of holies, but come down to the level of the nave to eat it. Similarly, they stand at the threshold to exchange the kiss of peace with the officiating clergy, who again remain inside the sanctuary, but they step down in order to exchange it with their courtiers. In relation to the latter, George Majeska has observed:

Standing literally in the doorway between the sanctuary and the body of the church - symbolically, then, between heaven and earth - the emperor, this clerical-lay figure, mediates between the two worlds, bringing the *pax* of the altar to the lay world of the empire.<sup>117</sup>

However, Majeska's focus on the combination of clerical and non-clerical imperial behaviour in the church, in which the "clerical" aspects are not easily interpreted, as evidence of an imperial identity in which both aspects find a place, and, in the light of this conclusion, to interpret the behaviour, is open to criticism. Imperial actions at the doors of the sanctuary do not resemble those of ecclesiastical figures, although they do

demonstrate his unique position within the laity, which does not necessarily stem from a joint clerical and lay identity but rather in the imperial status, without reference to a priestly aspect, which itself, according to Psellos, participated in the divine.

The Emperors' actions within the sanctuary not only establish their unique position in relation to the spiritual realm and their piety, but also demonstrated their support for the Church through the tangible act of gift giving. This general protocol states that, having entered the sanctuary, the Emperors deposit the two usual white cloths (ἀέρας) on the altar. These cloths, usually referred to as *eilita*, were white altar cloths, the Emperors' regular gifts to the church.<sup>118</sup> Although it is not explicitly stated here, the two patens and chalices, which the Emperors venerate within the sanctuary, were probably also imperial gifts. It is certainly the case that on Easter Sunday the Emperor deposits such items, along with the altar cloths, in the sanctuary.<sup>119</sup> On Easter Sunday, Epiphany and Christmas, having venerated the chalices, patens and the swaddling clothes, the Emperor also left an *apokombion* on the altar table before his departure.

Material benevolence towards the Church is also the subject of the closing ceremony at the Holy Well, when the Emperors distribute *apokombia* both to representatives of the poor, demonstrating their philanthropy towards the weakest members of the community, and also to church dignitaries. The silver bearer's chant during this distribution, to the "good Emperors," indicates the manner in which it was intended such behaviour should be perceived. Rather than an imperial obligation - which the act demonstrably is, being firmly fixed within the protocol - it is advertised as a gift, a demonstration of the goodness of the individual Emperors. At this leave-taking ceremony we also find the reciprocal relationship between the Emperor and Patriarch confirmed when the former

---

<sup>117</sup> Majeska, "The Emperor in His Church," 8.

<sup>118</sup> See P. Speck, "Die," *JÖB* 15 (1966), 323-375.

<sup>119</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 9, Reiske, 65; Vogt, 59. Majeska (*op. cit.*, 6) is mistaken in claiming these gifts were left at Pentecost, having failed to identify the disruption in the middle of 9 which brings to an end the acclamations of that ceremony and begins the protocol for Easter Sunday.

receives from the latter a piece of blessed bread and perfumed oils and, in return, gives ten pounds of gold coins.<sup>120</sup>

The moment at which these acts of imperial patronage take place is significant. The first gift of the Emperors is donated when they are about to leave the sanctuary and indicates that their admittance there to venerate the altar and objects placed upon it is being acknowledged. Likewise, the later gifts are distributed when they are about to come out of the church, again the Emperors recognise and reward their admittance there. At the same time these moments of departure are from a holy to a less holy place. Acts of imperial benevolence and goodwill toward the Church precede both their movement from the sanctuary to the nave, in symbolic terms from heaven to earth, and that from the church building to the outside world. These moments, in which the Emperors move between the holy environments into which they are temporarily admitted and the secular realm in which they exercised their authority, provide opportunities for them to contribute part of their material wealth to the holy altar table and to the Patriarch, the “living image of Christ.”

The Emperors’ behaviour within the church is interesting in a number of respects. On one level it constitutes a clear imposition of the imperial figures into the church. Throughout the office, the Cross of Constantine stands at the doors to the sanctuary as a constant reminder of the traditional inheritance of the Emperors and when they process through the church they are accompanied by military standards and members of their court. They are continuously seen in relation to symbols of their political authority, indicating that inside the church the Emperors are never disassociated from connections with their secular position. From the outset, limitations are imposed on the Emperors’ status in the holy space of the cathedral. They are divested of their crowns before they enter the narthex, a clear sign that their supreme authority is put aside when they leave the secular environment of the city to enter the space where the Patriarch, the only earthly authority

---

<sup>120</sup> A scholium to the text informs us that this sum is fixed and will be shared out amongst the Emperors according to their number: *De Cer.*, I, 1, Reiske, 19; Vogt, I, 14.

to whom the Emperors perform *proskynesis* in the pages of the ceremonial book, held sway.

On occasion, the Patriarch might refuse the Emperor admittance to the church for the liturgy and it is evident that during its standard protocol he remained in control. He summoned the Emperors to make their way to the church and is honoured by them at each imperial appearance at the sanctuary, when they bow before returning to the *mitatorion*. Their participation marks them out amongst the laity but never admits them into the ecclesiastical hierarchy. When Constantine VII drew up his protocols the destructive possibilities of discord between the imperial and Patriarchal courts had been manifest not only during the years of Iconoclasm but also with the dispute over his father's fourth marriage. That the imperial position is tightly regulated within the religious ceremonies, by which Constantine wished to ensure the government ruled in harmony with a divinely established order, is, therefore, hardly surprising. That the imperial status is perhaps limited with regards to a priestly role does not detract from the political and ideological dimension of the ritual. For it was expedient and necessary for the Emperors' behaviour to be acceptable to the Patriarch, to whom they relinquish control of the ritual when they enter the cathedral. Within the church they establish their position, if not as clerics, as Church patrons and benefactors of the poor, as the only secular figures who might penetrate beyond the holy doors of the sanctuary and act as mediators between the holy sphere of the Patriarch and the imperial court.

In the final moments, the Emperors again receive their crowns, this time from the Patriarch himself, who, by this action, recognises and confers, as it were in imitation of the coronation ceremony itself, their authority, offering ecclesiastical sanction to their rule. This action acts as a final reminder that the Emperors' status within the church is less authoritative than outside, that they were now leaving a space governed by the Patriarch who himself performs the symbolic act by which they resume the complete status through which they ruled outside.

It is all too easy to impose on the descriptions of imperial participation in the liturgy our own expectations of an attempt to exalt the imperial position and to push it into contentious areas of ecclesiastical influence. However, the *Book of Ceremonies* displays a marked lack of imperial presumption within the church and certainly no overt challenge to the theoretical harmony that characterised the Byzantine understanding of the respective areas of imperial and Patriarchal competence. Rather, through a careful regulation of its participants, the ceremony serves to establish a unity between the two powers, one that was often difficult to maintain in practice.

### *The Return to the Palace*<sup>121</sup>

Having resumed their crowns, the Emperors begin their procession back to the palace, which essentially takes the same route as that which had marked their arrival. Coming out of the Holy Well (Pl.4 13) they again receive acclamations from the factions. Five receptions take place between the Holy Well and the Lychni and these are conducted in the same manner as those that punctuated the route to Hagia Sophia, except that on their return the Emperors do not receive booklets from the faction *demarchs*. They pass through the buildings of the tagmata and arrive at the entrance of the Triclinos of Nineteen Couches (Pl.3 17), the state banqueting hall, where two musicians stand and praise them before they continue as far as the Consistorium (pl.3 15). Here the chief of the *kanikleion*, the *protonotarios* and other representatives of the chancellery present their homage.

At the Onopodion (pl.3 18) stand the palace guard, whilst the staff of the Chrysotriclinos, the magistrates, proconsuls, patricians and those with high office stand inside the Golden Hand (pl.3 19). The Emperors pass with the *manglavion* and *hetaireia* and are acclaimed by all who have accompanied them. The *cubicularii* and the *praepositi* precede them into the Triclinos of the Augusteus (pl.3. 20), they enter and the doors are closed behind them. Here a herald attached to the imperial chamber (ὁ τοῦ κουβουκλείου φωνοβόλος)

---

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., Reiske, 19-22; Vogt, I, 14-17.

receives them, saying, “*kalos*,” to which the *cubicularii* respond “you are welcome, *ad multos annos*.”

The Emperors enter the Octagonal Chamber (pl.3 21) with the *cubicularii*, leave their diadems and *chlamydes* and enter the apartment of Daphne. They put on their *sagia* and, preceded by the *cubicularii* and the *praepositi*, enter the Chrysotriclinos. The *cubicularii* line up and, when the Emperors pass, they acclaim: “may God grant your reign many and good years.” The staff leave and the Emperors go to the conch where is figured the image of the enthroned Christ before they return to their sacred apartments.

The return of the Emperors to their private apartments involves a similar, though simplified, movement as that which characterised their arrival. Once again they receive the acclamations of the factions and again they encounter the courtiers they had met during the earlier cortege. The only striking difference is that the courtiers, who had joined the former procession gradually, now accompany the Emperors together as far as the Golden Hand and the Emperors themselves do not engage in the acts of thanksgiving that had punctuated the procession to the church. They are divested of the imperial insignia at the Octagonal Chamber and wear their *sagia* as they continue bare headed through the palace, accompanied by the *praepositi* and *cubicularii* as far as the Chrysotriclinos, where they once again approach the image of the enthroned Christ alone before retiring.

The gradual amplification in imperial splendour, action and laudatory acclamation that can be identified during the procession towards Hagia Sophia is reversed during the movement back to the palace. Having come out of the church the Emperors are once again presented to the court over which they governed in full imperial splendour and they receive the acclamations of the factions and homage of the military and administrative officials on whom their government rested. Once again, proximity to the Emperors and access to the deepest confines of the palace single out members of the cubiculum. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the Emperors are left alone before the image of the enthroned Christ in the Chrysotriclinos.

Both at its outset and at its conclusion the Emperors privately adore this image, placed in the heart of the imperial residence. This action powerfully defines the imperial position, humble before the ultimate source of its authority and heavenly counterpart; a definition that had been expanded upon during the ceremony but had remained consistent throughout. Imperial participation in the liturgy is deliberately controlled in the *Book of Ceremonies*. We have seen that it involved a number of complex associations, regulation of the court, careful integration of imperial and religious powers, exaltation of the Emperors through reference to their predecessors, their civilian and military authority, piety, orthodoxy and benevolence. On a fundamental level, the ceremony's message is encapsulated in the scene in the Chrysotriclinos: the Emperor resident in the Great Palace rules through divine sanction, as the mirror image of Christ, the heavenly Emperor, his authority is unquestionable and he is always mindful of the Authority through Whom he received his position.

### **Variations to the General Protocol, Ceremonies in the City and in the Palace**

The protocol for the Emperor's appearance at Hagia Sophia is the most important description of religious ceremonial in the *Book of Ceremonies*. It provides a clear delineation of the procession to and from the church and of imperial participation in the service and gives an idea of the basic ideology behind the religious ceremonies. We have seen that the treatise also contains details of variations to the general protocol on specific feast days as well as ceremonies that took place in the city and those conducted inside the palace complex. One might expect that these ceremonies, especially those belonging to the last two categories, would add considerably to the impressions gained from an examination of the general protocol. However, in fact they provide very little new information about the ritual presentation of the Emperor and the ideology of imperial rule. Moreover, their number is such that a detailed examination of each ceremony is beyond the scope of the present work.

Nonetheless, it will be useful to extract from each of these categories certain scenes, of particular interest either because they introduce new ceremonial participants or behaviour or because they show the way in which the underlying concepts present in the general protocol are given particular emphasis in different locations. Beyond the general concept of the integration of the Emperor<sup>122</sup> into the religious life of his capital, which itself is given additional weight in these chapters, we might note three themes which are developed therein: a) the use of religious ceremonies to regulate the court and reinforce its ordered structure; b) demonstrations of imperial benevolence; and c) the exploitation of the physical environment of the ceremonies to enhance their symbolism, in particular with reference to Constantine the Great. It should be highlighted that the following discussion does not claim to be a comprehensive, or even representative account of cc. 2-46 (37) of the *De Ceremoniis*, which generally function through the same types of ritual behaviour found in c. 1 and confirm the conclusions drawn from it. Rather, it seeks to elicit from the wealth of descriptions found in these chapters examples of passages which show the way in which the Emperor's participation in religious ceremonial beyond the liturgy is incorporated into the *De Ceremoniis*, expanding our understanding of that participation by showing an extensive range of rituals in which he took part.

We have seen that the presence of the imperial court when the liturgy was celebrated at Hagia Sophia affected the ceremony considerably. This is the case at each of the feasts celebrated at the cathedral for which the *Book of Ceremonies* provides a description and, whilst they demonstrate that its model was not always strictly adhered to,<sup>123</sup> these rituals all function in much the same way as the general protocol and all the familiar elements are found. However, during the liturgy the Emperor could only be integrated into the ceremony in a limited manner. Elsewhere we find him playing a more pro-active role; in the *De Ceremoniis* imperial participation in the devotional life of Constantinople is pivotal.

---

<sup>122</sup> In the vast majority of these ceremonies, only one Emperor is mentioned.

<sup>123</sup> For example, at Christmas, the Emperor exchanges the kiss of peace with two newly baptised individuals as well as church dignitaries at the threshold of the sanctuary, a not insignificant detail but one

The ceremony for the feast of Purification (Ἑπαπαντίας) on the particular occasion when it falls on the first Monday of Lent, although unremarkable in many respects, lends support to the idea of a dynamic imperial role in the celebrations of the religious year.<sup>124</sup> In the unusual event that these three elements – the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February, a Monday and the beginning of Lent – coincided,<sup>125</sup> it is prescribed that the Emperor goes to the Magnaura palace (Pl.3 69), where he addresses the people. He announces that he will spend Lent “in the holiness and belief of God” and is acclaimed before processing to Hagia Sophia, where he does not enter the sanctuary but retires to his *mitatorion* and observes two hours of canons, before processing to the church of the Theotokos at Blachernae for the liturgy. In the *Book of Ceremonies*, therefore, the Emperor is integrated into the devotional life of the city not only through his attendance at the services that punctuated the liturgical calendar but also through example and exhortation. He is instrumental in opening the period of Christian penance and in announcing its arrival, indicating that his role extended beyond simple participation in the established rites of the Church.

In the ceremonies themselves the Emperor might also participate in a more active manner. For example, at the Elevation of the Cross, celebrated on 14<sup>th</sup> September, the Emperor goes to the church to participate in the exposition of fragments of the true cross at the ambo.<sup>126</sup> We have seen that the cross was a particularly resonant symbol for the court and the Emperors at Byzantium and it is not surprising to find the political authorities taking a central role in this celebratory feast. The ceremony is uncomplicated, yet highly effective. Although some of the more expansive ritual action in praise of the Emperor that characterised his participation in the liturgy do not find a place here - in particular the acclamations of the factions do not take place, nor is the Emperor involved in the usual prayers during his processional movement through the sanctuaries of the Daphne palace- he is a central figure in the ceremony. He leads the procession of the relics from the galleries and twice enters the sanctuary to venerate them. When they are displayed to the congregation at the ambo, the Emperor’s position, elevated above the

---

which in no way amplifies our understanding of the Emperor’s involvement with his Church, *De Cer*, I, 32 (23), Reiske, 134; Vogt, I, 124.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 36 (27), Reiske, p. 155, Vogt, I, 143.

<sup>125</sup> Between 700 and 1100 this happened but twice, in 851 and 946: Vogt, I, *Commentaire*, 161.

rest of the court but not to the level of the Patriarch, establishes him as intermediary between the ecclesiastical world represented by the Patriarch, the heavenly sphere embodied in the relics of Christ's Passion and the lay world of the court below. This disposition of the participants in the ceremony mirrors that which is found in the general protocol at the moments of communion and the kiss of peace, when the Emperor occupied a middle space between the court, who stood at the level of the nave, and the Patriarch, who stood inside the doors of the sanctuary. Returning to the sanctuary to venerate the fragments a second time, the Emperor's unique position in relation to the laity, excluded from the holy of holies, is again confirmed.

This ceremony represents a different type from the regular liturgical rites, for which c. 1 provides the model. It does not celebrate a specific biblical event but rather a symbol represented by the relics housed at Hagia Sophia. As well as the veneration of the cross as a sign of Christ's Passion, the ceremony also celebrates the State and its ownership of such precious objects. Repeated acts of imperial piety within the sanctuary confirm the privileged position of the Emperor in relation to the Church and reaffirm the close interweaving of political power with the divine. Acting as representative of the lay population, the Emperor honours the objects through which salvation is achieved. At the liturgy, his presence had to be accommodated by alterations to the ecclesiastical ceremony, nonetheless it could only ever be incidental to the action. By contrast, the Elevation of the Cross, like the Emperor's discourse at the Magnaura Palace at the feast of the Purification, demonstrates the way in which religious ceremonies in the *Book of Ceremonies* are imperial ceremonies, both because of the political relevance of many of their features and in a more straightforward way, because often the Emperor's actions are fundamental to the ritual.

If the religious ceremonies demonstrate the integration of religious and imperial ritual at Middle Byzantine Constantinople and the prominence of the Emperor in its public devotional life, they equally display a concern with the internal structure of the court through the strict regulation of its members. In the context of the general protocol that

---

<sup>126</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 31 (22), Reiske, 124-128; Vogt, I, 16-118.

regulation was particularly a feature of the procession to and from the church and its attendant rituals and receptions. Turning to other religious ceremonies, we find that here too relations within the body politic are articulated as eloquently as those between the political and ecclesiastical establishment. This is particularly true of ceremonies within the palace, both those that precede ritual further afield and those that are confined to the interior of the palace walls.

For example, the *Book of Ceremonies* prescribes that on the eve of Palm Sunday court dignitaries and members of the cubiculum come to the palace to participate in a rite in which the consolidation of the court system is central.<sup>127</sup> At the church of St Demetrius (Pl.3 63) the Emperor stands before an image of the Theotokos and distributes bouquets of palm leaves and flowers to his courtiers. Magistrates, *praepositi*, proconsuls and patricians receive large silver crosses, whilst smaller ones are distributed to the occupants of high offices. Any remaining crosses are given to eunuch *protospatharii* and the congregation goes to the church of the Theotokos at Pharos for vespers. Following the church service the *praepositi* distribute palm leaves to the *cubicularii*.

In this ceremony, each person with an elevated status within the court comes into direct contact with the Emperor and the relative status of the dignitaries is publicly recognised in the size of cross received. At the church of St Demetrius the Emperor, through his gifts to the court, is confirmed at the head of the political establishment. At the Theotokos at Pharos, a series of gifts to the *cubicularii* from the hands of the *praepositus* not only serves to distinguish those who would take their offerings from the Emperor and thus to demonstrate their elevation above the other courtiers but also provides the opportunity for the staff of the cubiculum to meet the officer with authority over them. The ceremony on the eve of Palm Sunday, therefore, not only extends the celebration of the religious feast into the heart of the political establishment and gives the Emperor a pivotal role within the devotional life of the court, but also serves to consolidate relations within the political hierarchy.

---

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 40 (31), Reiske, 170-171; Vogt, I, 158-159.

Liudprand of Cremona's famous description of the distribution of money and robes to the court in the week before Palm Sunday during his visit to the court of Constantine Porphyrogenitus provides a wider context to this ceremony.<sup>128</sup> Over several days, the dignitaries of the court and military officials came to receive gold coins and *scaramangia* from the Emperor, the highest ranking receiving such amounts as had to be dragged rather than carried from the scene. Liudprand was clearly impressed by the proceedings, more so since he was himself presented with both with a robe and a bag of gold, and remarked the length of the Emperor's involvement and the proportion between status of office and payment. The ceremony on the eve of Palm Sunday was, therefore, not of an isolated type, but closed several days during which the court received its salaries from the Emperor in a public ritual that brought it into direct contact with its political ruler, firmly establishing him as the source of its wealth and offering an unambiguous statement to the court as a whole and its visitor, Liudprand, concerning the structure of the court.

Imperial gifts to the court, timed to coincide with and tailored to the festivals of the Church show clearly the imposition of ceremonies whose focus is the regulation of the political fabric, which we have seen evident in the general protocol and which find a place in every religious ceremony described in the ceremonial book. Imperial gifts in other contexts and to other groups carry different associations, for example on Good Friday when the Emperor visits the hospice at Kiphis where he distributes money to its old and lepers.<sup>129</sup>

On Holy Thursday, imperial charity is the central theme of his ceremonial action.<sup>130</sup> Then, the Emperor goes on horseback to the hospices of the elderly: "accomplishing the word of the prophet and, more so, the word of the Lord: "he has scattered alms, he gave to the poor, his benevolence endures always"<sup>131</sup> and he enriches them and consoles them with the inexhaustible treasures given to him by God."

---

<sup>128</sup> Liudprand, *Antapodosis*, book VI, c. 10.

<sup>129</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 43 (34), Reiske, 180-181; Vogt, I, 167-168.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 42 (33), Reiske, 177-178; Vogt I, 165-166.

<sup>131</sup> Ps. 112, v. 9; II Corinthians, ix, 9.

Beyond the palace, the potential for reinforcing the notion of imperial benevolence towards the weakest members of the population in the understanding of those who witnessed the ceremonies - and that group would naturally become larger when the ceremonies took place in the city - was evidently seized upon by the organisers of the ritual. Through gifts to the hospices of Constantinople on Good Friday and Holy Thursday the Emperor's orthodoxy is not only demonstrated through his attendance at the liturgy and gifts to the church but also through his realisation of the ideal of Christian charity.<sup>132</sup>

However, it should be noted that, in general, the population of Constantinople is absent from the *De Ceremoniis*. There is no significant alteration in the behaviour of the court as it processes through the city. In particular, there is no attempt to integrate the Constantinopolitan population into the ritual or to articulate a relationship between the Emperor and the people. Neither do visitors to the court command any special place in its scheme.<sup>133</sup> The mention of one group, other than those we have already met, though brief, is worth addressing; this is the court of women. On Easter Sunday, when the Emperor presented himself for the liturgy at Hagia Sophia, the rite in the nave conforms in all respects to that of the general protocol. However, in the galleries of the church, a simultaneous ritual takes place. At the beginning of the service, members of the cubiculum mount to the galleries where they stand behind the Empress as she receives the female court, wives of the male dignitaries. A series of seven receptions takes place, during each of which the Empress exchanges the kiss of peace with the women. There is no indication that this disrupts the ceremony taking place below.

This unusual ritual demonstrates the existence of a separate female court to serve the Empress and indicates its segregation from the male court. The *Book of Ceremonies*

---

<sup>132</sup> For an interesting counterpoint to imperial gifts to the poor, see the feast of St Elijah (*De Cer.*, 28 (15), Reiske, 114-118; Vogt, I, 106-109) when the chief of the *sakellion* (in his capacity as head of imperial charitable institutions) and the directors of the hospices go to the Chrysotriklinos to give the Emperor golden crosses.

<sup>133</sup> Where foreign guests are mentioned, they make little impact on the ceremony. For example, at Easter Sunday, it is stated that, if there are any foreign ambassadors, they enter the Triclinos of Nineteen Couches after the Emperor has received his dignitaries, perform *proskynesis* before him and leave. They play no part in the rest of the day's ceremonial.



makes frequent reference to the left side of the church as the area reserved for women and it is made clear here that not only within the ecclesiastical ceremony but also in imperial protocol the female dignitaries conducted their own ceremonies independently of the masculine administration. That it is only the eunuch *cubicularii* who witness the proceedings suggests that part of their role was to provide a link between the female and male courts, their unusual sexual status allowing them to cross an apparently rigid dividing line between the genders.

The scarcity with which the *Book of Ceremonies* makes reference to the female members of the imperial family suggests that, at least for its compilers, the ritual activity of the female court was either an infrequent feature of the ceremonial life of the wider Middle Byzantine court, or that its correct observance was not a pressing concern amongst the organisers of imperial ritual. In the usual protocol for the liturgy at Hagia Sophia the court gathered in the right side of the church, normally reserved for women, proof that the female court did not usually attend the religious ceremonies there. However, as well as the testimony of imperial art, in which Empresses often take their place in ceremonial settings, most famously the mosaics at Ravenna, there is compelling evidence that the female court, like its male counterpart, was involved in regular ceremonial behaviour. For example, a letter of Nicholas Mysticus to the Pope, condemning the fourth marriage of Leo VI, sympathises with the Emperor, despite the illegality of the union, precisely on the grounds of ceremonial: “since there must be a Woman in the Palace to manage ceremonies affecting the wives of your nobles.”<sup>134</sup>

Because of the dearth of references to women in the ceremonial book, it is difficult to draw any conclusions from those places where they are mentioned. They tend to expose more questions than they can answer. What, for example, is the significance of the Empress receiving her court in the galleries of the church rather than in the palace and what, if any, acknowledgement of the proceedings taking place there came from the Emperor and clergy below? The *Book of Ceremonies* is typical of imperial treatises in its silence about the female court. It is a silence that is particularly frustrating for the modern

---

<sup>134</sup> Nicholas Mysticus, Ep. 32, Jenkins and Westerink, *Letters*, 221.

reader, one which highlights the sexual segregation that must have characterised the Middle Byzantine palace and leaves us essentially ignorant about an entire section of the imperial community.

Throughout the religious ceremonies, imperial behaviour in the churches of Constantinople is consistent. For example, the ceremonial surrounding the Emperor's appearance at the church of the Theotokos and palace at Blachernae conforms in all respects with that which conducted him through the Daphne palace to Hagia Sophia, indicating the similarity of the topography of the two palaces. Beyond the obvious significance of imperial association with the Virgin and the veneration of the relic of her robe, these rituals introduce nothing novel in respect of the court's participation in the liturgy.

Likewise, at the Forum of Constantine, the other location which provides a station for the imperial cortege on more than one occasion, the standard behaviour of the Patriarchal and imperial courts does not diverge from the basic formulae established elsewhere.<sup>135</sup> Nonetheless, the use of this important monument to Constantine the Great, whose prominence in the formulation of imperial ideology as it is expressed in the general protocol has been noted, shows clearly the way in which the wider environment of Constantinople is used in the ceremonial book.

It was at the Forum, on one of the highest hills of the city,<sup>136</sup> that the administration under Constantine I had erected the famous porphyry column, surmounted by a statue of the Emperor himself. This statue, with its crown of seven rays, has been seen as demonstrative of the continued attachment of the great Constantine to the traditional deities of Roman and Greek rulership, and appears to have quickly become a focus of popular devotion and a "barely disguised pagan cult."<sup>137</sup> By the tenth century, of course, such associations would have been long forgotten and the Forum was incorporated into

---

<sup>135</sup> The Forum is a station at three religious ceremonies: The Nativity of the Theotokos (*De Cer.*, I, 1 fol. 29<sup>v</sup>-32<sup>v</sup>, Reiske, 26-33; Vogt, I, 20-26); The Annunciation (*Ibid.*, 39 (30), Reiske, 162-170; Vogt, I, 151-157) and Easter Monday (*Ibid.*, (10), Reiske, 71-86; Vogt, I, 65-77).

<sup>136</sup> Richard Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals* (Berkeley, 1983), 55.

the entirely Christian ceremonies of the liturgical calendar. At some point, a small church had been there, probably on the north side of the porphyry column.<sup>138</sup> That this church was dedicated not to a biblical figure or traditional saint but to the Emperor Constantine himself, who like his mother Helena was regarded as a saint, indicates the degree to which that Emperor was recognised as a legitimate object of Christian devotion. These ceremonies, therefore, when the imperial and Patriarchal courts join in worship at the monument dedicated to the first Emperor, Constantine, provide an unambiguous statement confirming the harmonisation of imperial ideology and orthodox religious belief in the Middle Byzantine capital.

The Emperor arrives with his retinue before the Patriarchal court and mounts the steps leading to the porphyry column and the church. He will remain there throughout the ceremony, while *cubicularii* stand on the steps and the senate stands at their foot in the *kionostasia*.<sup>139</sup> When the Patriarchal cortege arrives, the metropolitans and archbishops perform *proskynesis* before the Emperor and stand on the steps, opposite the *cubicularii*. A processional cross is brought up to the Emperor, who venerates it, and it is placed behind him, in front of the church. Only the Patriarch, deacons and cantors enter the church and the litany is intoned from its north-facing window. At the close of the ceremony, the Emperor takes leave of the Patriarch in the usual manner before continuing his progress.

At the Forum, the Emperor is seen by cleric, courtier and citizen alike in the company of two of the most important figures in the Byzantine understanding of imperial rule: the cross; and Constantine I. On Easter Monday, after the recitation of the litany at the Forum, the contemporary imperial attachment to Constantine I is further underlined when the procession continues to the church of the Holy Apostles.<sup>140</sup> Here the Emperor, together with the Patriarch, venerates the tombs of Constantine the Great along with those of other holy figures: Sts. John Chrysostom and Nazianzus and the Patriarchs Nicephorus

---

<sup>137</sup> Cyril Mango, "Constantine's Porphyry Column," *Studies on Constantinople*, 109.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 107-108.

<sup>139</sup> On which see *ibid.*, 105-107.

<sup>140</sup> See n. 135.

and Methodius. The church of the Holy Apostles housed the tombs of the Byzantine Emperors from Constantine I to Constantine VIII. In this important building, the anticipated final resting place of the Emperor, the *Book of Ceremonies* describes an annual event during which the heads of the ecclesiastical and imperial authorities come together to honour the relics in a display of Patriarchal and imperial harmony, religious unity, confirmation of the importance of Constantine I and the orthodoxy of his successors. The collection of relics, like the presence of historic monuments, at the capital served to enhance state ceremonial and the concern for harmony between imperial and Patriarchal power and between the political and religious inheritance of the Byzantine ruler, so evident in the *Book of Ceremonies*, permeated the topography of the city and the disposition of objects within it.

Religious ceremonies occupy an important place in Constantine Porphyrogenitus's treatise. It has only been possible, here, to give a brief overview of some of the more notable features of ceremonies other than the standard procession to Hagia Sophia and liturgy presided over by the Patriarch. Above all, it is the conformity of the religious ceremonies that emerges from their description in the *De Ceremoniis*. The consistency that characterises the Emperor's behaviour within the churches of his capital indicates the degree to which the regular participation of the imperial court in the religious services performed at Constantinople had, by the tenth century, become fixed, providing an established and recognisable order. To what extent the fixity the *Book of Ceremonies* appears to reflect was a reality in the ceremonial life of the Middle Byzantine court and to what extent an ideal its authors were attempting to realise is an impossible question to answer. In either case, that uniformity was evidently a concern of its authors, who envisioned a perfect religious state ritual, in which each participant's role was predictable and in which the imperial court displayed both to itself and to the outside world the order of its structure, the qualities of its head and its harmony with the ecclesiastical authorities.

### **The Acclamations**

One important element in the religious ceremonies, both those conducted at Hagia Sophia and those that included other churches in Constantinople, has been omitted from the

discussion thus far. This is the content of the praises delivered to the Emperors by the factions. These acclamations, with which the Emperors were greeted during their processional movement through the palace and the city, appear independently from the protocols for the ritual action in the ceremonial book, of which eight chapters are given over to those delivered during religious ceremonies.<sup>141</sup> This separation of the acclamations from the ceremonial descriptions is probably a natural consequence of their being drawn from a different source, one designed for use by the factions themselves rather than the *master of ceremonies*, who was responsible for the organisation of the participants in the solemnities and not the content of the praises delivered to the Emperors. It has, therefore, been deemed appropriate to deal with the acclamations separately within the present study.

In the *Book of Ceremonies* the factions' acclamations occupy a prominent position on both religious and profane occasions. The first examples of such activity on the part of the factions come from the late sixth and seventh centuries and, although it may well have featured earlier, it was probably during this period that their role became recognised as an official element in the ceremonial appearances of the Emperors.<sup>142</sup> By the tenth century, the acclamations are an indispensable feature of the protocols, strictly prescribed and delivered at fixed points along the routes of the imperial processions and at the dinners hosted by the Emperors during religious feasts.

#### *The organisation of the factions*

The four factions of the Byzantine Hippodrome, identified by the colours under which the teams raced, correspond to the circus parties of the Roman Republic. However, in the Byzantine period a new structure appears to have been imposed, representing a break with the past, as the organisation of the games and the appointment of officials presiding over them was taken over by the imperial administration. It is not in the scope of the present study to trace the history of the factions during the early years of the Empire, nor

---

<sup>141</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 2-9, Reiske, 35-71; Vogt, I, 29-64.

<sup>142</sup> Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions. Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford, 1976), 250-251.

is it necessary. What is significant is that the internal organisation of the factions as it appears in the *Book of Ceremonies* seems to have been an official creation of the imperial government from the sixth or seventh century, designed to facilitate their growing ceremonial role.<sup>143</sup>

The term “faction” is somewhat misleading since it implies a continuity with the Roman past not supported by the Byzantine terminology and also suggests the kind of divisive political power dismissed by Alan Cameron in his seminal work, *Circus Factions. Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium*.<sup>144</sup> However, because it is the most commonly used and, therefore, recognisable word for the Hippodrome parties it will be used here to designate the partisans of the racing teams. It is important to draw a distinction between these partisans’ or supporters’ clubs (δῆμοι or μέροι) - what we will call “faction” - and the actual participants in and organisers of the Hippodrome races (ταχίς), a distinction that is consistently maintained in the ceremonial book. It is the former that are responsible for the acclamations and this activity is independent of the latter. Finally, it is worth stating that although the term *demos* might be interpreted as the people as a whole, like the use of λαός to distinguish the ordinary faction members from the claqueurs, it is clear that in the *Book of Ceremonies* it is used in the specific sense of the factions and not the entirety of the Constantinopolitan people.

Although it is commonly understood that over the course of time the Reds and the Whites had ceased to exist or had been subsumed into the Blues and Greens well before the tenth century, all four colours do appear in the *Book of Ceremonies*. Nonetheless, it is often simply the Blues and Greens who deliver the acclamations and the leaders of these two factions oversaw the acclamations of all four groups, the head, or *demarch*, of the Blues leading the Blues and the Whites and that of the Greens leading the Greens and the Reds. A clue as to the differences between the colours comes from those ceremonies at which the four are present, for on these occasions the Blues and Greens are always referred to as *peratic* and the Reds and Whites are identified by their colour alone. The two major

---

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 258: “the faction hierarchy was not a spontaneous growth within the factions, but an official creation, much as we know it from Philotheus and the *Book of Ceremonies*, of the late sixth century.”

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

colours were, therefore, split into a *peratic* or suburban contingent, from outside the city (the Blues and Greens), and a *politic* contingent, from Constantinople itself (the Whites and Reds).

During the religious ceremonies the acclamations are spread evenly amongst the colours. However, the fact that the *politic* groups are so often described simply by the colours of the *peratic* factions supports Cameron's observation that "the *peratic* demes were apparently bigger and certainly more important than the others, thus implying that *more* partisans of *both* major colours lived outside the city than in."<sup>145</sup> However, that where the *politic* demes are separately identified they deliver an equal number of the acclamations indicates that in the ceremonial life of the court they may have played a more prominent role than Cameron allows. This is not the case during the profane ceremonies, at which the Blues and Greens dominate the acclamations and it is possible that the impression given by the distribution of praises during the religious ceremonies is misleading. The Blues and Greens always greet the Emperors before the Reds and Whites and this, rather than the number of stations at which they praised their rulers, establishes them as the senior colours.

At the head of the four colours stood the two *demarchs*. The *demarch* of the Blues and Whites was also the head of the Scholae and that of the Greens and Reds was the head of the Excubitores, although the factions themselves were not military organisations. The *demarchs* were appointed by the Emperor in a ceremony that took place at the Onopodion (Pl.3 18). Here they would be presented to the faction and the *praepositus* would announce, "The Emperors command it, accept this man as your *demarch*."<sup>146</sup> After this, the new faction leader would light candles both at the Onopodion and in the Church of the Lord (Pl.3 12) before going to the faction stables to inspect the horses and returning home. During his progress, the faction would acclaim him, although, unfortunately, the

---

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 94. Vogt's suggestion that all four factions had *peratic* and *politic* members (Vogt, I, *Commentaire*, 83) finds no support in the ceremonial book.

<sup>146</sup> *De Cer*, I, 63, Reiske 269-271; Vogt, II, 75-78.

content of these acclamations has been lost.<sup>147</sup> What is evident from the ceremony is that the *demarch* was not raised by the faction itself but was imposed by the Emperor's choice. He was truly an imperial dignitary. Each *demarch* had a second, or *deuteros*, also chosen by the Emperor,<sup>148</sup> who appears to have been much more closely involved in the organisation of the races than his superior and does not feature in the acclamations.

At each ceremony the factions gather according to their colour at fixed stations, the *claqueurs* lead and the rest of the faction responds whilst the *demarch* conducts the proceedings. The eight chapters of the *Book of Ceremonies* that provide the content of the acclamations can be divided into two categories. Firstly there are those that took place as the imperial cortege went to and returned from Hagia Sophia. For these occasions the ceremonial book gives the acclamations delivered at Christmas, Epiphany, Pentecost and Easter Sunday when six, or sometimes five, receptions take place. The second group corresponds to processions that took the Emperor further afield and involve more numerous receptions. The ceremonial book provides the acclamations for Easter Monday, the Sunday after Easter, Ascension and Mesopentecost.

The standard procession to Hagia Sophia has six stations at which the factions address the Emperor. The first takes place at the Lychni (Pl.3 8), the second at the church of the Holy Apostles (Pl.3 5), the third at the Scholae (Pl.3 11), the fourth at the Chalke (Pl.3 3), the fifth at the Augusteon and the sixth at the *horologion* of Hagia Sophia (Pl.4 1). Three out of the four chapters of the *Book of Ceremonies* that give these acclamations specify only Blues and Greens. However, in the fourth, that concerned with the celebration of Christmas, as well as the general protocol of chapter one, the Whites and Reds also take their place.<sup>149</sup> In either case the sequence is the same: Blue, Green, Blue, Blue (or White), Green (or Red), Blue (or White). The Blues dominate the acclamations, both delivering more of them and occupying the first places as the Emperor leaves the palace and when he enters the cathedral. However, the praises delivered by the two senior factions, both at

---

<sup>147</sup> The section of chapter 63 that claims to give the acclamations for the new *demarch* in fact repeats the protocol of the ceremony.

<sup>148</sup> On the promotion of a *deuteros* see *De Cer*, I, 65 (76), Reiske, 272-273; Vogt, II, 80. During this simple ceremony the *deuteros* is appointed by the Emperor and then presented to the *demarch*.

religious and profane events, are equally essential to the ceremonies. Both groups were dependent on the imperial administration and their acclamations use identical methods to laud the Emperors. It would, therefore, be a mistake to imagine that either faction enjoyed a closer relationship with the imperial authorities than the other.

### *The Acclamations*

Although it would be hard to overestimate the importance of acclamation in the religious rites described in the *Book of Ceremonies*, they are marked by a high level of consistency and, once again, it is only possible here to include a few examples. These statements – of which the document contains a large number – like the rituals themselves, are of enormous interest, not least because of the similarities between them. In every case, the acclamations are delivered to more than one Emperor and the promotion of the notion of dual rulership that this implies is reinforced in their content, where the Emperors, Augustae and Porphyrogeniti are all incorporated. For example, on Easter Monday, the claqueurs of the Greens lead the acclamations:

Lord, save the Emperors of the Romans  
Lord, save those who were crowned by You  
Lord, save the Emperors and the Augustae and the Porphyrogeniti  
Always, our risen God, keep the Emperors.  
Theotokos, keep the Porphyrogeniti.<sup>150</sup>

As well as such series led by the claqueurs to which the ordinary faction members give the responses, the *De Ceremoniis* contains numerous, extended acclamations delivered by the claqueurs alone. Each combines statements pertinent to the feast being celebrated with praises of the Emperors, in which the theme of imperial rule through and in imitation of the divine governance of the universe dominates. The language by which this notion is articulated is, above all, military in character and frequent reference is made to the physical act of imperial coronation, performed by God. Thus at Pentecost, the Emperors are acclaimed:

---

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 2, Reiske, 35-41; Vogt, I, 29-34.

Christ, who has drawn the nations to the knowledge of truth through tongues of fire, benefactors crowned by God, through the visitation of the Spirit, has Himself placed on your precious head a holy crown. This is why we invoke ceaselessly with all heart: Lord, who rules eternally, preserve us for the joy and exaltation of the Romans.<sup>151</sup>

God, through his illuminations in the form of tongues, having destroyed the impiety of the nations, begins to vanquish and to destroy through you, Emperors full of courage, the impiety of nations. May He bring those who speak foreign tongues to speak the same language, *N. and N.*, joy and pride of the Romans.<sup>152</sup>

Similar ideas are expressed on other occasions, for example, at the fifth reception en route to Hagia Sophia on Easter Sunday, the Greens acclaim:

He who reigns with His Father beyond time has in the end spoken with men within time and on the cross has imprisoned Hell and death through His resurrection on the third day. He has inaugurated the resurrection of the dead. May He exalt your power, Emperors, through your victories over the barbarians.<sup>153</sup>

During the return to the palace, the Blues cry:

Christ, having submitted to the cross and to death, has spontaneously come down from the tomb and has smashed the gates of hell by His divine power. He inaugurates the resurrection of all men who have died since the beginning. Today creation celebrates a double Easter, seeing your sceptre, Emperors, rise up with the resurrection of Christ.<sup>154</sup>

As the Emperor's make their way to the church, the factions give audible expression to many ideas that have been identified in other aspects of the ceremony, bringing together worship of God with praise of the Emperors, His servants. Within these praises, the temporal concerns of the imperial authorities – victory over barbarian nations, a strong imperial family crowned by God for the government of the Roman Empire – are combined with statements specific to the feast, so that throughout there is established a juxtaposition of God's revelation through Scriptural narrative and in the lives of the Emperors and, through them, in the Empire. The participation of the divine is established, particularly, at two stages of the Emperors' lives: their coronation and their victories. The highly military character of the factions' praises and the focus on imperial coronation by

---

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 5, Reiske, 48-49; Vogt, I, 42-43.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 9, Reiske, 59; Vogt, I, 54.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., Reiske, 59; Vogt, I, 54-55.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 4, Reiske, 44; Vogt, I, 38.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., Reiske, 45-46; Vogt, I, 40.

God are especially appropriate in the context of the ceremony itself; delivered when the Emperors emerge from the Daphne palace, crowned and wearing the imperial purple, and cross the buildings of the tagmata, where the troops display their arms and Roman *vela*.

It has been suggested, above, that the procession to Hagia Sophia closely resembles the Emperor's triumphal entry into the cities in traditional *adventus* and that the acclamations correspond to its second phase, when the people gathered within the city walls to praise their rulers. Whether the image of consistent, predictable acclamation painted by the ceremonial book was maintained in practice is impossible to determine. Cameron doubts it: "absurd is the naïve but prevalent assumption that the respectful protocols of the *Book of Ceremonies* mirror exactly the actual behaviour of the factions in the middle Byzantine period."<sup>155</sup> However, given the control the Emperor had over the appointment of the two *demarchs* who led the acclamations, it would be surprising to find much hostility directed towards the government within the ceremonies. Certainly, in Liudprand of Cremona we find reference to acclamations conforming to the type set down in the ceremonial book.<sup>156</sup>

However, whether the *De Ceremoniis* provides an accurate representation of the acclamations as they were employed in the ceremonies of the Middle Byzantine Emperors matters little; in the idealised ceremonial that Constantine VII sought to establish, they are important. We have noted that, even when religious ceremonies extended into the streets of Constantinople, people outside the privileged circle of the palace, troops and ecclesiastical establishment feature little. It is in the acclamations that the notion of the people, represented by the factions and led by the imperially appointed *demarchs*, is introduced. Yet this participation is essentially passive, in that the people themselves have ceased to be incorporated into the ritual, their traditional role being undertaken by the factions, whose actions, though perhaps not entirely as predictable as the treatise would have us believe, were certainly more easily incorporated into the kind of insular, regulated ceremonial of the *De Ceremoniis*.

---

<sup>155</sup> Cameron, *Circus Factions*, op. cit., p. 247.

<sup>156</sup> Liudprand, *De Legatione*, c. 10.

What the *Book of Ceremonies* seems to represent is the manipulation of traditional ceremonial types to suit contemporary circumstances. In the highly centralised society of Middle Byzantium, where we have seen Constantinople had come to dominate the cultural and political landscape, the arena of imperial triumph has been transferred into the metropolis: Constantinople has come to represent the wider Empire and here it is the relationships between the dignitaries of the court, the palace troops, the clergy of Hagia Sophia and the imperial family that dominate. Nonetheless, the notion of popular consent to imperial rule is evidently a concern of the authors of the ceremonial book, if not its genuine expression by the people of Constantinople.

With these religious ceremonies, Constantine Porphyrogenitus presents an image of a fixed ceremonial order, in which the Emperors' place in the progress of the religious calendar is assured. In them is found evidence that touches on many aspects of the social and ideological framework in which the rituals were formulated. We have seen, at their core, a concern to promote the piety of the Emperors and the divine sanction they enjoyed, established at their coronation and continued through military victories. In each ceremony, we have seen a desire to present an image of order and harmony, both within the court and between the ecclesiastical and political administrations and it has been argued that the principal audience for these ceremonies is the court itself.

Within the church the Emperor is presented elevated amongst the laity, as an intermediary between the holy realm of the sanctuary, occupied by the priests, and the earthly space of the nave, occupied by the court. He is instrumental in announcing the arrival of Lent and in many of the church ceremonies and, beyond the church, he is surrounded by rituals in which he is honoured by his courtiers and enveloped by powerful symbols that tie him into a traditional inheritance of divinely sanctioned imperial rule. It remains to be seen how far the concerns that have been identified in the religious ceremonies are incorporated in the other rituals of the *De Ceremoniis*. The following discussion will begin with an examination of the coronation ceremony, which has emerged in the regularly recurring feasts of the liturgical calendar as an important

reference and manifestation of God's active participation in the political system of Byzantium.

## **PART 2: IMPERIAL RITES OF PASSAGE AND COURT PROMOTIONS**

The protocols for religious ceremonies contained in Constantine Porphyrogenitus's compilation demonstrate the manner of the Emperor's involvement in the liturgical life of Middle Byzantine Constantinople. During these ceremonies we have seen the ritual interaction of the Emperor not only with the Church but also with the court, the army and, through their representatives, the factions, the people. During his movement through the palace and the city to the Emperor's position are drawn a number of associations that serve to describe the foundations upon which his rule was built and to place the individual within a framework of standard imperial behaviour and characteristics. After chapter 46 (37) the ceremonial book leaves the religious ceremonies to give the protocols for various landmarks in the Emperor's own life, beginning with his coronation and ending with his funeral.

These descriptions open a series of court ceremonies that also include promotions to office and dignity. However, since they form a group in their own right and are so obviously concerned with the definition of the Emperor's position and notions of legitimacy, they will be addressed as a distinct body here. For, where the religious ceremonies successfully subsumed the individual who occupied the throne into an imperial model, it is in these ceremonies organised for the Emperor himself that one can expect to find a particular and perhaps less easily achieved attempt to mould the individual who has achieved the governance of the Empire into an idealised model.

### **Imperial Rites of Passage**

As these landmarks of imperial coronation, birth, marriage and death are examined, a picture emerges not only of the Emperor himself, the autocrat governing as God's vicegerent on earth, but also of the way in which his power is supported through an alliance of family members and co-appointees. Although the Middle Byzantine system did not require a hereditary succession, these ceremonies foster the impression of an Emperor whose reign is not simply concerned with rulership, but whose personal life,

particularly the fathering of imperial children, equally reveals his place as legitimate, God-protected monarch. After an examination of these imperial rituals, the ceremonies for imperial promotions, in which members of the court are raised to dignity and office, will be addressed in order to examine more closely the relationship between the Emperor, his courtiers and officials.

### *Coronation*

In any analysis of the role of ceremonial in the life of the Byzantine Emperor and his court and in the expression and formulation of imperial ideology the coronation ceremony will be of particular interest.<sup>1</sup> It was at his coronation that the Emperor received the insignia of his office, the purple *chlamys* and the crown, and that he was officially recognised to have achieved the *basileia*.

Coronation was the final stage in the process of becoming Emperor, a process that might take different forms in different circumstances. For in the Byzantine Empire there was no single, exclusive method of becoming Emperor and no officially recognised right of hereditary succession. In the light of this there was a natural desire to ensure a smooth transfer of power from one reign to the next. Ideally this would be achieved during an Emperor's reign by the appointment of a co-Emperor - often, but not necessarily, the reigning Emperor's son - who would automatically succeed on the monarch's death. This was the preferred method of imperial appointment and involved, as we shall see, a direct symbolic act, the coronation of the co-Emperor by the senior, in which power was conferred on the former by the latter and an unbroken chain of succession was established. In the period from the defeat of the Iconoclastic heresy in 843 to the end of

---

<sup>1</sup> F. E. Brightman, "Byzantine Imperial Coronations," *Journal of Theological Studies* 2 (1901), 359-392, traces the history of coronation ceremony from the Principate to the twelfth century. See also: Miguel Arranz, "Couronnement royal et autre promotions de cour," *Orientalia christiana periodica* 56 (1990), 83-133; Panayotis Yannopoulos, "Le Couronnement de L'Empereur à Byzance: Rituel et Fond Institutionnel," *Byz.* 61 (1991), 71-92; Majeska, "The Emperor in His Church," 1-11 at 2-4; Dagron, *Empereur et Prêtre*, 74-105.

the rule of the Macedonian dynasty in 1025, of the ten Emperors who succeeded to the Byzantine throne, eight were appointed in this way.<sup>2</sup>

However, the succession was not always settled before the death of the reigning Emperor and usurpation, often violent, was not unknown at Byzantium. In other circumstances a power vacuum might be created when, for example, an Emperor died whilst his successor was in his minority. In such cases the coronation of a senior Emperor was necessitated and was performed by the Patriarch. In our period two coronations of this type took place. In 963 the Emperor Romanus II died, leaving his five-year-old son and appointed co-ruler, Basil II, and a vulnerable throne. Nicephorus Phocas, Domestic of the East, was proclaimed Emperor by the Anatolian armies and marched on Constantinople. After three days of fighting between his supporters and the troops of the grand chamberlain, Joseph Bringas, he entered the city and was crowned by the Patriarch, his coronation marking the beginning of a reign that would last until 969. In that year John Tzimiscēs, who had replaced Nicephorus as Domestic of the East, in collusion with the Empress, Theophano, had him murdered while he slept and was crowned by the Patriarch, Polyuctus.

Therefore, there existed at Byzantium two methods of imperial succession. Either the new Emperor was appointed by the reigning Emperor and would automatically succeed him on his death or an individual would seize power by force, often launching his attempt from a military foundation. The two methods were not mutually exclusive and more than one co-Emperor declined to wait for the natural course of events to conduct into their

---

<sup>2</sup> Michael III, crowned co-Emperor by his father, brought to an end his mother's regency by having himself proclaimed sole Emperor in 856 without the need of another coronation ceremony. Leo III assumed sole power after the death of Basil I in 886 and on his death his brother and co-Emperor, Alexander, became sole ruler. Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus's early reign, during which he was in his minority was marked by bitter rivalries at court. Romanus Lecapenus, the drungary of the fleet, was able to capitalise on the political instability at the palace, having himself crowned co-Emperor in 920. The following year he took precedence over Constantine and established his own son, Christopher, as co-Emperor. After Romanus's forced tonsure by his sons at the end of 944, Constantine moved against the brothers, sending them to the same monastery as their father, and assumed sole power in 945. Romanus II, crowned co-Emperor by his father in 945, ascended the throne on Constantine's death in 959. His own son, Basil, crowned co-Emperor in 960, in his minority on his father's death was denied power until 976. Although in these cases the transition of power was not straightforward or uncontested, in all of them the Emperor was crowned during the reign of his predecessor and therefore ascended the throne without the need of further coronation. The only exception is that of Basil I, who was crowned co-Emperor by Michael III on Whit Sunday 866. However, after he had the Emperor murdered in 867, a second coronation was organised, see below 145.

hands the reigns of power, as is amply demonstrated by the events surrounding the rise to supremacy of Basil I. In either case, intrigue and uncertainty often surrounded the transition from one rule to the next and the ritual marking the completion of that transition must have assumed a particular importance.<sup>3</sup> These two, apparently contradictory, routes to the Byzantine throne, the one founded in birth or imperial appointment, the other in force, preclude any institutionally cemented imperial ideology and, therefore, make the coronation ceremony a subject of enormous interest. For, in the absence of strict rules of succession and, by implication, of easily defined notions of legitimacy, it is through the process of inauguration, of which the coronation ceremony formed an indispensable part, that the newly appointed Emperor is accepted and confirmed as ruler, both in fact and by right.

The coronation, given in chapter 47 (38) of the *Book of Ceremonies*, is divided into two sections.<sup>4</sup> Although there is no overt reference within the text to the different circumstances in which the coronation ceremony might be organised, these two sections describe different ceremonies, representing the two kinds of coronation necessitated by the two routes to imperial succession. The second focuses on the acclamations delivered to the new Emperor, who is not a sole ruler but a co-Emperor, crowned by the reigning monarch. The first, conversely, deals primarily with the action of the ritual and sets out the protocol for the coronation of a senior Emperor; that is, where no Emperor occupied the imperial throne or he was in his minority as in the cases of Nicephorus Phocas and John Tzimiscēs. It describes the full range of ceremonial behaviour, by which the Emperor processes to Hagia Sophia and receives the insignia of his office from the hands of the Patriarch.

On the day of the coronation, the senate and the dignitaries of the *tagmata* go to the palace and take the “insignia” (τὰ σκεύη) - that is, the banners and standards of the different corps<sup>5</sup> - ahead, ready to escort the Emperors. The Emperor, wearing his

---

<sup>3</sup> In our period there was only one uncontested succession of the Emperor's adult son on the death of his father; that of Romanus II on the death of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus in 959.

<sup>4</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 47 (38), Reiske, 191-196; Vogt, II, 1-5.

<sup>5</sup> See Haldon, *Three Treatises*, 270-274; Bury, *Administrative System*, 56.

*scaramangion* and purple *sagion* and escorted by the *cubicularii*, leaves the palace and comes out as far as the Onopodion (Pl.3 18) where he is received by patricians, who, responding to the usual command of the *master of ceremonies*, “Be Pleased!” wish him “many and good years.” At the Consistorion (Pl.3 15) the senate is gathered and, with the patricians amongst them, they perform *proskynesis* before the Emperor and again wish him many happy years. Crossing the area occupied by the buildings of the *tagmata* (Pl.3 8-11), the Emperor is greeted by the factions, who do not acclaim him but make signs of the cross as he passes.

Having entered the *horologion* of Hagia Sophia (Pl.4 1) he goes to his *mitatorion*, where he puts on a silk robe (*divitision*) and a coat of Khazar origin (*tzitzakion*) and he enters the narthex with the Patriarch. He lights candles at the “silver doors”, that is, the central Royal Doors, crosses the nave and goes up to the *solea*, where he lights candles and prays before the Holy Doors of the sanctuary before mounting, with the Patriarch, to the ambo (Pl.4 11), where his coronation will take place.

The Patriarch performs a prayer over the *chlamys*, with which the *vestitores* dress the Emperor. Then he prays over the crown and himself places it on the Emperor’s head. Immediately the people acclaim three times: “Holy, Holy, Holy, Glory to God in the highest and Peace upon Earth” and “many years to N., great Emperor and autocrat.” Wearing the crown he comes down and enters the *mitatorion*, in the south-east corner of the nave, where he sits on a portable throne (*sellion*) to receive the dignitaries of the court. These enter in strict order, fall to the ground and kiss his two knees. When these receptions have been completed everyone repeats their desire for many and good years for their new Emperor before leaving the *mitatorion*. The protocol ends with the statement that: “When it is time for the kiss of peace and communion [it is done] as is customary at the feasts and all the other things are done as usual.”

It has been noted, above, that the second section, which gives details of the acclamations that follow immediately after the coronation, under the title *Ἀκτολογία τῶν δῆμων ἐπὶ στεψίμῳ βασιλέως*, actually describes a different ceremony: the coronation of a co-

Emperor; that is, where a senior Emperor already exists.<sup>6</sup> It begins with the statement that the “solemnity is performed according to custom and the Emperors go in procession to the Holy Church observing all that is customary for solemn outings.” Once again the Emperors enter the church with the Patriarch and mount to the ambo. Here the Patriarch performs the prayer over the purple with which the senior Emperor clothes the newly elect. After the prayer over the crowns the Patriarch crowns the senior Emperor who in turn crowns his co-Emperor. The *proskynesis* of the court and the acclamation of the factions follow.

On the day of his coronation, therefore, the Emperor, whether he is assuming sole power or associated to the imperial position by the reigning *basileus*, processes from the palace, the seat of his government, to the cathedral of Constantinople receiving signs of honour from the court and factions. The signs of the cross with which the latter greet him highlight the sacred nature of the event that is manifest in its location at the ambo of Hagia Sophia. Within the church the Emperor joins with the Patriarch to advance through the nave, a symbol of the co-operation of the ecclesiastical and political authorities that will be repeated at every imperial arrival there. Here the dignitaries of the court gather with representatives of the army, the *tagmata*, and the people, the factions, to witness the investiture of their new ruler. At the ambo the prayers of the Patriarch invest the imperial insignia with a sacred character and, we shall see, express notions of the Emperor’s duty towards his people and the power conferred on him by God. The new Emperor receives these insignia either from the Patriarch or from the senior Emperor and this reception is followed by the assent of those gathered below, the insignia are lowered before the Emperor and the factions acclaim him. This process in which the ecclesiastical and imperial powers unite to establish the Emperor’s status as God’s elect, recognised by his people, symbolises an imperial election in which the divine appointment is acknowledged by layman and cleric alike. Nonetheless, as it emerges in the *Book of Ceremonies*, the coronation ceremony poses a number of problems, not least the difficulty of establishing exactly what is achieved through the ceremony. Before examining the elements that find a place in the tenth-century ceremonial book, it is worth addressing some of the wider

---

<sup>6</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 47 (38), Reiske, 194-196; Vogt, II, 3-5.

aspects of imperial inauguration and, importantly, the domination of coronation in other symbolic references to imperial power.

What is immediately apparent is that, for the compilers of the ceremonial book, it is the coronation at Hagia Sophia that is the defining ceremony of imperial inauguration. On the one hand this concentration on a ceremony in which the traditional players in the creation of an Emperor - the army, senate and people - are afforded a minimal role, attending to demonstrate their consent to the inauguration rather than performing any strictly elective rite, suggests a possible diminution in their participation in the choice of the new Emperor. It is not within the scope of the present study to examine in any detail the history of imperial inauguration at Byzantium.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, it will be argued, below, that the role of these three groups in the election of an Emperor before his coronation is not central to our understanding of the ritual. Nonetheless, it is worth briefly turning to the shifts in their relative importance in the body politic that can, in part, be discerned from their historical participation in imperial inaugurations.

Significantly there is no mention of the traditional military ceremony of raising on the buckler. In the long tradition of imperial inauguration, which, like so many aspects of Byzantine society had its roots in Roman practice, the army had assumed a particular importance in the creation and acceptance of the new Emperor. During the Principate that role had been acclamatory. After election by the Senate the new Emperor would be acclaimed by the soldiers, to whom a promise of largess became customary, and the people would then express their consent. From the late fourth century the army appears to have become the most important body in the process of Emperor-making and now we see the introduction of raising on a buckler, by which the army would elevate the Emperor both physically and symbolically.

Brightman has observed that the lack of reference to this ceremony in the *Book of Ceremonies* does not necessarily prove its non-observance since the description it

---

<sup>7</sup> See Brightman, "Imperial Coronations," and MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 240-266.

provides is for the coronation specifically and not the inauguration generally.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless various factors combine which, if they cannot prove that such a military ceremony was not customary, certainly indicate that it would not have been an essential component in the ritual surrounding the creation of a new Emperor. Here another feature of imperial coronation that had not remained constant since the Principate is relevant; the type of crown used. According to Brightman, the use of the diadem rather than the laurel wreath in imperial coronations from the time of Diocletian (crowned in 284) marks “the character of the new Empire as no longer a magistracy but an absolute monarchy.”<sup>9</sup> With the accession of Julian (361) an innovation was introduced; a diadem not being to hand, a torque - a military insignia - was used instead and this set a precedent that was to be observed throughout the next two centuries. Now, Sabine MacCormack has stated, in understanding the continuation of coronation with the torque rather than the traditional diadem “the role of the army as an elector of the Emperor is worth bearing in mind.”<sup>10</sup> However, we learn from the fifth- and sixth-century descriptions of coronation ceremonies, ascribed to Peter the Patrician and contained in the final chapters of Book I of the *De Ceremoniis*, that from the late fifth century the diadem was reintroduced and a double coronation took place, first in a military setting with the torque where the new Emperor would also be raised on a shield and later in an urban setting with a diadem, whilst from the late sixth century the diadem replaces the torque completely.<sup>11</sup>

Just as the original introduction of the diadem and its later replacement with the torque are indicative of developments in the political structure and imperial ideology, so the re-emergence and subsequent dominance of the diadem as the principle imperial insignia also indicates a significant development. That development sprang from the increasingly civilian political system and the habitual residence of the Emperor in his capital:

Residence in Constantinople, rather than residence in the various frontier capitals of the empire, changed imperial ideology from a predominantly military to a more civilian and urban

---

<sup>8</sup> Brightman, *op. cit.*, 378-379.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.

<sup>10</sup> MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 241.

<sup>11</sup> *De Cer.*, II, 91-95, concern the coronation of Leo I, Leo II, Anastasius I, Justin I and Justinian. They are described by Brightman in “Imperial Coronations,” 368-378. See also MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 240-247; Bury, “Ceremonial Book,” 211-213; Dagron, *Empereur et Prêtre*, 79-90.

ideology... Coronation with the torque or corona in the camp... was a viable ceremonial as long as imperial elections took place in a military milieu, but was no longer fully valid in an urban environment.<sup>12</sup>

By the tenth century, the civilian nature of the Byzantine political system had intensified. With the consolidation of the theme system and the establishment of departments of state, run from Constantinople, responsible for its civil and fiscal administration, the Empire had become increasingly centralised. Although during this period military usurpation did take place and in the cases of John Tzimisces and Nicephorus Phocas appropriation of the imperial throne was initiated by the proclamation of the army and would almost certainly have been accompanied by raising on the shield, in these circumstances it was necessary for the pretender to secure the capital and receive the crown from the Patriarch. The swiftness with which both Nicephorus Phocas and John Tzimisces sought coronation at Constantinople and the concessions to which the latter was prepared to accede in exchange for the ceremony indicate the importance of the urban coronation ceremony.

Military usurpation was, however, relatively rare during the Middle Byzantine period and usually the purple would be secured from within the court, either conferred by the Emperor on a member of his family or, as in the case of Basil I, “the Macedonian” and founder of the “Macedonian Dynasty”, on a favourite within the palace. Here the army would have little influence over the election and the existence of the military ceremony of raising on the buckler appears unlikely. Therefore, although any military ceremony involving the raising of the new Emperor on a shield does not obviously fall within the subject matter of chapter 47 (38) of the *De Ceremoniis*, this aspect of the ceremonial, which was relevant as long as the army took an active role in the election, like that of coronation with the torque, appears to have become less important from the late fifth century as imperial ideology and appointment became less focussed on the military and more urban and civilian in character.

Similarly, the importance of the senate in Byzantine political society had undergone a process of diminishment since the days when it would assemble to decide on an imperial successor. In the fourth century, as we have seen, its role as the initial body in the process

---

<sup>12</sup> MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 242-243.

of election appears to have been taken over by the army. Under Justinian the subordination of the senate to the will of the Emperor had been confirmed and, though in the seventh century it had exerted its influence in imperial election deposing Heraclonas and elevating Constans II to the throne, under Leo VI its legislative authority and power to promote officers were revoked.<sup>13</sup> In both cases it is expressly stated that the authority of the senate belongs to a defunct system and that now all authority lies in the hands of the Emperor. With reference to senatorial power to appoint officers it is judged that:

Today... everything depends on the wisdom of the Emperor, and all things are supervised and managed, with the aid of heaven, by the providential care of his wisdom. This law now fulfils no necessary purpose, and we therefore rule that it should be abolished along with the other laws which have been removed from the constitution.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, revoking the authority to issue senatorial decrees, it is stated that:

The position of affairs has pronounced sentence of condemnation upon that law, ever since the power of the Emperor took their management into his hands.<sup>15</sup>

By the tenth century, the senate had lost its influence as an independent assembly in the body politic. It continued to exist as an advisory body but was convened less and less frequently. Therefore, where the *De Ceremoniis* makes reference to the senate to what it refers remains ambiguous. In general it designates those within the court with dignity or office of an elevated rank.<sup>16</sup> In the coronation ceremony their participation is not proactive. On his procession to Hagia Sophia they perform *proskynesis* before him and express their desire for a long and happy rule and escort him to the church where they witness the proceedings. The *Novellae* of Leo VI demonstrate the fluidity of the Byzantine constitution and the dilution of senatorial authority within it. Therefore, as with the army, it is possible that the apparently limited participation of the senate in the

---

<sup>13</sup> On fluctuations in senatorial authority see the collection of translated sources in Geanakoplos, *Byzantium*, 87-97. Justinian's demotion of the Senate is reported by Procopius in the *Anecdota*, ed. H. Dewing (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), 170. The Senate's rejection of Heraklonas in favour of Constans is reported in Theophanes's *Chronographia*, trans. C. Mango and R. Scott (Oxford, 1997), 475.

<sup>14</sup> Novella XLVII, *Les Nouvelles de Léon VI le Sage*, ed. P. Noailles and A. Dain, translated in Barker, *Social and Political Thought*, 99.

<sup>15</sup> Novella LXXVIII, translated in *ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>16</sup> Although in the ninth-century *Kletorologion* of Philotheus the senatorial dignities are separated from those with a military character: see below, 172.

coronation ceremony as it is recorded in the ceremonial book, reflects a genuine diminution in its importance as an elective body.

The final group in the traditional election process, the people - in the tenth-century protocol being represented by the factional demes - is present at the coronation to acclaim the Emperor and voice their consent to his election. The development of the role of the factions in imperial coronations has been traced by Alan Cameron.<sup>17</sup> Once again the late fifth century emerges as a turning point when, with the habitual residence of the Emperor at Constantinople and an increasingly civilian political system, the people become serious players in the process of inauguration: now, for the first time, the new Emperor “formally deferred to popular approbation before considering himself legally constituted Emperor.”<sup>18</sup> In the fifth century the new Emperor would be presented to the people in the Hippodrome where, led by the circus factions, they would acclaim their approval of his appointment. By the tenth century, when the coronation took place in the cathedral, the people of Constantinople disappear from the process and their role is undertaken by the factions alone. That role had always been acclamatory. The people might still exert their influence over imperial elections and as late as the tenth century they might clamour for their preferred candidate, as we are told they did when Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus assumed sole rule. However, their influence, like that of the senate and the army, must have suffered as the succession is increasingly decided within the confines of the court.

Despite these fluctuations in the importance of army, senate and people their consent to the imperial candidate was evidently necessary for the establishment of his legitimacy, as is demonstrated by their presence at the coronation ceremony. It has already been noted that this ritual marked the final moment in the process of making an Emperor. It is clear that in recording this final stage of inauguration the *Book of Ceremonies* fails to offer a full account of the way in which a candidate was raised to the imperial dignity. It is perhaps for this reason that its authors appended the more complete sixth-century descriptions of Peter the Patrician. These record a number of different historical accounts

---

<sup>17</sup> Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 261-270.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

that might be consulted in order to organise an inauguration best suited to the circumstances in which a candidate found himself. By reducing the proceedings to the essential rite, applicable in all circumstances, it has been suggested that Constantine Porphyrogenitus condemns himself to recording banalities and that, given the lack of any institutionally cemented way of becoming Emperor, Peter the Patrician's method is far more successful for providing a model for future inaugurations because it recognises the different types of legitimacy inherent in the Byzantine system.<sup>19</sup> However, Constantine Porphyrogenitus is not only concerned with providing a ceremonial model for future administrations, but also to ensure that, through ceremony, the essential harmony between the earthly and heavenly universes is maintained. In doing this it is natural that the ruptures and violence that often preceded coronation would be passed over in an attempt to present a uniform ceremony. The same concern can be seen behind the apparent reluctance even to make clear the two types of coronation, of senior or co-Emperor, that are nonetheless evident from the two sections of the chapter concerned with the ceremony.

This difficult task of finding a universally appropriate ritual of inauguration and its failure to disguise the different types of coronation is a particularly vivid demonstration of the impossibility of fixing ritual action that would in reality be altered to accommodate the circumstances in which it took place. Nevertheless, what we are presented with in the *Book of Ceremonies*, though limited in its scope, is a fundamental stage in the overall process of investiture. That it is only this moment that finds a place within the pages of the ceremonial book is itself significant. Furthermore, the procession of the Emperor from his palace, where his power was centred, to the cathedral and his reception of the insignia of his office within the holy space, as described there, provides us with far more than banalities. For here, at the ambo of St. Sophia the most important symbolic ritual, by which the hand of God entrusts the Empire to His earthly representative, takes place.

The dominance of the coronation in the overall process of Emperor-making is not only reflected in its inclusion in the ceremonial book. For example, the date of a new reign

---

<sup>19</sup> Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre*, 75-76 and 79-80.

was always taken from the date of coronation. More significantly, perhaps, it is the symbolism of coronation that emerges as a new and predominant theme in the artistic expression of imperial ideology during this period.<sup>20</sup> The earliest example of these images, which show the Emperor being crowned directly by religious figures, is that of Basil I in the famous Paris Psalter gr. 510. Here the Emperor, to whom the Psalter is dedicated, is shown being crowned by the Archangel Michael whilst he receives the *labarum* from Saint Elijah. Within this set of images there emerge representations of coronation by more important divine figures. One example is the ivory sceptre of Leo VI, which shows the Emperor crowned by the Theotokos, an image which was later incorporated by John Tzimisces on his coins.<sup>21</sup> Iconography involving the coronation of the Emperor by Christ is perhaps best, and most famously, represented by the Moscow ivory of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus. Here the Emperor appears head bowed, arms extended in supplication whilst Christ, raised on a platform, crowns his head with the diadem. Such images involve a complex of symbols and relationships fitted to their particular participants. For example, as Catherine Jolivet-Levy has observed, the figures of the Archangel Michael and saint Elijah were particularly important figures in the ideology of Basil I. It was they who had predicted his rise to power and to them, according to the *Vita Basilii*, that the Emperor would pray daily to request their intercession on his behalf. Likewise the coins of John Tzimisces have a variation on the theme of coronation by the Virgin which is particularly well suited to the circumstances of his usurpation. Here the Emperor is seen crowned by the Theotokos whilst the hand of God blesses the proceedings:

la main de dieu... le bénit, comme pour souligner qu'il n'avait été que l'instrument du ciel dans le meurtre qui l'avait conduit au trône.<sup>22</sup>

Above all, these images function to demonstrate the divine source of imperial authority. Jolivet-Levy has observed that this is a new concern that emerges during the Macedonian era. It would not be unreasonable to assume that in this period, when the symbolism of

<sup>20</sup> See Catherine Jolivet-Lévy, "L'image du Pouvoir dans l'Art Byzantin à l'Époque de la Dynastie Macédonienne (867-1056)," *Byz.* 57 (1987), 445-470.

<sup>21</sup> Kathleen Corrigan, "The Ivory Sceptre of Leo VI: A Statement of Post-Iconoclastic Imperial Ideology," *Art Bulletin* 60 (1978), 407-416.

coronation emerges as a dominant reference in imperial iconography, the crowning ceremony which was observed at the beginning of every Emperor's reign would itself have come to supersede other traditional ceremonies associated with imperial election.

In images like the Moscow ivory, the Emperors are shown in a subordinate position to the divine sources of their authority. The act of coronation is peculiarly well suited to communicating this relationship and demonstrating in an unambiguous way the direct link between earthly and heavenly rule. Nonetheless, that it is the coronation that is chosen for this purpose does demonstrate that it was this action that was regarded as the most important element in the establishment of imperial power. The relationship between the Emperors and their divine protectors is a constant reference in the ceremonies of Constantine Porphyrogenitus. This relationship was established and formulated in the coronation ceremony and it is evident in the art of the Middle Byzantine period that this moment in the reign of an Emperor would serve as a symbol of his legitimacy and the participation of the divine in the establishment of his government. These images serve to demonstrate the dominance of the coronation in the references available in the expression of imperial ideology.

That dominance is also evident when we turn to the acclamations addressed by the demes to their Emperor in the course of the ceremonies in which he took part. The acclamations, delivered both at religious and profane celebrations, are examined elsewhere in this study and need not delay us too long here except to highlight that where reference is made to the conferment of power on an Emperor by God it is often expressed in terms of coronation. The Emperors are habitually referred to as God-crowned (θεόστεπτοι) and on other occasions the theme of divine coronation is further developed. For example at the Feast of the Ascension coronation by the Virgin, which we have already seen was an important element in Middle Byzantine art, is represented when the factions chant:

Source of Roman life, Virgin, Mother of God the Word, act as a fellow-general (συστρατήγησον) only with the Emperors in the purple, for those who receive the crown from you hold you always as an invincible shield in the purple.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 447.

<sup>23</sup> *De Cer*, I, 8, Reiske, 55; Vogt, I, 50.

At imperial receptions reference is repeatedly made to divine coronation. For example when the demes acclaim:

May God, who crowned you, He, the Creator of all things, multiply your years.<sup>24</sup>

And later:

Lord, keep those who have been crowned by You.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly the act of coronation provides a powerful symbolism for divine election in the acclamations delivered at the Triclinos of Nineteen Couches (Pl.3 17) on the profane feast referred to as Gothic:

You have been crowned, Emperor, from heaven by the invincible hand of God.<sup>26</sup>

In both art and ceremonial acclamation, then, we find the imagery and language of coronation used to establish the relationship between the divine and earthly spheres and between religious and imperial figures. The use of that imagery and language and that this is the only ceremony of imperial inauguration contained within the tenth-century ceremonial book point to the central position of the crowning ceremony in the process of Middle Byzantine imperial inauguration. It marked a crucial moment in the life of the Emperor, one that was visually and symbolically powerful enough to be a constant reference throughout his reign.

Coronation had a huge symbolic significance and was directly associated with the interaction between divine and imperial authority. The predominance of this association, demonstrated both in the prayers and acclamations that accompanied the ritual, contributes to P. Yannopoulos's conclusion that the coronation was of purely symbolic rather than constitutional importance. Thus imperial coronation "ne conférait pas un pouvoir ou une fonction, mais il reconnaissait un pouvoir et l'exercice d'une fonction en

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 72 (63), Reiske, 281; Vogt, II, 91.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., Reiske, 282; Vogt, II, 92.

leur conférant la couverture de la protection divine, qui à Byzance constituait la forme suprême de la légitimité.”<sup>27</sup> Yannopoulos’s careful analysis does not underestimate the importance of the symbolic recognition of authority, which it judges the function of coronation. However, it does suggest a clear division between constitutional and symbolic/practical and ceremonial that need not be inferred from the evidence.

For reference to a constitution in relation to the history of Byzantium and its institutions is extremely difficult. As we have seen, the system had to accommodate different types of legitimacy and succession, stemming from within the imperial family or without, founded on peaceful transmission of power or violent usurpation. Dagron has noted the essential incompatibility of a *society of law*, in which social relations are governed by rules and their attendant institutions and *legitimate power*, in which the absolute authority of the Emperor might be disciplined but in no way limited. “Dans cette difficile conciliation entre pouvoir et droit, les théories ou idéologies ne pouvaient servir que de masque.”<sup>28</sup> Therefore at Byzantium there is no constitution, in the sense of a clearly defined set of institutional criteria or relations: rather, the Emperor is presented with models, both historical and moral, by following whose example he may rule both justly and legitimately. In other words, the constitution, if it may be so called, is itself based on symbolism.

The coronation ceremony certainly involves a symbolic recognition of power, but there are also indications that more is achieved through the ritual than that recognition; that a change in the individual is brought about through his investiture with the *chlamys* and crown. The protocol for the coronation of a senior Emperor given by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus opens with a description of that procession. It begins with the imperial cortege at the Augusteum and, therefore, does not give the protocol for the procession from the palace itself. We cannot, therefore, be sure how far the procession on the day of his coronation conforms to the protocol given for the Emperor’s movement from the

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 92 (83), Reiske, 383; Vogt, II, 183.

<sup>27</sup> Yannopoulos, “Le Couronnement de L’Empereur,” 73-89.

<sup>28</sup> Dagron, *Empereur et Prêtre*, 40.

palace to Hagia Sophia on religious feast days.<sup>29</sup> Brightman does not discuss this part of the ceremony since it “is of the usual type of imperial progresses as described in the *De Caerimoniis*.”<sup>30</sup> Indeed, as we have seen, the protocol for the coronation of a co-Emperor begins with the assurance that the procession is of the usual kind and that the Emperors carry out all the usual ceremonial. However, certain features of the description outlined above suggest a much simpler progress than is prescribed for the Emperors’ usual formal procession to the cathedral. This indicates that there may well be a significant difference in this part of the ceremony when coronation takes place in the absence of an already crowned and established senior Emperor.

The first indication that this procession does not conform entirely to that which would take place on religious occasions after the coronation of the Emperor is the statement that the reception in the Onopodion is the “first reception” and that it involves “patricians.” The usual progress from the palace to the church is punctuated by a complex series of pauses at stations along the route where the Emperor would give thanks to God and others where he receives honour and acclamation from the court. For example, having given thanksgiving at, amongst other places, the sanctuary of the Theotokos and at that of the Holy Trinity, inside the palace, he is received in the Triclinos of the Augusteus by the staff of the Chrysotriclinos and the palace guard who perform *proskynesis* before him. Later, having been dressed in the Octagonal Chamber in the palace of Daphne, the Emperor would return to the Triclinos of the Augusteus where high ranking courtiers, both civil and military, would be introduced and fall down before him. At the Onopodion he once again receives the *proskynesis* of the court before proceeding to the *scholae*.

Now the protocol for the imperial coronation does not preclude the existence of these elements or others that marked the usual progress to Hagia Sophia. However they are not necessary for its correct observance and there is certainly a strong implication that it is at the Onopodion and not earlier on in the procession that the Emperor first receives members of his court. This impression is strengthened by the statement that the Emperor

---

<sup>29</sup> This description is given in *De Cer.*, I, 1, Reiske, 5-35; Vogt, I, 3-28.

<sup>30</sup> Brightman, “Imperial Coronations,” 379.

is accompanied by the *cubicularii* when he advances to the Onopodion, whereas usually the magistrates and others would also be present at this stage. Further, in the first chapter of the *Book of Ceremonies*, which contains the protocol for the imperial procession to Hagia Sophia on feast days, there is no mention of the coronation ceremony. Rather it is stated that that ceremonial is observed on Easter Sunday, Pentecost, the Feast of the Transfiguration, Christmas and Epiphany.<sup>31</sup>

Further evidence for a simpler procession on the coronation of an Emperor in the absence of a senior Emperor is provided by the behaviour of the factions when the Emperor passes through the *scholae*. On this occasion it is stated that they take up their usual positions and make signs of the cross only.<sup>32</sup> On his usual progress through the buildings of the *tagmata* the factions acclaim the Emperor at various stations. On this occasion, however, it is specifically stated that these acclamations do not take place and the factions simply make signs of the cross as the Emperor passes. On the other hand, when the protocol for the coronation of a co-Emperor states that the Emperors observe all the customary rites for ceremonial outings this would imply, or at least would certainly not rule out, the usual reception of acclamation from the factions. Thus, at this stage of the ceremony there is certainly a strong implication that the two types of coronation do not follow an identical protocol. The former was probably a rather more straightforward progress from Augusteum to cathedral and certainly did not include the series of acclamations from the factions that usually punctuated the imperial procession to Hagia Sophia and, therefore, were probably included in the procession on the coronation of a co-Emperor.

At no point in the description of the procession given for this first type of coronation is there any mention of the Emperor fulfilling his usual tasks or receiving the usual acclamations. Although it does not rule out any aspect of the usual ceremonial, except the acclamation of the factions, it is safe to conclude that in the absence of any statement to

---

<sup>31</sup> *De Cer.*, I, Reiske, 22; Vogt, I, 17. However, that a largely similar protocol is followed on other occasions is confirmed when ceremonial variations at, for example, the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin and the Annunciation are given.

<sup>32</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 47 (38), Reiske, 192; Vogt, II, 1.

the contrary they were not observed. After all, if it was intended that the procession should proceed with all the pomp of imperial progresses to Hagia Sophia as outlined for religious feasts the compilers of the ceremonial book might be expected to have made a simple statement to that effect, as they did for the coronation of a co-Emperor.

Any conclusions reached about this stage of the ceremony must remain hypothetical. Nonetheless, if we are to assume that the coronation ceremony had any meaning and involved some kind of transition in the making of an Emperor, then it would certainly be surprising if the procession to Hagia Sophia of a yet-to-be-crowned individual was the same as that which would mark the same movement after his coronation. Where the coronation ceremony is to establish a co-Emperor the already crowned senior Emperor would have been present in the cortege. In this case it is reasonable to assume that the procession would conform more closely to the protocol for the usual imperial progress to the church as is indicated in the second section on the coronation in the *Book of Ceremonies*. Here in the procession, then, there exists some support for the suggestion that the coronation ceremony served to confer, rather than simply recognise and give symbolic legitimacy to, imperial status.

Within the church the Emperor's path leads him along the usual route by which he would enter and cross the nave to the Holy Doors of the sanctuary with the Patriarch and there pray with lighted candles. At this point the first obvious divergence from the Emperor's behaviour after his coronation takes place. For on this occasion he does not enter into the sanctuary. During the discussion of the religious ceremonies it has been observed that the Emperor's brief intrusion beyond the chancel barrier reflected a quasi-priestly status, albeit ambiguous and ill defined. The fact that the Emperor does not enter the sanctuary before he is crowned, an action which contributes to an uncertain impression of imperial priesthood, implies that the coronation serves to confer that clerical status that would remain indeterminate throughout his reign.

Might, then, the coronation ceremony be of ecclesiastical, rather than political significance? More than one scholar has highlighted the parallels that can be drawn

between imperial coronation and clerical ordination. It takes place within the church. It involves prayers, conducted by the Patriarch, over the insignia. In the case of a senior Emperor it is performed by the Patriarch and in the case of a co-Emperor, by the Emperor who - especially if his own coronation is considered analogous to ordination - has himself assumed something of a clerical role which might qualify him for this task. One of the most striking similarities between coronation and ordination occurs after the Patriarchal prayer over the crown and the placing of the diadem on the new Emperor's head. Here it is stated in the protocol for the coronation of a co-Emperor the Patriarch intones "Worthy!" and the congregation repeats the intonation three times. It has been argued that this would have been immediately recognised by the congregation: "Except for the lack of actual "laying on of hands" (a quite fundamental element, of course), its form is that of ordination to holy orders, the sacramental act that distinguishes clergy from laity."<sup>33</sup>

The clerical status of the Emperor will remain ill defined in a way that his political status will not. Although the coronation ceremony has clear parallels with that of ordination, the clerical privileges it appears to confer: limited access to the sanctuary, separate administration of the Eucharistic gifts and participation in the Great Entrance, would have served to distinguish the Emperor from the rest of the lay congregation rather than to admit him to the ranks of clerics in any meaningful way.

Here it is worth highlighting that both the clerical aspect of the Emperor's behaviour within his church after coronation and features of the ceremony as it emerges in the ceremonial book were not novel in the Middle Byzantine period and had evolved in the context of imperial inaugurations and not clerical ordination. For example, the coronation of Anastasius (crowned in 491) which took place in the Hippodrome involved prayers by the Patriarch and acclamation by the people that included the cry "worthy of the Empire, worthy of the Trinity, worthy of the city," which might place the triple intonation of "worthy" in the tenth century into the context of the popular consent to

---

<sup>33</sup> Majeska, "The Emperor in His Church," 3.

coronation rather than raising to ecclesiastical office.<sup>34</sup> After his coronation Anastasius proceeded to Hagia Sophia where he entered the sanctuary and left a gift. Here the alteration in the Emperor's clerical position is more starkly evident than in the tenth century where the change becomes tangible only in the Emperor's appearances at the church at festivals other than his own coronation, at which event he never proceeds beyond the chancel barrier. We have seen that the coronation is a primary reference for both artists and those charged with acclaiming the Emperor. Within these images and acclamations it is the relationship between the Emperor and his heavenly counterparts and not his status within the apparatus of the church that is fundamental. In the formulation of that relationship and the imperial ideology that it underpinned we must turn to the prayers of the Patriarch and the acclamations of the factions.

Having mounted to the ambo where the imperial insignia have been placed, the Patriarch begins a silent prayer over the *chlamys* before, aided by the *vestitores*, he clothes the Emperor in it. The prayer involves an impersonal and complex mixture of demands for divine gifts that will produce qualities in the Emperor and allow him to carry out certain functions:

O Lord our God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, which through Samuel the prophet did choose David, Your servant, to be king over Your people Israel; now also hear the supplication of us unworthy and behold from Your holy dwelling place Your faithful servant *N.* whom You have been pleased to set as king over Your holy nation, which You purchased with the precious blood of Your only begotten Son: vouchsafe to anoint him with the oil of gladness; endue him with the power from on high; put upon his head a crown of pure gold; grant him a long life; put in his right hand a sceptre of salvation; establish him on the throne of righteousness; encompass him with the panoply of Your Holy Spirit; strengthen his arm; subject to him all barbarous nations; sow in his heart Your fear, and fellow feeling with his subjects; preserve him in the unspotted faith; make him a painful guardian of the decrees of Your holy catholic Church; that he may judge Your people righteously, and the poor in judgement, defend the children of the poor, and be made an inheritor of Your heavenly kingdom. [Aloud] For to You, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, belongs the might and to You the kingdom and the power [and the glory, now and ever and world without end].<sup>35</sup>

In the opening words of the prayer God is addressed through a language of kingship that immediately calls to mind the analogy between His position and that of the individual to

---

<sup>34</sup> The coronation of Anastasius, described by Peter the Patrician in *De Cer.*, I, 93, is translated in Brightman, "Imperial Coronations," 369-373. It is also discussed in Dagron, *Empereur et Prêtre*, 86-88 and MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 240-247.

be clothed in the purple. Not only is He Himself addressed with such language but He is presented as the source of all kingship demonstrated through His appointment of David. Here, then, are statements about God which express belief about the Emperor and the divine source of his authority. His appointment by God is placed in the context of Biblical tradition and his position is conceived in direct relation to that of David, his Biblical counterpart. Therefore, the prayer introduces the concept of imperial election by God by presenting a model of royalty so raised. In other words, it uses a symbolic prototype of the kind on which the Byzantine understanding of imperial rule relied.

Having located the Emperor within a tradition returning to David the prayer proceeds to root the Empire over which he will rule in the history of salvation. The Byzantine Empire is God's "Holy nation," purchased with "the precious blood" of the incarnate Lord. Thus the prayer over the *chlamys* highlights that notion that would be preserved through art and acclamation and that underpinned the imperial ideology of the Empire; that of a God elected ruler, governing a chosen people according to a Biblical model. It does so in such a way that the specific events taking place within Hagia Sophia in the Middle Byzantine period are conceived within a wider framework that, on the one hand, reaches back into the Old Testament model of rulership embodied in David and, on the other, places the Byzantine State firmly within the context of Christian salvation, as the ultimate prize of Christ's passion.

The Patriarch goes on to request the Emperor's investment with a series of heavenly gifts of which he is presented as the passive recipient: oil of gladness; power from on high; a crown of pure gold; long life; a sceptre of salvation; the throne of righteousness and the panoply of the Holy Spirit. The rest of the prayer constitutes a plea for the person about to receive the purple to be endowed with certain qualities and to fulfil certain roles. The qualities he is to possess both unite him to those he is to rule, through fellow-feeling with them, empower him to do so, through strength, and unite him to the church and the divine

---

<sup>35</sup> *Euchologion sive rituale graecorum*, ed. J. Goar (Venice, 1730; Graz, 1960), 726.

sources of his authority, through unspotted faith. These qualities are directly linked to the functions of his office. His fellow feeling with his subjects will be manifest through the righteousness of his judgement and his protection of the weakest members of society; the children of the poor. His strength will be shown through his triumph over barbarian nations and his unspotted faith will qualify him to act as a guardian of Church decrees. All is formulated with the final appeal for the Emperor's salvation, that he will become an "inheritor of the heavenly kingdom" whose earthly counterpart is now his care.

In the prayer over the chlamys God is presented as the source of all kingship, the Emperor as a passive recipient of divine gifts. Three functions of imperial office are central: to subjugate barbarian peoples; to act as protector and judge over his people; and to defend and keep the decrees of the Church. The whole is placed within a context of salvation, both the Emperor's personal future inheritance of the heavenly kingdom and the present and historic status of the Byzantine Empire as a product of saving grace accessible after Christ's crucifixion.

Rather different aspects of imperial ideology emerge in the prayer over the crown that follows the Emperor's investiture with the purple:

To You, the only King of Men, he who is charged by You with the earthly kingdom, with us bowed down his neck: and we beseech You, Lord of all, keep him under Your shelter, strengthen his kingdom, vouchsafe to him always to do the things that are well pleasing to You; in his time make righteousness to flourish and abundance of peace, that in his serenity we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For You are the King of Peace and the saviour of souls and bodies, and to You we send up glory, [to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, both now and ever and world without end].<sup>36</sup>

Here, once again, God is presented as the ultimate monarch, the "only King of Men." Yet in this prayer the Divine Emperor is conceived of in terms not of power and might but of benevolence towards His people. He is King of Peace and the Saviour of men. The prayer is worded in a much more personal way than the previous one and is formulated as a

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 727.

communal plea, the Patriarch here expressing the hopes of the community that the Emperor may reign in such a way that will bring benefits for that community. Where the first prayer presented the relationship between Emperor and God in terms of the latter's power and the former's responsibilities (to judge and protect) and strength (to subjugate barbarian nations) here that relationship is envisaged in terms of divine good will and protection. Here the Emperor, together with the community, bows down before his Lord. Through his future actions the ultimate communal goal of peace, righteousness, godliness and honesty will be achieved.

With these prayers the crown and the *chlamys* become symbols through which the divine participates in the creation of the Emperor and in which are embodied the duties of the Emperor. The Patriarch expresses an imperial ideology that combines both secular roles, moves against barbarians and justice, and involvement in the Church, to uphold its decrees, in an overall cosmology that establishes the relationship between Emperor and God and between the earthly and heavenly Empire. The formulation of imperial authority within a framework of Christian cosmology indicates the degree to which the ideology of Empire was absorbed into religious understanding. Furthermore it reconciles, or at least places side by side under divine approval, the civilian peaceful imperial mission and the violent laying low of foreign peoples from which an attempt on the throne might be launched. The investiture with the imperial insignia, therefore, not only confirms the new Emperor as God's chosen representative but also sanctifies the imperial mission.

It has been suggested, above, that the use of the imagery of coronation on the coinage of John Tzimiskes, in which the Emperor is seen crowned by the Theotokos under the hand of God, was particularly pertinent to the confirmation of that Emperor's legitimacy. By placing him under the protection of religious figures and his reception of the imperial crown in a divine context the served to dismiss any doubts concerning the bloody means by which he had acquired the throne. Likewise the coronation ceremony itself, taking place before the dignitaries of the senate, the army and representatives of the people in Hagia Sophia and accompanied by the Patriarchal prayers obviates the means by which

the individual had been brought to the church by turning the events which took place there into an intimate convergence of heavenly and temporal spheres.

In what capacity the Patriarch acts in the coronation ceremony is a question that has been repeatedly addressed but to which a satisfactory answer has failed to emerge. For example, the fifth-century introduction of the Patriarch into the coronation ceremony has been described as “a real constitutional innovation. Henceforth the church became an essential element in the constitutional system of the empire.”<sup>37</sup> Conversely Dagron maintains that with this introduction the Patriarch “ayant pour fonction d’attirer la grâce de Dieu... mais ne jouant aucun rôle institutionnel.”<sup>38</sup>

The Patriarch’s role in coronation has been discussed by Janet Nelson. She argues that any attempt to view that role in purely secular terms rests on a clear separation of church and state, of religious and secular, that simply does not exist in the thought-world of early medieval Byzantium and that is entirely unhelpful in analysing Byzantine authority. Rather, the Patriarch crowns the Emperor as representative of the entire community, a community in which he “took his place without friction alongside other channels of divine communication.”<sup>39</sup> Such a view would support the earlier assertion that the coronation ceremony should be viewed in political rather than purely ecclesiastical or symbolic terms. It is supported in the Patriarchal prayers, in which are expressed the hopes of the entire community. The highly religious context in which those hopes and desires are formulated is not the territory only of the ecclesiastical elements of the body politic. The acclamations of the factions, for example, are exclusively Christian whilst we find later in the *Book of Ceremonies*, for example in imperial appearances at the races of the Hippodrome, acclamations that express a comprehensive theology, here entirely outside an ecclesiastical setting.

---

<sup>37</sup> Peter Charranis, “The Imperial Crown Modiolus and its Constitutional Significance,” *Byz.*, 12 (1937) 189-195, here 194.

<sup>38</sup> Dagron, *Empereur et Prêtre*, 103.

<sup>39</sup> Janet Nelson, “Symbols in Context,” *Studies in Church History* 13 (1976) ed., Derek Baker, 97-119, here 106.

However, despite such acclamations, Nelson goes too far when she asserts that the move from the Hippodrome to Hagia Sophia is not significant since “the Hippodrome no less than Hagia Sophia was a religious location.”<sup>40</sup> Furthermore the assertion that the Patriarch acts simply by virtue of the lack of the senior Emperor and therefore occupies the “highest rank in the system”<sup>41</sup> seems doubtful. For both in the coronation of a senior Emperor and of a co-Emperor the Patriarch performs prayers over the insignia and, himself, crowns the senior Emperor. Therefore the Patriarch always takes an active role in the confirmation of imperial power in the ceremony of coronation.

Our understanding of the role of the Patriarch, and indeed of the senior Emperor in the coronation of a co-Emperor, should not perhaps focus primarily on the act of coronation itself. For, although this is the defining moment in the ceremony, neither Emperor nor Patriarch here functions as representative of the population. For in future reference to the coronation the Emperor will never be referred to as crowned by the Patriarch or by the Emperor but by God, usually Christ and occasionally through the intercession of the Virgin. The frequency with which this notion is raised in acclamation and art must dissuade us from regarding it as a purely symbolic conceit. The action itself - the placing of the crown on the Emperor’s head - is of course a ritual symbolic action. However, that which is symbolised is real. The participation of the divine in all aspects of human life including imperial succession and the cosmology it assumes were not a symbolic afterthought but were fundamental to the way in which Byzantine society functioned. Thus the divine consent to election should not be viewed as a secondary symbolic notion that cements an established fact - as is implied by Yannopoulos’s assertion that the coronation recognised rather than conferred power by giving it a divine seal of approval - but rather as the reality that underscored the symbolic action of the ceremony.

The question of in what capacity the Patriarch acts in imperial coronation, of who he is representing in the ceremony, the Church or the Byzantine people as a whole, demands the kind of division of the “constitution” into its constituent parts that is very difficult

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 107.

when analysing imperial successions. In his prayers over the insignia, which give the ceremony its religious symbolism, he certainly acts as the head of the Church, as the individual best placed within his own environment of the cathedral, to call on the intercession of the heavenly powers. In the act of crowning, however, he certainly does not participate only as the head of the ecclesiastical hierarchy - the Church did not appoint the Byzantine Emperor - but on behalf of the community gathered to witness the ceremony.

It is after the investiture that the temporal elements in the inauguration are actively introduced. Immediately following the coronation and the triple intonation of “worthy”, in the coronation of a co-Emperor, military insignia and standards are lowered before the new Emperor. This action, by which the *tagmata* acknowledge his imperial status, would not be out of place in the coronation of a senior Emperor, the description of which does not specify this lowering of the standards or the acclamations of the factions. It is likely that both elements would have featured in the coronation of a senior Emperor although, of course, one should be careful not to assume the observation of anything outside the text. In the acclamation by the factions that follows immediately after the placing of the crown on the co-Emperor’s head, as in the Patriarchal prayers over the insignia, an imperial ideology that combines notions of divine election and a relationship between earthly and heavenly universes with imperial roles and responsibilities is expressed. Each acclamation is led by the claqueurs and repeated by the factions three times. They begin by giving thanks to God and re-affirming his participation in the coronation:

Glory to God in the highest and peace upon earth.  
Goodwill to Christians...  
For God has taken pity on His people.  
This is the great day of the Lord.  
This is the day of life for the Romans.  
This day is the joy and glory of the world  
On which the crown of the Empire  
Is put worthily upon your head.  
Glory to God, the Master of all things.  
Glory to God, who has made you Emperor.  
Glory to God who has shown you such kindness.

Here the imperial election, which glorifies God, the Emperor and the Byzantine people, and the coronation are presented as divine acts. The acclamations go on to develop the implications of that involvement for the future of the Emperor, who, along with his family, will now benefit from divine protection:

Now, may He who has crowned you, *N*, Emperor, by His own hand...  
Guard you in the purple for a multitude of years...  
With the Augustae and those born in the purple...  
For the Glory and elevation of the Romans.  
May God heed your people.

There follow a series of acclamations for the long life of the Emperor and the imperial family. The final acclamations repeat the formulation of a God-crowned Emperor, the desire for long life through heavenly intervention and the ultimate reward for the Empire:

And may the Creator and Master of all things...  
Who has crowned you with His own hand...  
Lengthen your years with the Augustae and those born in the purple...  
For the complete strengthening of the Romans.

The concentration on the imperial family and those born in the purple (*Porphyrogeniti*) is particularly relevant in the context of the coronation of a co-Emperor, who would usually come from the reigning Emperor's kin. It suggests also an ideology that preferred a hereditary succession, although the elevation of those outside the imperial family would never be made impossible. Above all, these acclamations confirm and recognise the new Emperor and his divine election and, by implication, the subordination of the earthly political structure to the divine order.

On one level, then, the coronation expresses and confirms a world-view in which the divine participates in a direct manner. The fact that the coronation takes place in Hagia Sophia and the Patriarchal prayers over the insignia serve to intensify the highly religious atmosphere of the ceremony, which is reflected in the factional acclamations. The Patriarch's role in performing the prayers and in crowning the senior Emperor and the senior Emperor's crowning of his co-ruler constitute a demonstration of a harmony between the earthly powers, ecclesiastical and imperial, as together they invest the new

Emperor with the symbols of his office; the purple and the diadem. In so doing they act as representatives of the divine authority that underpinned the political system. The imperial office is established in relation to divine authority. Yet within the prayers the Emperor's relations with those he is to rule is equally central and focus on the importance of the rightness of his judgement and his protection of them.

The Middle Byzantine Emperor was an autocrat. He was the ultimate authority, the highest judge in the Empire and the source of all promotion to office and dignity. In attempting not to undervalue the importance of the relationship between the Emperor and God, the interaction between the Emperor and the inhabitants of the temporal world cannot be overlooked. We have seen that one feature of the coronation involved the expression and consolidation of a co-operative relationship between the Emperor and the Patriarch. It also served to crystallise relations within the court. For immediately after the Emperor's coronation he retires to his *mitatorion* within the church and there, in strict order of rank, he receives the members of his court.

The coronation, as it is described in the *Book of Ceremonies*, involving a similar procession to the church, or at least a reluctance of the text to overtly recognise any difference, the prayers over the insignia, the *proskynesis* of the court and the acclamation of the factions, creates a model of investiture for all circumstances and all Emperors. Every individual conducted to Hagia Sophia receives equally God's benediction. The transfer of power - focussed on the act of dressing the newly elect with the *chlamys* and placing the crown on his head - takes place in an active ceremony, symbolic certainly but which actually does something. It involves the coming together of all sections of the body politic. As the new Emperor processes through the palace and the military quarter to Hagia Sophia, he is greeted by the court and the factions in a sort of compacted *adventus* by which he takes possession of the palace and its environs. At the church he receives the insignia in a ceremony that recognises his imperial status but also involves a symbolic transfer of power from God to His earthly counterpart.

Within the ceremony, the army, who lower their standards before their new ruler, the senate who gather after the coronation to prostrate themselves before him and the people, who acclaim him, express their approval of the election. These social groups are, as Dagron observes, reduced to symbols. Nonetheless, this does not seem to be a basis for the kind of criticism that the protocol of the ceremonial book receives, such as Dagron's assertion that it is limited to banalities. For the ceremony manages, in a way that the historical examples of Peter the Patrician do not and which is particularly important in a system with no firm rules of succession, to absorb him who has succeeded to the throne into a model. That model is provided not so much by the behaviour of the army, senate and people, but by an understanding of the interplay between the temporal and divine Empires in which the comprehension of the imperial reception of the *basileia*, in all its forms, is rendered consistent with an ideology, itself founded on symbolic models and a body politic with shifting institutional criteria. The ceremony works because it formulates the assumption of power in a way that confirms the legitimacy of the route to the throne, whether by murder, intrigue or birth, by establishing its foundation in the hands of God, the divine political architect. At the same time, especially in the Patriarch's prayers but also by the presence of representatives of those over whom the Emperor will rule, the new monarch is reminded of his duties to the Empire.

This analysis of the coronation ceremony has tried to question the commonly held view that it served simply to recognise and not to confer power. It has shown that there are some indications that the two types of coronation, especially the procession to the church, might have differed in a way that indicates that after his coronation the ceremony surrounding the Emperor might have changed. Nonetheless its real conflict with the traditional focus on a differentiation between conference and recognition lies in a disagreement about language rather than argument. When we turn to descriptions of actual coronations, the rites appear more extended than the *Book of Ceremonies* allows, in particular military usurpation involves a triumphal entry into the city, whereas those who receive the Empire by birth tend to be crowned in their extreme youth and have simply to travel from the palace to the church. Therefore, one can see that legitimacy might emanate from the battlefield or from the palace. Thus Dagron concludes:

L'usurpateur à qui ses soldats posent un collier sur la tête et l'enfant né d'un empereur reçoivent de ce seul fait, et quelle que soit l'issue de l'aventure, la marque de la *basiléia*. Le cérémonial confirme cette marque, mais ne la confère pas; il se borne à indiquer l'une des voies possible de légitimation: voie longue pour l'empereur nommé sur le champ de bataille, que la ville reçoit et civilise et que l'Église soumet à Dieu; voie courte pour le fils d'empereur légitimé par sa naissance même, considéré comme l'«oint de Dieu» s'il est porphyrogénète, et recevant, dès l'âge le plus tendre, une couronne qui ne fait que prolonger le pouvoir en place pour une nouvelle génération.<sup>42</sup>

The growing notion of legitimacy through birth and the establishment of imperial dynasties in Middle Byzantium is evident in other imperial ceremonies recorded in the *De Ceremoniis*, especially the acclamations for imperial marriages and the birth of a Porphyrogenitus. It will, therefore, be discussed below. What has been attempted here is a slightly different approach than that exemplified in Dagron's statement. One that sees in the confirmation of the mark of legitimacy, achieved through birth or by force, something more than the recognition of an accomplished fact. Rather, the coronation serves to transform that mark from a state of potentiality to reality. The coronation not only marks the final point in the process of imperial inauguration but also the beginning of the new reign, the point from which the individual takes on the responsibilities of his office and receives the veneration of his people.

To conclude, we might turn to the example of Basil I, the founder of the Macedonian dynasty, whose rise to power amalgamates the two kinds of succession - coronation by the reigning monarch and violent overthrow of the established regime. It has already been noted that, once the senior Emperor had crowned an individual, there was no need for a further ceremony to mark the transition of power on the ruler's death. The coronation itself and not the exercise of absolute power had given him his imperial status. However, in the case of Basil I, after the murder of his erstwhile patron, Michael III, from whom he had already received the imperial insignia, a second coronation was organised. This not because it was necessary or because he was not yet Emperor, but in order to "fix a new beginning of his *basileia*."<sup>43</sup> Through this second coronation a fresh start could be achieved, one by which the events leading up to the ceremony at Hagia Sophia, sordid even by Byzantine standards, might be consigned to history and the enduring image of

---

<sup>42</sup> Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre*, 100.

his appointment - the pious Emperor, the divinely-elected monarch, bowed before God, crowned with the imperial insignia by the Patriarch and before whom army, senate and people express their loyalty - would be established.

### *Coronation of an Augusta*<sup>44</sup>

The imperial coronation was an occasion of great solemnity, by which the Emperor received the insignia of his office, the protection of God for his government and the signs of loyalty from his people. In addition to the Emperor's coronation, the Book of Ceremonies provides the ceremony observed at the coronation of an Augusta. Although this ceremony shares many similarities with the coronation of an Emperor, there are also significant differences between the two imperial appointments. For example, the coronation of an Augusta takes place not in Hagia Sophia, but in the Augusteus<sup>45</sup> and, although the Emperors receive their courtiers before the ceremony, the male dignitaries are absent during the coronation itself. Only the Emperors, with their private entourage of eunuch *cubicularii*, the Patriarch, the clergy and any members of the female court who the Emperor has invited witness the coronation of the Augusta.

When the Emperors are seated on their thrones in the Augusteus and the Patriarch and priests of Hagia Sophia have joined them, the Augusta is brought in. Her face covered by a veil, she takes up candles with which she prays. The Emperors lift her veil and the coronation takes place in an identical ceremony to that of a co-Emperor, the Patriarch praying over the *chlamys* and the crown and the Emperors clothing the new Augusta. As soon as the coronation is complete the Patriarch and his courtiers leave, their role having come to an end. The Augusta sits with the Emperors and the male court is readmitted to perform *proskynesis* at the feet of the Emperors and Augusta and to with them many years. Once the entire male court has left the Augusteus, the female court is brought in by

---

<sup>43</sup> Genesios, ed. Lesmüller-Werner and Thurn, 80.

<sup>44</sup> Identical protocols for the coronation of an Augusta are found in *De Cer.*, I, 50 (41) and 49 (50).

<sup>45</sup> Although on occasion it might be conducted at the nearby church of St Stephen, the Augusteus would remain the accepted location for the coronation of imperial women throughout the Middle Byzantine period.

a silentary, in order of rank. They too kiss the knees of the Emperors and the Augusta and perform *proskynesis* three times.

When this ritual is complete the Augusta processes to the Tribunal. During her progress she is honoured by male and female dignitaries at different points and, having arrived, she is recognised by the factions and *tagmata*. She mounts to a terrace overlooking the tribunal and, whilst she performs *proskynesis* before a cross she is acclaimed. These acclamations are of the usual type, proclaiming the Augusta as crowned by God and wishing her, the Emperors and Porphyrogeniti long and happy lives. The Augusta performs *proskynesis* on either side of the terrace and the ceremony is brought to a close.

The Augusta was an important figure in the imperial ideology of Middle Byzantium, as the mother of Porphyrogeniti and vehicle of a smooth hereditary succession. However, despite important similarities between the ceremony marking her coronation and that of an Emperor, with the coronation of an Augusta there is a significant shift in implied status of the ceremony. The prayers of the Patriarch and presence of the clergy ensure the sacred character of the ritual. However, its location within the palace and the continued presence of the Emperors who receive the *proskynesis* of the court before and after the coronation, which they perform, and also receive acclamations at the Tribunal along with the Augusta, imply that this is an imperial rather than a sacred ritual. Despite the assertion of the factions' praises that it is God who has crowned the Augusta, there is a strong sense throughout the proceedings that it is through her association with the Emperors that she receives her dignity.

At the heart of the variations that exist between this investiture and that of the Emperor, perhaps, lies the fundamental disparity between their two positions. The Augusta, like the Emperor, stood at the head of her own court, which she receives on the day of her coronation. Like him, she takes her crown from the hand of God, just as she will be called, like him, to the heavenly kingdom at her funeral. However, unlike him, her status is a wholly temporal entity: there is no divine Augusta according to whose image she functions. At her coronation we have seen her introduction to the court of women over

whom she would rule, a court that was evidently strictly segregated from the male court. It has been suggested that one of the most important functions of the imperial women was procreation. In the context of the *Book of Ceremonies*, in which - both during the religious ceremonies and the coronations – an emphasis on the promotion of the imperial family and hereditary succession has been identified, it is not surprising to find elaborate rites set down by which an imperial couple were joined in marriage.

### *Marriage*

The ceremonial surrounding an imperial marriage is spread across three chapters of the *Book of Ceremonies*.<sup>46</sup> Through an amalgamation of the information contained in them it is possible to see how the event was celebrated. The acclamations of the different chapters are very similar, especially those of chapters 48 (39) and 91 (82), although they do appear to be delivered at slightly different locations. Despite the fact that no single description involves all of the acclamations and, therefore, it is likely that they did not all find a place in a single staging of the procession, there is no discord either in their subject matter nor in the manner of their delivery, lead by the faction claque with responses by the people. For this reason, and in order to provide as complete a picture of the ceremony as possible, they will be incorporated into this discussion in their entirety. Nowhere in the book is the actual marriage rite given, rather the protocol describes the ritual surrounding the procession of the newly married couple, after the wedding, from the church to the nuptial chamber at the Magnaura palace (Pl.3 69) and subsequent return to the Triclinos of the Nineteen Couches for a formal dinner.

Traditionally the wedding ceremony had taken place in the church of St Stephen in the Daphne palace. The use of this chapel, containing the relic of the arm of St Stephen, as the location for the nuptial coronation and also, on occasion, for the coronation of an Augusta, is explained by the play on words, between Stephen (*stephanos*, or crown) and

---

<sup>46</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 48 (39), 50 (41) and 91 (82), Reiske, 196-202, 207-216 and 380-381; Vogt, II, 6-10, 16-23 and 181.

the ceremonies of coronation (*stepsimon*) and marriage (*stephanoma*).<sup>47</sup> As Ioli Kalavrezou has observed, “this play on words, but also symbols, falls easily into the pattern of the Byzantine love for such uses of the Greek language.”<sup>48</sup> However, at some time before the protocols were recorded the location had been moved closer to the imperial residence, to the church of the Theotokos at Pharos. The possible motivation for this move, which has been attributed to the reign of Leo VI, is relevant in the context of the acclamations delivered to the couple and will be returned to below.

After the wedding at the church of the Theotokos the imperial couple would receive the nuptial crowns from the hands of the Patriarch, who presided over the ceremony. Outside the church tambourines and cymbals play and the factions acclaim them:

God, our Saviour, guard the Emperors. Holy, thrice Holy, give them life and health. Spirit of all holiness, protect the Augustae. Lord, their life for our life. Always, Lord, strengthen this Empire.

After their marriage it is stated that the newly weds leave via the Octagonal chamber, the Augusteus and the Golden Hand and that at the Onopodion the couple is received by the court dignitaries. However, this is for the circumstances in which the wedding took place at St Stephen and, therefore, the later procession takes an alternative route, passing through the Chrysotriclinos, outside which the magistrates and patricians receive them, performing *proskynesis* and wishing them many good years. They then escort the couple as far as the *secretion* of the consuls and there all the senators, magistrates and patricians perform *proskynesis* once more. The factions stand in the triclinos of the Candidates, “on either side, near the steps of the Magnaura” and, when the newly weds approach, crossing the door of the Consistorion, the organs of the two factions play and, after the familiar wish for many years, they say together:

Our Lord, guard the Emperors. Spirit of all holiness, protect the Augustae. Lord, their life for our life. Emperor, newly wed, may God guard you. Full of honour and virtues, may the Trinity adorn you and may heavenly God give you joy, He alone being supremely good, blessing your marriage. May He - who in former times, at Cana, helped at the wedding and at that wedding blessed the water, through love of Man and made wine to give joy to men - bless you with your spouse and

---

<sup>47</sup> On the church of St Stephen and its place in imperial ceremonies see Kalavrezou, “Helping Hands for the Empire,” 57-67.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

may God grant you Porphyrogenitus children. This is the day of joy for the Romans. The day when you, prince, marry *N.*, very happy Augusta.

The couple then proceed to the nuptial chamber and as they approach the factions acclaim:

For us You are descended, blessing, as God, at Cana in Galilee, legitimate union. As man you left the maternal nuptial chamber. Just as you blessed those who were married there, bless now this crowned couple and grant them fruitfulness and a peaceful life.

Noble newly weds, may God protect you. Full of honour and virtue, may the Trinity grant you prosperity and bless your marriage. The only perfectly good one, Who was in former times present at Cana and there blessed water through love of mankind and changed it into wine to give happiness to mankind, may He also bless you, yourself and your bride. Always, Holy God, protect the newly weds.

The nuptial chamber (παστός) of the Magnaura palace to which the imperial couple proceed after their marriage is not a separate apartment of the palace but the great hall, the conch of which contained the imperial throne and in which was housed the *pentapyrgion* where the nuptial crowns would be hung. For this occasion the hall would have been lavishly decorated and, the word παστός, also used for the Triclinos of the Nineteen Couches, according to Vogt, designates a room so prepared to welcome the newly weds:

le mot παστός, en ce jour, était aussi appliqué aux Dix-neuf Lits, ce qui prouve bien qu'en réalité, il faut entendre par "chambre nuptial" simplement la grande salle de la Magnaure transformée en salle de fête et de réception à l'occasion des mariages impériaux.<sup>49</sup>

Vogt further surmises that the great hall of the Magnaura would have served only as the location for the ceremony that takes place there and that the couple would not in fact have stayed there. This conclusion is, however, less convincing, especially in the light of the ceremony that would take place a few days after the marriage.

As they make their way from the church to the nuptial chamber at the Magnaura palace, the imperial couple are honoured by the high dignitaries of the court and acclaimed by the factions. Through these acclamations the events within the church are likened to the

---

<sup>49</sup> Vogt, II, *Commentaire*, 18.

biblical marriage at Cana at which Christ had been a guest. Christ is invoked to also bless this marriage and to protect the imperial couple. Just as the acclamations after imperial coronation had expressed an understanding of the rite in terms of the direct involvement of the divine, so it is here stated that the nuptial coronation, by the Patriarch, had been performed by God. The use of the plural (Emperors and Augustae) at the beginning of the acclamations strongly suggests that, as would be expected, the couple are accompanied at the outset of the procession by other members of the imperial family. It also suggests that this marriage ceremony assumes that the groom will be a junior Emperor. After the initial acclamation, it is only the couple themselves who are addressed, indicating that other members of the imperial family leave them before they approach the nuptial chamber.

We have seen that at the coronation ceremony the acclamations addressed to the junior Emperor have a particularly dynastic theme. Here, also, the ceremony implies a familial element to the imperial ideology, in particular through the expression of a desire for God to bless the couple with imperial children, born in the purple chamber of the Chrysotriclinos. This evident concern for the marriage to yield children might also go some way to explaining the location of the tenth-century wedding ceremony. The ceremonial book specifies that the move from the church of St Stephen to that of the Theotokos at Pharos was a recent innovation. A number of factors point to the Leo VI as the architect of the change. For example, Paul Magdalino has noted the similarity of the iconography of one of that Emperor's coins to that of the church's apse.<sup>50</sup> Significantly Ioli Kalavrezou has seen in Leo VI's association with the Theotokos a desire of the Emperor, childless at the time of his marriage, to secure her intercession to ensure the continuation of the dynasty.<sup>51</sup>

The Middle Byzantine period was an era of imperial dynasties. It was with the Isaurians, the first ruling dynasty, that the term *Porphyrogenitus* was introduced along with a seemingly deliberate attempt to create a clear dynastic line through the coronation of the ruler's eldest son only. With the Macedonians, the most successful Byzantine dynasty,

---

<sup>50</sup> Paul Magdalino, "Basil I, Leo VI, and the Feast of the Prophet Elijah," *JÖB* 38 (1988), 196.

<sup>51</sup> Kalavrezou, "Helping Hands for the Empire," 61, n. 36.

there is also an evident focus on the establishment of an imperial family, demonstrated, for example, in the decoration of the Kainourgion palace. Although the notion of a birth right to the throne is never institutionally recognised, here, in the acclamations, the participation of the divine in the union of an Emperor with his spouse advocates the importance of the ceremony and the express desire for the future introduction of Porphyrogenitus children promotes a system that favoured a hereditary succession.

The fact that those who gained the purple from the battle-field in the Middle Byzantine period did not establish their own dynasties, nor did they remove the claims of the crowned children of the established imperial family is testimony to the presence of strong notions of legitimacy by birth. The attempts by these usurpers to align themselves with the ruling family further suggests the prevalence of such notions and also indicates that marriage alliances were one important feature amongst the possibilities for establishing notions of legitimacy at the Middle Byzantine court:

Les princes légitimes doivent céder le pouvoir réel aux nouveaux venus, et ces nouveaux venus prennent une teinte de légitimité en s'alliant ou en cherchant à s'allier à la dynastie par des mariages croisés.<sup>52</sup>

In both legitimisation through marriage and the establishment of an imperial line through procreation women are essential. The importance of the imperial women is evident in the concentration of the wedding acclamations on the Augusta. Within the Magnaura palace the acclamations constitute a straightforward celebration of the couple and their marriage. However in this celebration also, the Augusta is the primary recipient of the good wishes of the factions.

The factions enter the nuptial chamber and when the crowned imperial couple takes its place there, the two factions wish them many years. Then, the claqueurs lead the acclamations and the factions respond: "Welcome."

Welcome, Emperor of the Romans.  
Welcome, Emperor with the Augusta.  
Welcome, Augusta, elected by God.

---

<sup>52</sup> Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre*, 54.

Welcome, Augusta, protected by God.

Welcome, *N.*, joy of the Romans.

Welcome, you, the nobility of the purple.

Welcome, you, desired by all.

You, who have been appointed by divine election for the strengthening and exaltation of the world. You have been married by God in the purple. All-powerful God has blessed you by crowning you with His own hand. Also may He who has called you to this dignity and has united you to *N.*, Emperor, fill you with days in the purple. May God heed your people.

These acclamations are directed principally at the Augusta and place her under God's protection. Just as her husband, at his coronation, had been heralded as God's elect, so here the Augusta's introduction to the imperial family is seen as a "divine election," the people whom God has set her over are "her people". Although in the *Book of Ceremonies* the court of women and the Empress who presided over it, are notable by their absence, here is an indication of the high regard in which her position was held, a position that, particularly as it emerges in the post-marital acclamations, was associated with her fertility.

As the couple advances towards the conch of the nuptial chamber, where the imperial bed has been prepared, they receive a final set of acclamations before the departure of the factions, during which, once again, the marriage is confirmed as a divine act and the protection of the couple and the longevity of their lives are entrusted to God.

After the acclamations, the couple, crowns on head, goes to the golden imperial bed where they leave their crowns. The *cubicularii* hang the crowns on the *pentapyrgion* nearby and the couple goes to the Triclinos of Nineteen Couches and sits at the imperial table in anticipation of the celebratory meal. The purpose of this removal of the crowns before the formal banquet in the Triclinos of Nineteen Couches is intriguing. The *pentapyrgion*, a large piece of furniture on which the crowns are hung, was a receptacle for precious objects and imperial crowns.<sup>53</sup> It was an appropriate place for the couple to leave their crowns but the reason for removing them at all, unless it was a simple concern for the comfort of the couple as they made their way back to the Great Palace, escapes us.

---

<sup>53</sup> Vogt, II, *Commentaire*, 18.

There follows an extra set of acclamations, directed at the Augusta. It is likely that these were intoned either as the cortege made its way to the banqueting hall or when the imperial couple were seated there. Since there is a rather confusing statement about the cortege that might accompany the Augusta if she went either to the triclinos (here the confusion, since which room is not specified) or to the Nineteen Couches, it appears that she processed separately from her husband.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, as the acclamations are for her alone, the former possibility seems the most likely. These acclamations repeat the theme of the former encomia: wishes for the long life of the Augusta, the establishment of her appointment as a divine election and the loyalty of her people. They begin, “We celebrate, as is appropriate, the Augusta, our joy” and continue, to each phrase the people responding “many years to you” three times:

Many years to you, Augusta elected by God.  
Many years to you, very happy Augusta.  
Many years to you, wife of the Emperor.

As the claqueurs continue, each chant is taken up by the people and repeated three times:

You have been appointed by divine election.  
All powerful God has blessed you.  
By God you have been married in the purple.  
May God who has crowned you with His own hand  
And has called you to such a dignity  
And has united you to *N.*, the Emperor  
Multiply your years with the Emperor.  
May God heed your people.

They conclude:

Claqueurs: Many years to *N.*, very pious Augusta.  
People: May God grant her many years.

It has been noted that for Vogt the ceremony at the Magnaura did not indicate that the newly married couple was to stay at the palace. However, the events that took place on the third day after the marriage strongly suggest that, at least for the days following their nuptial coronation they would take up residence at the Magnaura. For on this third day an

---

<sup>54</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 50 (41), Reiske, 213-214; Vogt, II, 21.

additional ceremony takes place during which the Augusta is escorted to the baths for a ritual cleansing.<sup>55</sup>

On this day the factions again gather at the threshold of the Magnaura palace, the Blues on the right hand side, “where the door to the Augusteus is,” and the Greens on the left, facing the nearby imperial stables. One organ is placed at the doorway of these stables, another in the gardens and a final one near the entrance to the path leading down to the bath. Along this path consuls escort a number of objects, including underwear, perfume, jewellery, pots and washbowls. The Augusta comes out of the nuptial chamber and the patricians approach to bring her to the beginning of the descent and the consuls escort her further, “as far as the way down to St Christine.”

When the Augusta appears the Blues receive her and deliver their acclamations whilst their organ play. When she has advanced as far as the gardens, the Greens begin their acclamations and the Augusta enters the bath. When she re-emerges the senators again provide an escort, this time back to the nuptial chamber, whilst a group of female guests stand at the Oaton. A maid of honour (ἡ παρακαθίστρια) walks behind the Augusta carrying a porphyry orb decorated with precious stones, two more of which are carried on either side of her. During this procession the factions walk behind the cortege delivering their acclamations.

This ceremony brings to a close the wedding celebrations. It indicates that the couple would have remained resident at the Magnaura palace in their first days as a married couple. It further demonstrates a certain integration, at least as far as this ceremony is concerned, of the male and female courts, members of the latter gathering at the Oaton and those of the former accompanying the Augusta during her progress to and from the bath. Despite the dearth of references to the court of women in the ceremonial book, a strict segregation of the genders does appear to have been maintained. It has been noted that the Empress’s reception of the female court on Easter Sunday, conducted in the galleries of Hagia Sophia, took place in the absence of the male courtiers, the eunuch

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., Reiske, 214-216; Vogt, II, 22-23.

*cubicularii* alone mounting from the nave to witness the proceedings.<sup>56</sup> However, after her own coronation she would receive ranks of male courtiers as well as their wives – in separate receptions - suggesting that at pivotal moments the barrier between the courts would be relaxed to allow the court in its entirety to approach the Augusta and recognise her position. This coronation is itself described in two chapters of the ceremonial book, the first of which describes the event independently, the second as a preparation for the marriage ceremony. It seems that the Emperor's bride, therefore, would always be an Augusta, having received her title beforehand or, had she not done so, being raised to the dignity immediately before the wedding ceremony. The coronation itself will be addressed below. Here it serves to prove that the division between men and women at the court, apparently adhered to throughout the religious ceremonies, did not preclude the involvement of the male court at her ceremonial assumption of the office. At her marriage, this second milestone in her career, one in which she occupied a central position as the mother of future Porphyrogeniti, they again make an appearance, not only to honour the couple as it emerged from the church but also to escort the Augusta to her bath three days after the rite. In the acclamations that followed the marriage and through the participation of the male court in this later ceremony the high esteem in which the Augusta was held is strongly manifest.

At the imperial coronation and in the acclamations that followed imperial marriage the promotion of a dynastic model has emerged as a central theme. Although the imperial title was not established as conferred through hereditary succession either in theory or in practice in the Middle Byzantine political system, these tenth-century ceremonies do appear to foster a notion of the imperial family in which such a transmission of power is favoured. This focus on the imperial family, the marriage performed by God of an Emperor, God's elect, to a divinely appointed bride and the desire for Porphyrogenitus children to be produced by the couple is further highlighted by the inclusion in the *Book of Ceremonies* of a series of acclamations to be addressed to a Porphyrogenitus child after his birth.

---

<sup>56</sup> See above, 100-101.

## *Birth*

Chapter 51 (42) of the ceremonial book provides the acclamations delivered by the factions after the birth of an imperial child, or Porphyrogenitus.<sup>57</sup> These acclamations were only part of a week-long period of celebration, during which *lochozema*, food given to a new mother to aid milk production and recovery, was distributed to the factions and *tagmata* at the Triclinos of Nineteen Couches and to the poor at the Mese.<sup>58</sup> On the day of the birth the senate enter the palace to congratulate the Emperor and express their desire that the child would come to rule and to inherit a “paternal royalty” for the good governance of the Empire. On the third day the acclamations of the factions took place. Two days later some two hundred men, representatives of the factions and the *tagmata*, gathered at the Hippodrome to acclaim the child, using his name for the first time. On the eighth day after the birth a priest would go to the narthex of one of the palatine churches to bless the child with prayers and to give him his name. Following this ceremony the court dignitaries and their wives acclaimed the child. Thus it is clear that a high level of celebratory activity marked the days after the birth of an imperial baby.

Two further ceremonies took place in the early life of the Porphyrogenitus: his baptism, conducted at Hagia Sophia<sup>59</sup> and his tonsure, which took place in a church of the Emperor’s choosing, though because it is stated that the Patriarch is summoned there it almost certainly took place within the palace walls.<sup>60</sup> During the latter ceremony, the child’s hair was cut and offered on the one hand to God and on the other to those who would act as godparents (*anadochoi*). Those who received the hair might be of a great number. For example, at the tonsure of Basil I’s son Leo the *strategoi* of Anatolia and Capadocia along with all the officers of and above the rank of *comes* of the two themes, numbering around fifty, received his hair. During these ceremonies the court, the clergy the factions and the army gather to welcome the new addition to the imperial family:

---

<sup>57</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 51 (42), Reiske, 216-217; Vogt, II, 24-25.

<sup>58</sup> *De Cer.*, II, c. 21. The ceremonies surrounding the birth of a Porphyrogenitus are described in Book II, 21-23. They are discussed in Dagnon, *Empereur et prêtre*, 64-67.

<sup>59</sup> *De Cer.*, II, c. 22.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 23.

Il s'agit, en effet, de faire adopter l'enfant impérial par les représentants, aussi nombreux que possible, du corps social dont dépendra son avenir et peut-être même sa survie... Au lieu de reconnaître droit du fils à succéder au père en vertu d'une parenté naturelle, on multiplie les liens de parenté symbolique qui font du porphyrogénète non pas seulement le fils de l'empereur, mais le fils adoptif de l'Empire.<sup>61</sup>

In Book I of the *De Ceremoniis*, however, only the acclamations of the factions, which took place at the *phiale* of the Sigma (Pl.3 28), find a place. Here the representatives of the people greeted the Porphyrogenitus, acclaiming:

Claqueurs:	For the Emperors.
People:	Day of happiness through victories.
Claqueurs:	And anything more for them?
People:	And strengthen them, yes, Lord, protect them, yes, Lord, day of happiness through victories.
Claqueurs:	For the Augustae.
People:	Day of happiness through victories.
Claqueurs:	And anything more for them?
People:	And strengthen them, yes, Lord, protect them, yes, Lord, day of happiness through victories.
Claqueurs:	For the Senate.
People:	Day of happiness through victories.
Claqueurs:	And anything more for it?
People:	And strengthen it, yes, Lord, protect it, yes, Lord, day of happiness through victories.
Claqueurs:	For the army [leaders].
People:	Day of happiness through victories.
Claqueurs:	And anything more for them?
People:	And strengthen them, yes, Lord, protect them, yes, Lord, day of happiness through victories.

As the acclamation is finished, again each phrase is repeated in triplicate by the ordinary faction members:

May God grant the orthodox Emperors beautiful and happy days.  
 May God grant an abundance of beautiful days to the Empire.  
 May God send beautiful days to the Augustae and Porphyrogeniti.  
 May God grant complete victories to *N.* and *N.*  
 May God give beautiful days and anniversaries to *N.*, Porphyrogenitus, who you have engendered.  
 All Holy Spirit, protect the Augustae; Mother of our God, preserve the Porphyrogeniti.  
 Always, holy God, keep the Emperors.  
 Lord, their life for our life.

Finally, everyone joins together to intone: "May God grant them many years."

<sup>61</sup> Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre*, 66-67.

Thus we can see that following the birth of a Porphyrogenitus the infant and his family would receive acclamations very similar to those that would be addressed to the Emperors throughout their rule. They reaffirm the theme of heredity identified in the wedding acclamations. From the earliest days of his life a member of the imperial family was placed under the protection of the divine and his emergence into the world was heralded as a day of rejoicing for the Empire. These acclamations, by which the birth is celebrated, glorify the entire imperial family. Once again the Augustae are afforded a central position in the eulogies along with the Emperors, the plural demonstrating that it is not simply the parents of the Porphyrogenitus child who are due reverence. Along with the Emperors and Augustae the army and senate find a place and are acclaimed in exactly the same way as them, being placed under the protection of God and strengthened by Him.

It has been suggested, above, that the symbolic participation of army, senate and people at the coronation ceremony should not necessarily be conceived of in terms of a limitation of their role, but rather as evidence of the exclusive concentration in the ceremonial book of a universally applicable rite in which the symbolism is relevant not only within ceremony but also a political understanding, both of which functioned through symbols. Here, again, the three groups are brought into the proceedings, the imperial birth a source of joy to each and an opportunity for the factions to praise the army and the senate as well as the imperial family. Once again these important groups in the body politic participate in a predetermined, symbolic manner in the days after the birth. Nonetheless their involvement does appear to link them to the child in an active way, people gathering in the Hippodrome to acclaim him, using his name for the first time before the religious ceremonies at which that name is given and the dignitaries, in the case of Leo coming from the military, receiving his hair and becoming symbolic parents of the child.

In the acclamations of the factions, as at the coronation, these groups are subsumed under the divine, secondary players gathered to recognise a God-given event. It is God who blesses the imperial family and will protect the child. However, it is specifically to the

care of the Theotokos that the child is given. It has been noted that the removal of the marriage ceremony to the palatine church dedicated to her might be associated with the desire of Leo VI to acquire her intercession for the continuance of his line. Here, for the first time she is invoked to protect the Porphyrogeniti, an invocation that, we have seen, will be repeated in other praises of the imperial family. On the third day after the imperial birth the factions gather to acclaim the child, his parents and wider family, as well as the army and senate, to wish him a long and happy life and to establish him under divine protection. Thus the people welcome the child into the Empire, over which the senate, two days earlier, had expressed its desire that he would one day rule. The next imperial ceremony marks the final stage in the life of an Emperor, his funeral.

### *Death*

The chapter of the *Book of Ceremonies* devoted to the protocol for the imperial funeral is relatively short and the ceremony it describes relatively simple.<sup>62</sup> The body is taken via the Caballarios to the Triclinos of Nineteen Couches. Here a golden bed, called the mourning (λύπης) bed has been placed and the body is deposited there wearing full imperial regalia, the crown, *divitision*, *chlamys* and *campagion*. The lay personnel and clergy of Hagia Sophia enter with the senate, wearing *scaramangia* and the religious rite is sung. Then the *praepositus* signals to the *master of ceremonies* and he says three times: “Depart, Emperor, the King of kings and Lord of lords calls you.”

The officers of the palace guard transfer the body to the interior of the Chalke where it is placed until it is time for the funeral. Before the body is lifted the *praepositus* again signals to the *master of ceremonies* and he begins, saying three times: “Depart, Emperor, the King of kings and Lord of lords calls you.” Next the body is brought out of the Chalke, carried by imperial *protospatharioi*, is taken along the Mese and arrives “at the place where the funeral will take place”, in the Middle Byzantine period this was usually the church of the Holy Apostles. When the office of psalms has been observed the *praepositus* again signals to the *master of ceremonies* who says three times: “Enter,

---

<sup>62</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 69 (60), Reiske, 275-277; Vogt, II, 84-85.

Emperor, the King of kings and Lord of lords calls you.” Then: “Remove the crown from your head.” The *praepositus* lifts the crown and replaces it with a simple purple band. The crown is placed on the tomb.

Where the birth, coronation and marriage of an Emperor were marked by extensive acclamation and ceremony, the death receives a more subdued rite. Essentially we have the display of the corpse and its transfer to the Holy Apostles for its interment. At the Triclinos of Nineteen Couches the dignitaries of the court and the army would be able to view the body, whilst at the Chalke the people of Constantinople would have the same opportunity. After his death, therefore, the ordinary people would be able to see their ruler at a level of proximity previously denied to them, laid in state, dressed in the signs of his office.

Although this ceremony is less elaborate than those that would have punctuated his reign, the ceremony surrounding the Emperor’s funeral does more than to simply transfer the body from the palace to its place of rest. During this final processional progress of the Emperor through his city he is called by God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, out of the palace and into his tomb. In the end, his crown is removed and with it he is divested of the *basileia* before joining his heavenly counterpart, his Protector throughout his reign, in His Empire.

Throughout this discussion the Augusta has emerged as a central figure in the imperial ceremonies. At the end of its description of the Emperor’s funeral, the ceremonial book confirms that her own interment would follow the same protocol, the only variation being in the words of the *master of ceremonies*: “Depart, Empress, the King of kings and Lord of lords calls you.” Therefore, the death of imperial women was conceived of in the same terms as that of the Emperors, as a calling from the palace to the heavenly kingdom. At her coronation, too, parallels with the ritual of the Emperors have been identified. Nonetheless, it was also argued that fundamental differences, in particular the shift of location, separated the coronation of an Augusta from that of the Emperors and that, in certain respects, those differences aligned her investiture with those of the high

dignitaries of the court. Leaving the rituals marking defining moments in the lives of the Emperors and Augustae, it will be useful to examine that way in which the ceremonial book describes the dissemination of power through the court system.

## Imperial Promotions

### *Promotions to Dignity*

A number of chapters of the *De Ceremoniis* concern promotions to imperial office and dignity. The majority describes promotions to dignity, those positions which did not necessarily involve the fulfilment of the duties of an office. Of the eighteen such dignities listed in the *Kletorologion* of Philotheus,<sup>63</sup> eight appear in this section of the *De Ceremoniis*. Although in the Leipzig manuscript they do not appear in precisely the same order of precedence as in the *Kletorologion*, they represent the eight most senior dignities of Philotheus's codification. However, although the lists give the impression of a stable hierarchy, with the Caesar at its summit and the στρατηλάτης and ἀπὸ ἐπάρχων sharing the lowest rank, the *Book of Ceremonies* suggests a slightly different system. For in the ceremonies surrounding their investiture it is clear that there is a shift in the system with the third title in the hierarchy, the *curopalates*. In the ceremonial book, therefore, the titles of dignity fall into two categories. The first is represented by the promotions of a Caesar and a *nobilissimus*, the second by those of a number of lesser ranks, that of patrician providing a model to which the others conform in all their essential characteristics. The division between the two types is not simply demonstrated in the ceremonies themselves, but also in the terminology used. For the first are described as χειροτονία, indicating an election or consecration,<sup>64</sup> the second as προαγωγή, or promotion. The clear implication of this terminology, that the Caesar and *nobilissimus*, are created through election, perhaps in a more religiously understood manner than the rest of the court is supported in the ceremonies themselves. For their promotions are

---

<sup>63</sup> *Klet.*, 86-97.

<sup>64</sup> The term is used not only for the promotion of a Caesar or *nobilissimus* but also the ordination of priests through the laying on of hands. Vogt, II, *Commentaire*, 44.

conducted in a more elaborate ceremony, in which the Patriarch blesses the insignia, and they receive the acclamation of the factions at the Tribunal in much the same way as the Augusta had after her coronation.

*The promotion of a Caesar<sup>65</sup> and nobilissimus<sup>66</sup>*

The promotion of a Caesar and that of a *nobilissimus* follow almost identical protocols. On the morning of the promotion the Emperors sit in the Triclinos of Nineteen Couches and they receive the court, entrance by entrance. When the receptions are complete they ask the dignitaries for their choice of Caesar or *nobilissimus*. This given, the *master of ceremonies* announces “Be Pleased!” and the court leaves. The patricians stand in the corridor of the Nineteen Couches and the rest of the senate on the steps leading up to the terrace of the Tribunal. Within the Tribunal stand the *tagmata* with their insignia, the factions and the “people of the city.”<sup>67</sup> There is here an indication that a wider group than normally participate in the ceremonies is included. Throughout the *Book of Ceremonies* are found references to “the people,” most commonly in the acclamations delivered by the factions. It has already been argued that in this context “the people” should be read as the ordinary faction members rather than as the common people of Constantinople. In a scholium to the description of the promotion of a Caesar, it is stated that the disposition of the people and objects within the Tribunal correspond to that at the coronation of an Augusta:

It must be known that the members of the senate, the dignitaries, the two factions, all the people, also the cross, the sceptres and all the people, at the promotion of a Caesar, occupy the same positions as at the coronation of an Augusta.<sup>68</sup>

“All the people” are here specified twice and it seems obvious that they must be identified with reference to the objects with which they are associated. The factions and “all the people,” suggesting the claqueurs and the ordinary faction members, the sceptres

---

<sup>65</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 52 (43), Reiske, 217-222; Vogt, II, 26-32.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 53 (44), Reiske, 222-225; Vogt, II, 33-36.

<sup>67</sup> For the promotion of a Caesar, the description simply designates the insignia and “all the people.” It is clear that the same groups are meant.

<sup>68</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 52 (43), Reiske, 222; Vogt, II, 29.

and “all the people,” suggesting the *tagmata* and their banners. Nonetheless the reference in the promotion of a *nobilissimus* to the people of the city (οἱ τῆς πόλεως), certainly indicates that representatives from the wider population of Constantinople are present. Although it is not possible to identify who these were, it is clear that here, as at the coronation of an Augusta, representatives of the senate the army and the people are gathered. At each of the investitures discussed thus far the representatives of the three groups gather together in a single space - at the coronation of an Emperor in the nave of Hagia Sophia and at both the coronation of an Augusta and the promotions of a Caesar and a *nobilissimus* in the Tribunal - to honour the individual and to recognise their appointment. The people present in the Tribunal, therefore, as the scholium to the promotion of a Caesar certifies, provide a ceremonial similarity between these promotions and the rituals surrounding imperial investiture, particularly that of an Augusta.

The Patriarch, who has been waiting at the church of St Stephen, joins the Emperors as they make their way through the Triclinos of Nineteen Couches, receiving the *proskynesis* of the patricians at the corridor and accompanied by them as they continue to the Tribunal. Before they arrive the factions begin their acclamations: “Rise, in glory, divine royalty.” Each of the acclamations, which include the command to rise in glory to the Emperors, “servants of the Lord,” and to the Augustae, is led by the claqueurs, the people responding three times, “Rise in glory.” The Emperors and the Patriarch enter the Tribunal and mount to the terrace. Here the Emperors bless the people three times and the factions respond: “Holy, holy, holy” continuing:

Lords of the universe, heed your people who entreat you. As servants, we dare to call upon you; with fear we beseech the Emperors; with indulgence, benefactors, listen favourably to your people’s entreaty. Lords, fill your servants with joy. Lords, we entreat you for the happiness of your city. May the Caesar/*nobilissimus* appear to your servants; we, lords, your servants, ask for the greatest glory of the senate, for the greatest success of the armies, for the joy of your servants, benefactors.<sup>69</sup>

The senior Emperor now asks the people for their choice and, when they have responded, the factions cry:

---

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., Reiske, 223; Vogt, II, 30.

Those who give the crown have understood our prayer, greatly pleasing their people. The Emperors cause the joy of the State, for the prosperity and expansion of the Romans, with the approval of Him who crowned you, benefactors. May the Creator and Master of all things fill you with years along with the Augustae and the Caesar/*nobilissimus*. May He keep your power in the purple for a multitude of years. May God heed your people, *N.* and *N.*, friends of Christ, victorious in God.<sup>70</sup>

In the Emperors' emergence into the Tribunal and the acclamations that accompany it are found many of the features familiar from other ceremonies. The command to rise in glory is reminiscent of the terminology used at imperial *adventus*, confirming the arrival as a kind of epiphany, by which the Emperors appear to the city. The triumphal character of that epiphany is highlighted within the acclamations, which focus on imperial victory, the expansion of the Roman people and the desire for the success of the army. The latter, as at the birth of a Porphyrogenitus, are objects of the hope of the people along with the senate and, here, also the city. Once again, the promotion provides a framework in which the Emperors receive the praises of the factions and the new dignitary does so by association with the imperial family. Nonetheless, these promotions incorporate a new element: explicit references to a process of election by the court dignitaries and the civil and military representatives in the Tribunal. Here is found what was only hinted at in the imperial investitures: the full participation of army, senate and people in the choice of dignitary.

He who is to be promoted is brought up to the terrace. The Patriarch stands before a portable altar, on which have been placed the *chlamys* and insignia.<sup>71</sup> On either side of him stand the Emperors and behind him the deacon. At the rear of the group the individual about to be promoted takes his place.<sup>72</sup> The Emperors and the newly elect hold lighted candles while the deacon recites the litany and the Patriarch prays. The Patriarch takes the *chlamys* and hands it to the *vestitores*. The Emperors then clothe the new Caesar/*nobilissimus* and the factions acclaim. In the case of a *nobilissimus* this ends the investiture and the acclamations are of the usual kind, expressing the desire that many

---

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., Reiske, 223; Vogt, II, 30-31.

<sup>71</sup> The insignia of a Caesar was a crown, that of a *nobilissimus* a green *chlamys*.

<sup>72</sup> In the case of a *nobilissimus*, Caesars stand before him and behind the deacon. Throughout this ceremony the Caesars have accompanied the Emperors.

happy years be granted to the Emperors, the Augustae and the *nobilissimus*. In the case of a Caesar, the clothing with the *chlamys* is followed by a simple acclamation, “congratulations, congratulations,” led by the claqueurs and repeated three times by the people. The Patriarch then prays once more before kissing the insignia. These he holds out for the Emperors to kiss. They then hold the insignia above the new Caesar’s head and, with them, make a sign of the cross, saying, “In the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.” They then crown the Caesar and again the factions cry, “congratulations, congratulations,” finally wishing many years to the Emperors.

The ceremonies in which a Caesar and *nobilissimus* receive their title, therefore, share similarities with all imperial coronations and are identical to that of an Augusta. The other promotions to dignity contained in the *Book of Ceremonies* follow a different protocol in which the prayers over the insignia by the Patriarch before the investiture do not feature. Once again the ceremonies seem to unite the newly elect to the Empire in a way that other promotions do not, bringing the ecclesiastical and imperial authorities together to perform the rite, which itself amalgamates election by army senate and people with God’s sanction, confirmed in the prayers over the insignia.

Following the investiture in the Tribunal, the Emperors and the newly elected dignitary go to the Triclinos of Nineteen Couches, where they receive the court. The dignitaries enter and perform *proskynesis* before the Emperors and the newly elected dignitary. In the case of a new Caesar they kiss the feet and knees of the Emperors and one knee of the Caesar. In the case of a new *nobilissimus* a Caesar sits on either side of the Emperors and the court greets them in the same way before kissing the hand of the new *nobilissimus*. The Caesar’s promotion, as it is laid down in the *Book of Ceremonies*, occurs on Easter Sunday and the receptions in the Triclinos of Nineteen Couches are, because of the feast, followed by the kiss of peace before the court processes to Hagia Sophia for the liturgy. The promotion of a *nobilissimus*, on the other hand, might take place on a church feast day, in which case the kiss of peace is observed, or on an ordinary Sunday, in which case only the acts of reverence towards the imperial party take place.

The receptions in the Triclinos of Nineteen Couches confirm the imperial status of the Caesar and *nobilissimus* that has been suggested throughout the ceremony. For the holders of these titles, like the Emperors themselves, are recipients of overt signs of veneration by the other dignitaries of the court, who never receive such honours. These signs are more limited than those offered to the Emperors or to the Augusta after her coronation. Their recipients, therefore, do not have an equivalent status but it is comparable, elevating them above the lesser dignitaries of the court.

The title of Caesar was the highest dignity below Emperor, *nobilissimus* the next down the scale. Both were, therefore, highly prized titles. The title of Caesar, often conferred on a favourite in the absence of imperial sons, for example on Bardas by Michael III, carried with it an assumption that its holder might succeed to the throne. In other circumstances it was given to an Emperor's male children, those not crowned co-Emperor, or, in the case of Nicephorus Phocas, to the Emperor's father. It was, therefore, a title that was associated with the imperial family, its use reflecting a desire to foster notions of familial, if not hereditary, legitimacy. The elevation of the title is confirmed by Philotheus, who describes it as comparable to the imperial glory (παρομοία τῆς βασιλικῆς δόξης).<sup>73</sup>

Although the title of *nobilissimus* appears very rarely after the reign of Justinian and especially from the ninth century,<sup>74</sup> the similarity of the two ceremonies indicates that it carried an equivalent status. The description of the promotion in the *Book of Ceremonies* is almost certainly taken from that of Constantine V, in 768. This is strongly suggested by the presence of two Caesars throughout the ceremony; Leo VI's second and third sons were crowned Caesar on the same day as Constantine's investiture. Nonetheless, because it is recorded in the ceremonial book in the same unspecific terms as the other ceremonies and also because it states that the promotion might take place on a feast day or an ordinary Sunday (the Caesar receiving his title on Easter Sunday) there is no doubt that this was the model deemed appropriate for future investitures.

---

<sup>73</sup> *Klet.*, 97.

<sup>74</sup> Vogt, II, *Commentaire*, 50-51.

It is clear from the ceremony of investiture that they are close to the imperial centre, receiving their insignia directly from the Emperors in the presence of representatives of the army, senate and people. They share in the praises delivered in the acclamations and in the honour of the dignitaries of the court at the receptions in the Triclinos of Nineteen Couches. Furthermore, the ceremonies give a strong sense of election, both the senators and the people being asked for their choice before the investiture. It seems unlikely that the promotion would be organised without the knowledge that the two groups would agree in their nomination. Such elective elements justify the title χειροτονία and establish, at least symbolically, the holder of the title as the choice of the community, elected to share in the reverence offered to the Emperors, sharing, therefore, the Empire.

As with the coronation of an Augusta, whose protocol has much in common with these imperial appointments, it is the Emperors who are the primary focus of the praises and the veneration of the court. Here there is no overt statement about the participation of the divine in the election, although the acclamations confirm that the Emperors act with the approval of the divine. The prayers of the Patriarch and his kissing of the insignia before they are placed on the new dignitary clearly accentuate the sacred nature of election into the imperial system. Like the Augusta, the Caesar and *nobilissimus*, receive their dignity through their association with the Emperors. This is certainly an imperial promotion, but it is of a different calibre than the other promotions described in the ceremonial book. For through their reception of the insignia they become participants in the imperial receptions, as recipients of honour along with the Emperors. Like the Augusta they do not perform any acts of thanksgiving towards the Emperors in recognition of their promotion. Rather they receive their dignity in a ceremony comparable to those in which a junior Emperor or Augusta received their crowns, in which ecclesiastical and imperial, secular and divine powers combine to confer the title, after which they take their place alongside the Emperors to receive the veneration of the court.

Other promotions to dignity do not follow this type of protocol. The *Book of Ceremonies* contains six such promotions, which correspond to the titles placed directly below

*nobilissimus* by Philotheus, from magistrate to *protospatharios*. Although the descriptions are not identical, some containing more detail than others, that concerned with the promotion of a patrician contains the full range of ceremonial behaviour, into which the others fit without contradiction. It is this ceremony, therefore, that provides the model for a discussion of the second type of raising to imperial dignity.

### *The promotion of a patrician*<sup>75</sup>

On the morning of the promotion the Emperors receive the court in the Chrysotriclinos. They sit on their throne, that is beneath the portrait of the enthroned Christ and behind them are gathered members of the eunuch *cubicularii*, forming a semicircle around their throne. Whilst these entrances are being organised the *master of ceremonies* informs the factions of the name of him who is to be promoted, so that they can compose appropriate acclamations. When the receptions are complete the Emperor signals to the *praepositus*, who in turn signals to the *master of ceremonies* and the new patrician is brought in to stand in the middle of the court. He performs *proskynesis* three times, first in the doorway of the triclinos, then in the middle of the chamber and finally in front of the Emperors' throne. He kisses the feet of the Emperors and then their knees. If there is more than one patrician to be promoted they are brought forward in turn. He then receives the insignia of his office, ivory inscribed codicils, from the Emperors and kisses their hands. The senate gives thanks and the new patrician again approaches the Emperors and kisses their feet and knees, thanking them. The *master of ceremonies* says "Be Pleased!" and the court responds "many happy years" and leaves the Chrysotriclinos.

This ceremony is of a different type to those discussed thus far. Although on occasion it might take place in a different setting, for example the curopalates receives his purple *divitision* in the Triclinos of Nineteen Couches, this ceremony of investiture marks the promotion of all the dignitaries below the rank of *nobilissimus*. Here the ecclesiastical authorities, the representatives of the army and those of the people do not attend and only the dignitaries of the court witness the elevation within their ranks of the new patrician.

---

<sup>75</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 57 (48), Reiske, 252-260; Vogt, II, 51-60.

and the Emperors alone receive the veneration of the court. There is no suggestion of an election, rather the new dignity is the choice of the Emperors alone and, both as a preliminary to the investiture and at its conclusion, he prostrates himself before the Emperor to kiss his feet and knees. Immediately after he receives the codicils, too, he kisses the Emperors' hands to signify his gratitude and loyalty towards the Emperor. All this is in stark contrast to the previous promotions and is more in keeping with our understanding of the ideology of the Middle Byzantine court, in which the Emperor stands as the sole source of promotion.

After the ceremony in the Chrysotriclinos, the new patrician is accompanied by a silentary, who holds his codicils as he processes with the senate to the "church of the Hippodrome." There he lights candles before continuing to the Consistorion, where he does the same thing, finally going to the church of the Lord, where he again lights candles and prays. At the door of the triclinos of Candidates, inside which are gathered the dignitaries of the court, an *admissionalis* cries "Halt." The curtain suspended at the threshold is lifted and the *admissionalis* commands, "Pass, patrician," appending any other dignity conferred, for example *strategos* or *logothete*. As he passes through the buildings of the *tagmata* the new patrician is greeted by the factions who acclaim him and he receives from them the booklets containing the acclamations. The precise content of these acclamations is not given, since they would be composed to incorporate the name of the individual promoted. However it is prescribed that when the title of his dignity is used the new patrician performs *proskynesis* before the *demarch* and his faction and the *demarch* likewise honours the patrician.

This process, by which the patrician performs acts of thanksgiving along the route to the outskirts of the palace and is welcomed by the dignitaries of the court and the factions, occurs without the Emperors. Here the promotion is recognised and the new patrician is honoured by the factions both in their acclamations and the *proskynesis* of their leader. At the same time, however, the patrician offers them reverence, or rather he responds to his title with an act of humility. This procession offers the dignitaries of the court and the

factions the opportunity to acknowledge the promotion and for him who has received the dignity to be addressed with his title for the first time. At its conclusion the patrician passes from the buildings of the *tagmata* to Hagia Sophia, where the final stage in his investiture takes place.

The new patrician reaches Hagia Sophia via the Chalke and the Holy Well, where he lights candles. He enters the church and stands with the patricians; that is, for the first time he occupies the space reserved for them within the holy space of the church. At the appropriate moment he is brought forward to the *solea* and here he meets the Patriarch coming out of the sanctuary. He hands over his codicils, which are placed on a portable altar. The Patriarch prays over them and, in return, the patrician leaves an *apokombion* of between 72 nomisma (for a *strategos*) and 36 nomisma (for an honorary patrician). The Patriarch then delivers communion from the portable altar, where the new patrician receives the gifts of the Eucharist from the Patriarch's hands. He then returns home.

This final stage in the ceremony is not described for all the dignities, most of which satisfy themselves with a description of the investiture and court receptions before the Emperors. However, it is unlikely that this visit to the cathedral would only follow the promotion of a patrician. Certainly, the *curopalates* processed to Hagia Sophia after receiving his insignia and it is highly unlikely that a magistrate, who ranked higher than a patrician, would be denied the blessing of the Patriarch. At the end of the process of investiture the Church is brought in to the ritual for the first time. The Patriarch prays over the insignia, thus blessing the promotion. However, unlike the prayers of the Patriarch at the coronation of an Emperor or an Augusta or at the promotions of a Caesar or *nobilissimus*, these prayers do not influence the tone of the investiture itself. That event was initiated and performed by the Emperors alone. Nonetheless, the action within the church is not insignificant. Here the Patriarch blesses the promotion, establishing the position of the patrician, already fixed within the ranks of court dignitaries, under the protection of God and the patrician himself is admitted into the ranks of his peers, to appear alongside them at the ceremonies conducted at the cathedral. Furthermore, in return for the blessing, the Church receives a donation from the new patrician, suggesting

that its involvement in the promotions is a reciprocal affair. Like the Emperor before him, the new patrician acts as a patron of the church in recognition of the service done him within the cathedral.

With the protocols of those promotions to dignity that share the same ceremonial procedure as that of patrician the *Book of Ceremonies* describes a process by which the relationship between the Emperor and those he chooses to occupy a place within the court are established. In the *Kletorologion* of Philotheus five of these dignitaries (TABLE 1) are described as senatorial (εἰς συγκλητικούς<sup>76</sup> or τῇ συγκλήτῳ ἀρμόζονται<sup>77</sup>). The rest is made up of military titles, which are described as εἰς προελευσιμαίους,<sup>78</sup> that is forming part of the imperial retinue, or as ἐν τοῖς βασιλικοῖς κατατάττονται κώδιξιν.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, the hierarchy of dignitaries was divided between senatorial and military titles, whilst the highest dignitaries, from the rank of patrician and above, might be conferred on those of either category.<sup>80</sup> The descriptions of the *Book of Ceremonies* are all concerned with these higher dignitaries, except for a few lines describing the promotion of a *spatharocandidatos* to the rank of *protospatharios*.<sup>81</sup>

The promotion of these senior dignitaries of the imperial court is organised within the ritual of imperial receptions and, unlike with the Augusta, Caesar and *nobilissimus* he who receives his dignity offers expansive signs of his humility before his patrons, kissing their feet, knees and hands and performing repeated *proskynesis*. There is a strong sense that the promotion is organised without the court's prior knowledge of who will receive the dignity, the *praepositus* not being told his name until the receptions are about to be brought in to the Emperor and the factions being forced to incorporate that name into their acclamations with great speed. From its outset, therefore, the promotion to dignity of those below the rank of *nobilissimus*, is placed exclusively in the hands of the Emperors. Where the former investitures were performed in a framework of election,

---

<sup>76</sup> *Klet.*, 87.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>80</sup> Bury, *Administrative System*, 23.

<sup>81</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 68 (59), Reiske, 275; Vogt, II, 83.

these are formulated as imperial appointments. Where the creation of an Augusta, a Caesar and a *nobilissimus*, seem to occupy a middle ground between imperial promotion, election by the people and consecration, the ceremony in which these dignitaries receive the insignia of their office is an entirely imperial event. The clergy are not present during the investiture, there are no prayers over the insignia and the Emperor, seated below the image of his divine counterpart, enthroned in the conch of the Chrysotriclinos, alone receives the thanks of the court for raising the new dignitary to his position.

### *Promotions to Office*

In addition to the descriptions of these promotions to dignity, four chapters of the *Book of Ceremonies* are devoted to promotions to office. The positions whose promotion they describe all fall into the third of seven categories into which Philotheos grouped the sixty titles of office in the Middle Byzantine administration, the judges (κριταί). In Philotheus this group consists of just three titles: City Prefect (ὁ ἑπαρχος Πόλεως); Quaestor (ὁ κυαίστωρ); and the chief of petitions (ὁ τοῦ δεήσεως).<sup>82</sup> In the ceremonial book the promotions of the first two are found along with those of some of their subordinates: the Assessor and the Logothete of the Praetorium (the σύμπωνος and the λογοθέτης τοῦ πραιτωρίου),<sup>83</sup> who served under the City Prefect; and heads of department (ἀντιγραφεῖς),<sup>84</sup> who were associated with the Quaestor.

The City Prefect commanded high authority at Constantinople, with both civil and judicial responsibilities.<sup>85</sup> He acted as chief of police, responsible for law and order, and was also in charge of the guilds into which the city's tradesmen were organised. In the latter capacity he was aided by the Assessor, whose other duties are not clear. Likewise, beyond the fact that he was of equal rank with the Assessor, the precise functions of the Logothete of the Praetorium are not certain. However, Bury suggests that the equality of their ranks points to two different departments under the Prefect, the former concerned

---

<sup>82</sup> *Klet*, 107.4-7.

<sup>83</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 66 (57), Reiske, 273-274; Vogt, II, 81.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 67 (58), Reiske, 274-275; Vogt, II, 82.

<sup>85</sup> See Bury, *Administrative System*, 69-73.

with the organisation of the guilds, in which he was represented by the Assessor, the latter with the administration of justice, in which he was served by the Logothete of the Praetorium.<sup>86</sup> The Quaestor, too, was an important official, with civil and judicial authority.<sup>87</sup> Amongst his duties were the supervision of provincial visitors to the capital and beggars within the city; judgement in cases of complaints by tenants against their landlords and in cases of forgery; the execution of wills and supervision of the inherited property of minors; and the reporting of misconduct on the part of magistrates to the Emperor. In performing these duties he was aided by ἀντιγραφεῖς, or heads of department, of which there appear to have been two in the ninth century.

The officials whose promotions are described in the *Book of Ceremonies* were, therefore, involved in the legal and civil administration of the capital. Despite the seniority of their offices and, in particular their close personal contact with the Emperor, the protocols for their investiture in the ceremonial book are relatively short and simple. On the day of his promotion the City Prefect was summoned along with the *praepositus* to the Emperor, who said to the latter, “Present him, as Prefect, to the city.” The *praepositus* would then order the urban administration to gather on the Consistorion and accompany the new Prefect through the palace to the Augusteum. The urban administration is summoned to the Onopodion and the *praepositus* and Prefect go to meet them. The Prefect remains behind the door to the Onopodion while the prefect goes and informs the administration of what the Emperor and the law dictates. The prefect is presented and the *praepositus* returns to the palace. The *master of ceremonies* fetches the Prefect and dresses him in his robes and he accompanies him, with the urban administration and representatives of the two factions through the area occupied by the buildings of the *tagmata*. When he is on the threshold of the Consistorion, the admissionalis orders him to halt and then says, “Pass, Prefect.” At the Lychni the Blues greet him, acclaiming:

Those who God strengthens by their victories, the Emperors of the Romans, loved by the universe, have justly promoted you as a dear and very faithful servant to high dignity, respected protospatharios, noble by your forebears. They have raised you to a high honour through the charge of Prefect.

---

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 73-77.

The rest of the acclamations, which begin, “Above all, we celebrate the lords of the universe,” celebrate the Emperors, given to the Empire by the “only immortal Emperor,” who have blessed the Prefect with his dignity. They conclude by welcoming the Prefect and wishing him many years with the Emperors and the Porphyrogeniti. Crossing through the *tagmata* the Prefect arrives at the Holy Well of Hagia Sophia, where he lights candles. Within the church the Patriarch prays for the Prefect, “in the same manner as for the patricians,” that is over his robes, with which the *master of ceremonies* again clothes him. He returns home, acclaimed by the officers of the administration and the people of the city (οἱ τῆς τάξεως καὶ τῆς πόλεως), who wish him and the Emperors many years.

The promotion of a Quaestor is described in very little detail, though it seems to conform in all respects to that of City Prefect.<sup>88</sup> The Emperor summons the new Quaestor and the *praepositus*, who accompanies him to the semicircle of the Skyla, where he presents the newly elect to the heads of department and chancellors. The acclamations in praise of the Emperors are delivered and the Quaestor is clothed in his robes. Although the description ends here, it is likely that the Quaestor, like the Prefect, would continue to Hagia Sophia for the blessing of the Patriarch.

The promotion of an Assessor and Logothete of the Praetorium is conducted according to a simple protocol. The Emperors inform the *praepositus* of the promotion and he sends a silentiary to find him who is to receive the office. The Emperors offer him to the *praepositus* and he goes to the semicircle of the Skyla where he offers him to the City Prefect. They acclaim the Emperors and leave. The heads of department are promoted in exactly the same way, except that they are presented to the Quaestor and not the Prefect at the semicircle of the Skyles.

The promotions of a City Prefect and a Quaestor share certain characteristics with that of a patrician, in particular the welcome into the city using their new title and the blessing in Hagia Sophia. However, there are notable differences. Importantly, they do not receive

---

<sup>88</sup> *De Cer.*, 62 (53), Reiske, 268-269; Vogt, II, 74.

the insignia of their office from the Emperors, but from the *praepositus* or the *master of ceremonies*. Indeed, the Emperors are strikingly absent from the proceedings. The new officer is simply given by the Emperors to the *praepositus* who presents him to those over whom he has authority. This terminology of giving is also new to the ceremonies. Rather than being invested with insignia by the Emperors, as were the dignitaries of the imperial court, they are given to the administration “as Prefect” or “as Quaestor.” Therefore, the ceremonies appear not involve any kind of creation, instead the individual steps in to occupy a vacant position. Where these influential officers are presented to a number of their subordinates and are welcomed by them, the more junior officers are presented to their chief. Although the Emperors themselves are only present at the outset of the ceremony, therefore, it is evident that it is in their powers to promote the officers who will aid in the administration of the capital; the Prefect and the Quaestor have no role in choosing their staff. In these ceremonies, as with the investiture of court dignitaries, the Emperors exercise their control over the appointments.

The position of the Emperor in the Middle Byzantine political system, as formulated at his coronation, was envisaged in terms of an absolute authority underpinned by divine sanction, tempered by imperial duties to uphold the law and to care for his people. This authority is symbolised by the imperial insignia, sanctified by the prayers of the Patriarch, which he receives during the ceremony. Once crowned the Emperor is the object of signs of devotion and submission by court, army and people that will set the tone for the relations between the Emperor and his subjects throughout his rule. The crowning ceremony acts as a vehicle by which the Empire is entrusted to God’s elect and, once achieved, this divine appointment cannot be undone except through death. At his funeral the Emperor is divested of the symbols of an authority which he no longer commands as he is called to join the “Lord of lords and King of kings” in the heavenly Empire. However, the imperial ceremonies, particularly the marriage ritual and the coronation of an Augusta, as well as the coronation of a co-Emperor, demonstrate that imperial authority not only realised the divine will, establishing a relationship between the individual Emperor and his heavenly Patron, but also worked to expand itself through a network of associated imperial figures. The Emperor occupied an unrivalled place as

God's earthly representative, undisputed head of the body politic. But alongside him the Empress also commanded the loyalty and *proskynesis* of the dignitaries who surrounded the Emperor and dominated her own court of women. She also received her crown in a ceremony in which the Emperor and Patriarch participated, the former to perform the coronation, the latter to invest the crown with the sacred character appropriate to her station. The acclamations with which she is greeted prove the elevated status she held, not so much in her own right but as the mother of imperial children, particularly sons, who from their birth in the purple chamber and the associated celebrations were drawn to occupation of the imperial throne.

Here is found not an ideology of Empire cemented in hereditary right, but a ceremonial framework in which the Emperor ruled, not alone, but at the centre of a family. That family certainly included his wife and children, but also the highest dignitaries of the court: the Caesar and *nobilissimus*. That these titles, like the co-Emperor and Augusta, were in practice generally conferred on members of the Emperor's blood line demonstrates the way in which the system might be used to create or support dynasties. However, nowhere in the ceremonies themselves or the rules, or lack of them, that governed the promotions is this familial aspect enshrined. The infant Porphyrogenitus may be worthy of praises parallel to those addressed to his father, but it takes a separate rite, his own coronation at the ambo of Hagia Sophia for his latent legitimacy to be transformed into actual, or associated, power. What we are presented with is a system by which the ceremonial mechanisms were set in place for an Emperor to extend the imperial status to a number of individuals, who bolster his own security and position. These individuals, however, receive their dignity not by the Emperor's own choice but through a combined process of election by the court, army and people and divine sanction.

Below the rank of *nobilissimus* a rather different system is in operation. Both the officials of the administration and the dignitaries of the court are appointed by the Emperors themselves. This joint election, by senior along with junior Emperor, confirms the shared imperial authority that presided over the system. No other power is required to establish a

patrician or a City Prefect; the Emperors, images of divine authority, alone decide those who will join them in the imperial processions or aid them in their departments of State. In all advancement at court the Emperor exercised his will and the dignitaries, officials, *tagmata* and factions acquiesce to his choice, praising him for it and reminding the appointee of the great honour bestowed upon him. Nonetheless, throughout the system, positions within the imperial court and government are associated with the religious system, the Patriarch blessing all appointments from his seat of authority located at the edge of the palace complex. The disposition of the buildings around the imperial residence serves this constant interaction between sacred and temporal realms that underpinned the political understanding of the Middle Byzantine Empire. The ceremonies that took place within this environment conduct the recipients of imperial dignity and office between the domain of the Emperors and the holy spaces of the palace and the cathedral and the wider population of the court and administration gather to welcome him and to confirm their support of the imperial appointment.

Within these ceremonies a rather more complex image of the imperial system emerges than can be gleaned from the lists of precedence exemplified in the *Kletorologion* of Philotheus. Here the high officials are set apart, to participate with the Emperors in the honour of those more junior in rank. At the highest point in the system stands the Emperor. His authority is felt everywhere. At the same time an attempt to promote the Emperor's family as an imperial family, sharing his honour and status is evident. The repeated acts of obeisance that he receives from the moment of his coronation onwards accentuate the elevation of his position and the acclamations with which the factions praise him repeat the theme of government through God that was established at his investiture.

### **PART 3: IMPERIAL RECEPTIONS AND HIPPODROME CEREMONIES**

Our final examination concerns the protocols for two very different types of ceremony. The first are described as imperial receptions (δέξιμα), during which the factions gathered inside the palace to acclaim the Emperors and a formal banquet took place. They might be organised on a number of different occasions, for example at Pentecost or to mark the accession of an Emperor.<sup>1</sup> Despite the multiplicity of events that might occasion a reception, the uniformity of the ceremony as it emerges from the *Book of Ceremonies* indicates that it constitutes a particular type of regularly recurring ritual. Imperial receptions also preceded certain Hippodrome races, which would be organised on the following day. The final group of chapters under discussion is concerned with the staging of the Hippodrome races and their attendant ceremonies.

Despite the obvious differences between imperial receptions and Hippodrome appearances, both have a rather more jovial atmosphere than has emerged in the ceremonies thus far. Taken together, they indicate the way in which the court engaged in ceremonies that were entertaining as well as the more weighty occasions previously examined, where the magnificence and grandeur evident in the *Book of Ceremonies* does not detract from an impression of stifling formality. At the same time, these celebrations continue to function through the formulation and expression of familiar themes, never relaxing their grip on the correct presentation of imperial authority and the strict regulation of a dramatic representation of the order that maintained the political system that belies its fragility.

The capacity of Byzantine ceremony to bolster government through the creation of a coherent set of relations both within the court and with outside agencies, in particular the Church, has been a central reference throughout this study. It is no less evident either within the confines of the palace or in the urban celebrations of the Hippodrome than it has been elsewhere. These descriptions demonstrate the way in which the imperial ideology contained in the protocols governing the Emperors' appearances during the religious ceremonies, those that marked defining moments in their personal lives and those by which they raised individuals to office and dignity, permeates the

---

<sup>1</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 72 (63), Reiske, 283-284; Vogt, II, 93.

life of the court and informs the interaction of the Emperors with their city during the races.

## **Imperial Receptions**

The protocol governing imperial receptions is contained in cc. 71 (62)-76 (67)<sup>2</sup> of the *Book of Ceremonies*, with some alternative acclamations for the eve of the ceremony found at the beginning of c. 80 (71).<sup>3</sup> Although these events might be organised on a number of occasions, of which the ceremonial book lists the accession; the Golden Hippodrome; the races called Λουπερκαλία; and Pentecost,<sup>4</sup> the majority of these chapters describe the celebration of an imperial accession. This palatine ceremony clearly succeeded public investiture at Hagia Sophia and constitutes a more private, courtly celebration, during which the court and the factions come together to praise the Emperors and commemorate the accession. The accession will, therefore, form the model for our investigation. Nonetheless, it is clear that a similar protocol, with alternative acclamations, was expected to be followed on different dates. Chapter 74 (65) describes the reception of the Golden Hippodrome.<sup>5</sup> This event, although it conforms in many respects to the general protocol of the accession, represents the opening of the Hippodrome calendar and will be discussed in relation to the races themselves. The acclamations of c. 80 (71) also correspond to Hippodrome races and will be incorporated into the following discussion.

None of the chapters concerned with imperial receptions provides a complete account of the ceremony at its various stages. The following description is, therefore, compiled from an amalgamation of the information they contain. Despite some disorder in the text, it is possible to reconstruct a picture of the ceremony from Constantine VII's compilation, although it should be noted that it would not have been possible for the ritual to be followed as it is presented there. For the receptions in the *Book of Ceremonies* take place in the courtyards or *phialae* of the two principal

---

<sup>2</sup> Reiske, 278-303; Vogt, 88-111.

<sup>3</sup> Reiske, 349-352; Vogt, II, 151-153.

<sup>4</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 72 (63), Reiske, 283-284; Vogt, II, 93.

<sup>5</sup> Reiske, 293-296; Vogt, 102-104.

factions, which had been destroyed under Basil I.<sup>6</sup> In c. 75 (66) the ceremony is moved to the secret *phiale* of the Triconch because of inclement weather.<sup>7</sup> The alternative location does little to change the ritual and it is likely that after the destruction of the factions' courtyards imperial receptions would always have taken place at the Triconch. Although the ritual has clearly been drawn from outdated documents it contains much that could continue to be observed in Constantine's day and can, therefore, take its place - albeit with a little reservation - alongside the other ceremonies as a source for our understanding of the way in which Constantine VII hoped to present the imperial figure, through state ritual, to posterity.

On the eve of the reception the factions go to the Sigma (Pl.3 28) where they acclaim the Emperors.<sup>8</sup> The Sigma was a semicircular construction, to the west of which, on a lower level, was a courtyard containing the secret *phiale* of the Triconch and to the east of which, linked by three doors, stood the Triconch itself (Pl.3 29).<sup>9</sup> It is principally around these buildings, situated close to the imperial residence, that the receptions are organised. The Emperors are enthroned at the Sigma, overlooking the courtyard from where the claqueurs acclaim them, the ordinary faction members responding three times to each phrase, "many years to you":

Many, many, many.  
Many years to you, elected by the Trinity.  
Many years to you, *N.* and *N.*, autocrats of the Romans.  
Many years to you, servants of the Lord.  
Many years to you, *N* and *N.*, Augustae of the Romans.

As they continue, each phrase is delivered by the claqueurs and the people repeat it three times:

As slaves we dare to entreat you.  
With fear we supplicate the Emperors.  
Hear favourably, benefactors,  
the prayer of your servants, the Blues [or Greens].  
We ask you to celebrate your accession.  
Lord, protect the Emperors.  
Lord, protect the Emperors with the Augustae and the Porphyrogeniti.

<sup>6</sup> Basil replaced the Green *phiale* with a church and the Blue *phiale* with his magnificent baths: Theoph. Cont., V, 90, 336.

<sup>7</sup> Reiske, 296-301; Vogt, II, 105-109.

<sup>8</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 71 (62), Reiske, 278-280; Vogt, II, 88-89.

<sup>9</sup> On the Triconch and its adjacent buildings see Ebersolt, *Le Grand Palais*, 110-119.

These acclamations are of the usual type, by which the factions wish their rulers a long reign and which have featured throughout the ceremonies discussed previously. Here, in the centre of the palace, the factions gather and they welcome the Emperors as the choice of the Trinity and servants of God. At the same time the Augustae are incorporated into the acclamations and also wished many years. It is questionable whether the women of the imperial family would have been present during this performance. The *Book of Ceremonies* does not indicate that they were. However, it seems that, whether or not they were present to hear the laudations, the Augustae shared in the honour offered to the Emperors. It has been observed that the multiplication of praises to the women and children of the imperial family promoted notions of legitimacy through birth, in which the imperial women played an indispensable part. Within these acclamations the accession is placed firmly within the context of an imperial family, with more than one Emperor, Augusta and Porphyrogenitus who share in the praises delivered to mark the inauguration of a new, evidently co-, ruler.

In the heart of the palace the factions gather to request permission to celebrate the accession. In the imperial ceremonies discussed in the previous chapter, except in respect of the promotion of the highest dignitaries, the factions did not play an active part in the instigation of the ritual; the events were firmly rooted in imperial initiative to which the factions, as representatives of the people, expressed their accord. These court ceremonies, on the other hand, are formulated as a response to popular supplication. With this reversal a new complexion is imposed on the ritual, which becomes a manifestation of the Emperor's benevolence towards his people, or rather, towards the palace. In the less public environment of the Sigma the relationship between the factions and the Emperors appears to become more personal. Although still expressed through the familiar language of imperial acclamations, that relationship here takes on something of a reciprocal character, with the factions, albeit whilst registering their daring, able to make demands of the imperial family, requests that will be granted through the continuance of the reception.

In the evening, the two factions return to the area dominated by the Sigma with torches and they perform a torch dance called the φακλαρέα. The dance itself is not

described in the *Book of Ceremonies*, which instead provides the praises chanted by the factions as they danced beneath the imperial thrones. They begin:

Greetings, Emperors of the Romans. Greetings, loved of the entire universe. Greetings, *N.* and *N.*, whom the Trinity has proclaimed victors and benefactors of the world.<sup>10</sup>

They mount the steps leading up to the Sigma, and acclaim:

The world rejoices, contemplating you, Emperor and autocrat, and your city is jubilant, *N.*, crowned by God. The court (ἡ τάξις) adorns itself, seeing you, its chief, and the sceptres are happy to have you as sceptre bearer. You adorn the throne of the Empire, which you received from your fathers, with the Augustae, projecting a brilliant light of good order and that is why the State (ἡ πολιτεία), flourishing through you, feasts the day of your accession.<sup>11</sup>

Finally the claqueurs chant, the people responding “Lord protect”:

Lord, protect the Emperors of the Romans.  
Lord, protect the Augustae, crowned by You.  
Lord, protect the Emperors, the Augustae and the Porphyrogeniti.

These acclamations have been taken as an invitation to attempt to fix the proceedings to a particular date, or at least to a specific administration.<sup>12</sup> However, beyond the obvious fact that this description must post-date the construction of the Sigma by Theophilus,<sup>13</sup> it is impossible to do so with any degree of certainty. For Vogt, a major difficulty presents itself in the contents of the acclamations, which he judges inconsistent:

[II] devait être assez délicat de faire chanter par les factions en l’honneur de Constantin [VII]: “Vous que la Trinité a proclamé vainqueur et bienfaiteur du monde” et, de l’autre... il était aussi difficile de leur faire dire, s’il s’agissait de Basile ou de Lécapène: “Vous embellissez le trône que vous tenez de vos pères.”<sup>14</sup>

However, it has been argued throughout this study that the desire to pinpoint the exact circumstances surrounding the descriptions of the *De Ceremoniis*, despite the temptation to do so, is not only consistently impossible to satisfy but also not particularly helpful in an analysis of the information they contain. For although Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his scribes lifted much of the material they

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Reiske, 279; Vogt, II, 89.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Vogt, II, *Commentaire*, 97-99.

<sup>13</sup> Theoph. Cont., III, 140.

incorporated into the ceremonial book from narrative descriptions of earlier events, these are always divested of their particularities to give the impression of consistent, immutable rites. Whether that impression bore any relationship to the reality of the ceremonial life of the Middle Byzantine court is a matter of limited importance.

It has already been observed that the description of the coronation ceremony contains an uneasy recognition of the two routes to the Byzantine throne, one by force, the other by birth. Although the two types of imperial coronation are represented there is a discernible preference for a peaceful hereditary succession, which is reinforced throughout Constantine VII's ceremonies, especially in the acclamations. It has been argued that the rather awkward arrangement of the coronation ritual in the *Book of Ceremonies* is consistent with the apparently contrary notions of legitimacy that existed at Byzantium. These acclamations, delivered after the event, though they may have been doctored to suit a particular performance, place the Emperor to whom they are addressed into a model of imperial rule, which is conceived of in relation to an ideal in which notions of imperial victory and familial succession are found side by side. In the perfect world described in the pages of the *Book of Ceremonies* the Emperor is elected by God to receive the throne from his fathers, thus achieving a distribution of imperial status that will create an unambiguous transfer of political power on the senior Emperor's death. He is also a benefactor and triumphant soldier. These qualities are not incompatible with notions of hereditary succession and, although Vogt might struggle to identify a contemporary ruler who could combine these three distinctions, they are in perfect keeping with the type of idealised imperial personality described throughout the *Book of Ceremonies*.

During the φακλαρέα the Sigma is transformed into a representation of the wider universe, the dances symbolising the jubilation of the world on seeing its new Emperor. Here the identification of the factions as representatives of the people is stated quite explicitly. The rejoicing of the world, the jubilation of the city, the adornment of the court and the feasting of the State is expressed through their dances and the acclamations in which they articulate their joy. Following the coronation of a junior Emperor, therefore, the Sigma is the focus for an exposition of the relationship

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 98-99.

between the Emperor and his subjects, the former the source of the city's exultation through the order he projects onto the world.

The alternative acclamations contained at the beginning of c. 80 (71) belong to the φακλαρέα when it is performed in anticipation of Hippodrome racing. Once again the factions gather at the Sigma, where their celebrations are presented as a demonstration in miniature of the jubilation of the wider community:

May your hand be powerful, may your right be exalted, *N.*, autocrat. For behold, your city turns to you, Emperor who loves his city. By your shining actions against the enemies she is rejuvenated and grace governs the centre of the Empire, so that your government appears like the city of the Great Emperor, through Whom your arms are made powerful. The enemies are surrounded by the hatred of Him who crowned you for the glorious anniversary of your city.<sup>15</sup>

After this the protocol states that the factions mount to the terrace of the *phiale*, where they continue with acclamations which do not belong to the eve of the reception and the φακλαρέα, but to the day of the races. Despite this confusion, the first praises support our previous assessment. Again, the physical movement of the colours is mirrored in the laudations, in which they announce that it is the city which turns to its ruler and which rejoices. The final words support Vogt's conclusion that this protocol belongs to the preparations for the races on 11 May, the anniversary of the inauguration of Constantinople. Here is found a clear expression of the notion of the earthly as an image of the heavenly Empire, focussed on the Queen city, centre of the Empire, revived through imperial victories and loved by her rulers. Not only is Byzantium reduced to its capital, but the realm of the Great Emperor is also described as a city. In this way the factions draw a specific parallel between the dominion of the temporal and heavenly spheres and intensify the urban character of the celebrations.

In both of these sets of acclamations the Emperors' government is presented in terms familiar from elsewhere in the *Book of Ceremonies*. The acclamations delivered after imperial accession are in keeping with the notions of imperial rule formulated at the coronation and expressed throughout the ceremonial book. As always imperial government is understood as divine gift and the familial elements that were particularly highlighted during the imperial rites of passage and promotions – bringing together the Emperors, Augustae and Porphyrogeniti as objects of adulation, sharing

the protection of the heavenly powers – make an appearance. Within these *apokombia* two features are particularly dominant: the joy of the city and the universal dominion of the Emperors. The second example is rather different. It mentions only one Emperor and the notion of the universal dominion of the imperial government is not incorporated. However, here too the factions praise the Emperor in terms that expand on the theme of rulership through God and the jubilation of Constantinople in the face of imperial victory over external enemies.

Now, on the eve of the imperial receptions in the palace, the city, represented by the factions, rejoices in the Emperors, loved by the universe and benefactors of the world. At the same time the palace is conceived of as a microcosm of the universe, with the Emperors at its summit, in direct counterpoint to Christ, the Great Emperor. Not only is the Emperor's government likened to that of God, but He also shares in the enmities of the Empire, manifested in imperial victories. The festivities that marked the commencement of an imperial reception, therefore, involve a particularly transparent exposition of the political ideas found elsewhere in the tenth-century ceremonies. These themes are further developed at the reception itself, which took place on the following day.

On the morning of the reception the *praepositus* goes to the Triclinos of Justinian (pl.3 54) to meet with the leaders of the two factions, the *demarchs*. The senate arrives and the *master of ceremonies* comes to the palace to inform the *praepositus* that the factions are ready, that the *demarchs* have brought their booklets and that they are waiting. The *praepositus* then processes to the Triclinos of Justinian, preceded by *cubicularii* and the *master of ceremonies*. When he enters everybody rises because “on this day he passes as representative of the Emperor”<sup>16</sup> and the *cubicularii* assemble on either side of the room. The *praepositus* stands between them and the two faction *demarchs* come forward, perform *proskynesis* before him and present him with two booklets each, one for himself and the other for the Emperor.

This is the only time that any member of the court, other than the Caesar or *nobilissimus*, who we have seen received their insignia in a ceremony that set them

---

<sup>15</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 80 (71), Reiske, 349-350; Vogt, II, 151.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Reiske, 296-297; Vogt, II, 105.

apart from the rest of the hierarchy of dignitaries, receives *proskynesis*. It is explicitly stated that the *praepositus* receives this honour not on his own account but due to the fact that he acts as the representative of the Emperor. Throughout the ceremonies the *praepositus* occupies a unique position at the Emperor's side, crowning him when this is necessary and, in general, acting as an intermediary between the Emperor and the other ceremonial participants. Nonetheless, this ceremony in the Triclinos of Justinian does appear to elevate his position to an unprecedented level. Such an act could only take place within the confines of the palace and during a relatively minor stage in the overall proceedings. It would, for example, be inconceivable that the Emperor would delegate his ceremonial role during the major feasts of the liturgical calendar, where acts of public *proskynesis* towards anyone but the Emperor, apart from the Patriarch who receives the honour only from the Emperor himself, are unheard of. However, both in the early stages of imperial receptions and, we will see, during the preparation of the Hippodrome races, the *praepositus* performs ceremonial duties in place of the Emperor. In both cases his duties include the greeting of the faction *demarchs* and receiving their booklets. These practical matters, preceding the main ritual, do not require the presence of the Emperor in person and they suggest that within the palace it was understood that the *praepositus* acted as his representative and as such would receive the veneration that in the outside world was due to members of the imperial family alone.

After this initial ceremony, the *praepositus* and his cortege return to the Tripeton to wait while the factions organise the receptions, whether in their respective *phialae* or at the *phiale* of the Triconch. For the sake of clarity, the protocol of the following description is taken primarily from the descriptions that locate the reception in the Triconch. The reception of the Golden Hippodrome, which represents the former ceremony in the faction *phialae* will be described, below, when the ceremonies of the Hippodrome calendar are addressed.

When the *master of ceremonies* informs him that all is ready, the *praepositus* fetches the Emperor. The patricians and bearded dignitaries process to the Lausiakos (Pl.3 52) and from there they pass through the Idikon (Pl.3 39) to arrive at the secret *phiale* of the Triconch. As he comes into the Triconch the Emperor is dressed in his *chlamys* and crowned by the *praepositus*. As always, this action takes place hidden from the

view of the bearded dignitaries so that the Emperor is revealed to them in full imperial regalia. The court enters and the Emperor receives the *proskynesis* of the *cubicularii*, who then pass through the central silver door to the Sigma (Pl.3 28), where the throne is prepared.<sup>17</sup> The Emperor stands at the silver door and receives the *proskynesis* of the court once more. As he approaches his throne the claqueurs of the factions cry, “Rise, divine imperial power” and the people respond three times, “Rise.”

When the Emperor is seated on his throne he is surrounded by members of the imperial guard, the dignitaries of the court and the eunuch *cubicularii*.<sup>18</sup> When everyone has assumed his position, the *master of ceremonies* takes the edge of the Emperor’s *chlamys* with which he makes a pleat. The Emperor takes the pleat and he blesses the people with it three times and they respond by crying “Holy, holy holy.” This is a standard behaviour that accompanied the Emperor’s appearance before his throne. It is, for example, observed when he mounts to the imperial box overlooking the Hippodrome.

The acclamations that follow the blessing correspond to the reason for the reception. Those contained in chapter 72 (63) of the ceremonial book, like those for the eve of the reception, celebrate the imperial accession. The first set of eulogies is presented by the Blues. They begin with the usual praises and wishes for many years for the Emperors. Then:

May God, the Master of things visible and invisible, grant you grace, Emperors, to reign for a hundred years and to celebrate this day of your succession.

Incomparable soldiers, defenders of the world, who wear the crown, you, who have been raised to the throne of the Empire, have dispersed the pagans through the divine arms of piety. May God, the Creator of all things, who has crowned you, multiply your years.

We, the Blues, as always acclaim: “Pious, many years to you; victorious, many years to you; choice of the Trinity, many years to you.”<sup>19</sup>

They then acclaim the Augustae:

---

<sup>17</sup> When receptions take place at the *phiales* of the factions, the throne is positioned on their terraces and is hidden by a cloth until the Emperor approaches.

<sup>18</sup> The correct disposition of the imperial cortege at the receptions is a particular concern in the ceremonial book, of which an entire chapter is devoted to the subject: *De Cer.*, I, 76 (67), Reiske, 301-303; Vogt, II, 110-111.

Augustae, you have been crowned by God, Who loves mankind, you have been blessed by spiritual oil from heaven on high for the joy of your people, Augustae, elected by God, and for the downfall of all you enemies.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, the city rejoices:

The city of the Romans is made strong, having been delivered by His own Son and the sceptre of power is glorified, because the Rising Sun has visited it from on high, through you, Emperor who has loved justice and has been anointed with holy oil by the Lord and because the State has been granted peace by Him who has saved the captives of the enemies.<sup>21</sup>

When the first acclamations are complete a signal is passed from the Emperor to the *praepositus*, who introduces the chiefs of the *tagmata*, who come into the courtyard to hear the final acclamations. These are a repetition of the final acclamations of the previous day, beginning “The world rejoices, contemplating you, Emperor and autocrat.” After this, either immediately afterwards at the same location or after a brief interlude to allow the participants to make their way to the Green *phiale* beyond the terrace of the Chrysotriclinos, the Greens acclaim the Emperors with the same words and the *tagmata* enter at the same moment to hear the final acclamations.

The acclamations of the receptions are very similar to those that had been addressed to the Emperors on the previous day. From their situation enthroned in the centre of their dignitaries, of which those standing immediately behind them and on either side on the steps carry military titles and display their arms, they dominate the *phiale* from which the factions celebrate them. Once again the Empire, governed by God through the intermediary of the Emperor, crowned by Him, is placed within a cosmological framework, encompassing without hiatus the earthly and heavenly realms. The military achievements of the Emperors are understood not primarily in terms of political expansion but as religious acts carried out with the “divine arms of piety” against pagan peoples. Here, also, the Augustae are acclaimed as God-crowned, receiving their title for the joy of the people and the destruction of their enemies. Thus the military, triumphal tone of the previous days acclamations is carried forward to the reception itself.

---

<sup>19</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 72 (73), Reiske, 281; Vogt, II, 91.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, Reiske, 281-282; Vogt, II, 91.

These praises, composed for the celebration of an accession, highlight, in particular, the military role of the Emperors. Although military success is interpreted in relation to divine sanction, there does appear to be, within the palace, a concentration on the secular aspects of the imperial mission. On the day of the reception the Emperors are described as “incomparable soldiers” and their love of justice as well as their successful subjugation of pagans is celebrated by the factions. The final acclamations, which describe the joy of the sceptres at being borne by the Emperors are addressed in the presence of the *tagmata*, intensifying the military atmosphere of the ceremony.

This incorporation of military and judicial imperial functions into the overarching framework of divinely appointed political power is not peculiar to the palatine ceremonies. For example, the Patriarch’s prayers over the crown and *chlamys* at the ambo of Hagia Sophia on the day of the Emperor’s coronation amalgamated these notions. Indeed, the three principal imperial qualities cited here: piety; victory; and election by the Trinity, along with the Emperor’s justice leading to peace, are regularly recurring references in the ceremonies. What we are presented with here, and what does appear new to these ceremonies, both at the reception and on its eve, is a formulation, devoid of ecclesiastical elements, in which the relationship between the Emperor and the city from which he governed is the dominant theme. This relationship, expressed through the *proskynesis* of the court dignitaries and officers of the *tagmata* or in factional acclamations, is present in a number of ceremonies but here, for the first time, it is the subject of an independent type of ritual. The importance the imperial authorities placed on the continuance of a ceremonial framework inside the palace, in which the Emperors are presented in a consistent manner with the order established on other occasions, is obvious.

When each faction has acclaimed them, the Emperors rise from their thrones and a herald steps forward to say:

May our all-powerful and all-merciful God, Who has crowned your majesty by the intercession of His immaculate Mother, grant us the grace, with you who love Christ, to celebrate these happy days for many years in peace.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., Reiske, 283; Vogt, II, 92.

This final statement, which is recited at every reception, is rather curious. For the intercession of the Theotokos is not a standard element in the understanding of imperial coronation expressed elsewhere in the ceremonial book. Neither on the day of his coronation, nor in the frequent references to the event on other occasions, is the Virgin established as an intermediary. The only such reference occurs at the celebration of Ascension, when, we have seen she was praised as a shield for the Emperors, whom she had crowned, and a soldier on their side.<sup>23</sup>

Usually there is, within the ceremonies, a repeated confirmation that the Emperor is crowned by God's own hand. The Theotokos was, however, an enormously important figure in the identity of the Byzantine capital, in particular its defence from external attack. In the context of this ceremony, at the secret *phiale* of the Triconch, in which the factions acclaim the military successes of the Emperors and the joy of the city, this reference to her intercession is certainly not out of place. Amongst the various formulae through which the notion of God-crowned imperial authority might be expressed, it is clear that the acclamations might incorporate those most suited to the occasion. On the one hand, the Theotokos receives her suitability on this occasion from her status as a combatant on the side of the imperial forces, on the other through her usual maternal role. For it has become clear that in the attempt to promote a divinely protected imperial family, it is to the care of the Theotokos, above all, that the Porphyrogeniti are entrusted. In the descriptions of an imperial reception celebrating accession there is always more than one Emperor, who together, along with the Augustae and Porphyrogeniti, receive the good wishes of the factions. The declaration of her intercession in their coronation demonstrates her importance in the identity both of the city and of the imperial family.

After this speech by the herald, more than one chapter of the *Book of Ceremonies* dictates that the factions make their "four usual requests." This is first mentioned at the reception of the Golden Hippodrome and, later, in the description of the reception in the secret *phiale* of the Triconch, the two principal sources for the action of the ceremony. The requests are not mentioned in the general protocol of chapter 72 (63) and, though it cannot be proved, it is possible that they found a place only at those

---

<sup>23</sup> See, above, 127, n. 23.

receptions which preceded games at the Hippodrome. In this case the factions demands probably consisted of simple requests to begin the preparation of the races, in the same manner that they had earlier requested a reception take place.<sup>24</sup> In all circumstances each demand is granted by the Emperor, who signals his assent to the *praepositus*. He, in turn, makes a sign to the herald, who gestures the Emperor's agreement.

Where the demands are included in the protocol, a further ceremony takes place after the Emperor has returned to the Chrysotriclinos. The *praepositus*, having removed the Emperor's crown, returns to the *phiale*, descending to the area where the acclamations were delivered, to present each of the factions with an *apokombion* from the Emperor.<sup>25</sup> This action is not found in chapter 72 (63). That chapter does not contain the ceremony in its entirety, concentrating, as it does, on the acclamations rather than the protocol. At the end of each reception it seems that the *praepositus*, as on the morning of the reception acting as representative of the Emperor, rewards each faction with an imperial gift. This act brings to a close the ceremony within the *phiale*. Returning to the Chrysotriclinos, if he so desires, the Emperor might make promotions. It has been observed that court promotions were often organised during the religious ceremonies. It is clear that they might also coincide within the alternative ceremonial context of the imperial receptions, less public occasions lacking the clear religious association of the liturgical feasts, but important in the life of the palace, exposing the court to an equally potent demonstration of the magnificence of the Emperors and the order that both lay behind and emanated from their rule.

The reception is concluded with a dinner in the Triclinos of Justinian hosted by the Emperors. Here a bizarre ritual takes place. The Emperor sits at his table and *atriklinai*,<sup>26</sup> members of the imperial service whose charge was the organisation of banquets and their guests, introduce members of the court who will dance around the

---

<sup>24</sup> This is Vogt's conclusion, Vogt, II, *Commentaire*, 106. However, he does not address the fact that these demands were made on occasions other than this first date in the calendar of Hippodrome races. In particular, their inclusion in the general protocol of c. 75, which in no other respects suggests itself to be specifically for the receptions preceding Hippodrome races, is problematic.

<sup>25</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 75 (66), Reiske, 300; Vogt, II, 108.

<sup>26</sup> The most famous *atriklines* was probably Philotheus, author of the *Kletorologion*. See Bury, *Imperial Administrative System*, 11-12.

imperial table. There is some disagreement between the chapters about the conduct of the ceremony, c. 75 (66) specifying six entrances and c. 74 (65) only two. However in each case members of the *cubiculum*, factions and *tagmata* join in the ceremony. In the context of an accession this group clearly represent the three traditional bodies in the process of imperial inauguration: the senate; people and army. As during the coronation ceremony itself, each is present through its symbolic representatives, who express their agreement with the appointment. Although they had played no active part in the appointment as it is formulated at the coronation, it is evident that their symbolic participation at Hagia Sophia was reinforced through a repetition of expressions of loyalty in the privacy of the palace, the apex of the new Emperor's authority.

When they enter the triclinos they wish the Emperors many good years and the two *demarchs* present their booklets to the Prefect of the Table. The first acclamations are delivered by the Blues:

Today power has been placed in your hands. God has confirmed you as Emperor and autocrat and the great ἀρχιστράτηγος has descended from heaven to open the doors of the Empire before your face. This is why the world falls on its knees before the sceptre of your right, giving thanks to God, who has shown such kindness to you. Pious Emperor, He has wanted to have you as Emperor and pastor (ποιμήν), *N.*, autocrat.<sup>27</sup>

Once again the acclamation affirms the subjugation of the world before the divinely appointed Byzantine ruler. The military associations of the previous acclamations are continued through the identification of God as the great ἀρχιστράτηγος and a new concept is introduced: the accession establishes the new Emperor not only as God's choice as *basileus*, but also as pastor, or shepherd, a notion that might not have been wholly acceptable to the ecclesiastical authorities present during the coronation rite, but can happily be incorporated into the palatine celebrations.

After the acclamation the dance begins. The Prefect of the Table signals the start by opening out the fingers of his extended hand and then closing them. Then all those who will participate dance around the Emperor's table, greeting him with their hands as they pass in front of him. Having done so three times, they stop at the foot of the table and, standing before the Emperors, the claqueurs sing two short sentences,

repeated by the ordinary faction members, asking God to keep the Empire. The Prefect of the Table then approaches and the *demarch* is given an imperial *apokombion*. They perform *proskynesis*, the faction wishes the Emperors many good years and then:

The Emperors are illustrious: the world rejoices; the Augustae are illustrious: the world rejoices; and also the Porphyrogeniti: the world rejoices. The senate glories along with the whole palace: the world rejoices. The city glories along with the entire Roman Empire: the world rejoices. Augustae, our joy and our wealth, yes, Lord, many years to them.<sup>28</sup>

The acclamations are concluded by the claqueurs and people, who wish the Emperors, Augustae and Porphyrogeniti many good years. When the Blues have finished their praises, the Greens approach the imperial table with representatives of the *cubicularii* and *tagmata* and they perform an identical ritual.

Although the dancing described in chapter 74 (65) of the *Book of Ceremonies* concluded the imperial receptions organised for a number of occasions, this description, the only one of the entire ceremony complete with acclamations, is quite specific to an imperial accession. At the end of the chapter it is stated that the same ritual was observed at the dinner table of a new Augusta.<sup>29</sup> The smaller number of participants in the description of chapter 75 (66) indicates that the dances on the accession of a new Emperor involved a peculiarly large display around the imperial table. The acclamations delivered after the accession conform to those previously delivered at the *phiale* of the Triconch. The banquet in the Triclinos of Nineteen couches, therefore, provided the opportunity for the continuance of the celebration, which again involves both dancing and acclamation in praise of the imperial family.

The first eulogy, intoned before the dancing begins, introduces the subject of the accession using a familiar exposition of the relationship between the Emperor and the divine source of his authority. The pious Emperor, as God's chosen representative, receives the Empire from Him and the world prostrates itself before its new ruler. It has been noted that the assertion of the role of the Emperor to act as pastor of his subjects with which the acclamation concludes is new. Nowhere in the coronation

---

<sup>27</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 74 (65), Reiske, 294; Vogt, II, 102.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 74 (65), Reiske, 295; Vogt, II, 103.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 74 (65), Reiske, 296; Vogt, II, 104.

ceremony had this function been referred to. It is, perhaps, not surprising that in the ceremony presided over by the Patriarch the imperial mission had been formulated in terms of the subjugation of barbarian nations, justice, piety and orthodoxy, but not the pastoral care of the people. Here, within the palace, on the other hand, this role, which might suggest a confusion of political and ecclesiastical responsibilities, is confirmed as an imperial duty, with which the Emperor is charged by God. Although it would be misguided to interpret this aspect of the acclamation as a deliberate attempt to undermine the order established at the coronation, it provides a strong example of the way in which the language used to define the imperial position could vary according to the context in which it was used.

The second acclamation, delivered during the dance around the Emperors' table, expresses the joy of the world, the senate, the city and the Empire in the presence of the illustrious rulers. Once again, the dancing gives a physical demonstration of the sentiments contained in the acclamation and the praises are delivered to the imperial family as a whole.

It is evident that the jubilant character of the reception is carried through to the banquet at the end of the day. Although, like the dances in the *phiale* of the Triconch, the tour of the imperial table is a vivacious display, it is not without a serious aspect. Indeed, given the quality of spectacles that might be called upon to divert the guests at imperial banquets, famously described by Liudprand of Cremona,<sup>30</sup> it would be surprising if the Emperors or their guests derived much in the way of entertainment by members of the factions and *tagmata* cavorting about the imperial table. These ceremonies, from the eve of the reception to its conclusion, involve the court in strictly regulated displays of loyalty towards the throne. Following an imperial investiture, the factions demonstrate their understanding of the magnificence of imperial rule, the ultimate Authority that had elevated the new Emperor, his legitimacy through justice, piety and military strength, the universality of his dominion which brings peace and strengthens the world, the Empire and, above all, the city.

---

<sup>30</sup> Liudprand is astonished both by the manner of service at a dinner he attended at the court of Constantine VII, in which huge golden vessels, suspended from the ceiling, were employed, and the dexterity of acrobats who performed between courses: *Antapodosis*, book VI, cc. 8-9.

Although the ceremonial book does not provide extensive acclamations for festivals other than the accession, it is clear that the receptions were important events in the life of the palace. For here, the court, factions and *tagmata* come together in the presence of the imperial family to praise them but also to develop a particularly metropolitan ritual. The city is a central reference. As well as strengthening the imperial government by repeated reference to the qualities of the Emperors and the God-given nature of their rule, these ceremonies confirm the unique position of Constantinople as the centre of the Empire. The power of the ritual to reinforce ties between the dignitaries of the court, the factions and the *tagmata* - both with the Emperor and, through fostering a unique civic/palatine identity, each other - should not be overlooked.

### **Hippodrome Ceremonies**

Having described the palatine receptions, the *Book of Ceremonies* turns to the protocol governing the races staged at the Hippodrome. Taken as a group these are probably the most problematic chapters of Book I of the *De Ceremoniis*. Vogt was certainly not exaggerating when he referred to “ces pages affreusement obscures, pour ne pas dire souvent inintelligibles.”<sup>31</sup> The difficulties stem in part from a disparity between the subject matter of and within the various chapters. Some is concerned with the behaviour of the imperial dignitaries within the Kathisma, the palace building communicating the Great Palace with the Hippodrome. Other passages describe the preparations of the races by the Hippodrome staff and additional sections give the protocol governing how diverse difficulties that might arise during the races should be handled, for example if an approved horse falls ill before its race or a charioteer crashes in front of the imperial box. It appears that the majority of the descriptions contained in these chapters are composed of an amalgamation of different and sometimes contradictory sources. Combined with this confusion, the assumption on the part of the compiler of the ceremonial book that its reader is familiar with the environment in which the ceremonies take place - a regular hindrance to an easy reading of the text but particularly so in relation to the Hippodrome and Kathisma,

---

<sup>31</sup> A. Vogt, “L’Hippodrome de Constantinople,” *Byz.* 1935, 471-488, at 471.

whose topography is largely unknown - proves a constant frustration.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, though unsurprisingly, these chapters often use a highly specialised terminology, proper to the staff and practices of the Hippodrome, whose precise meaning remains elusive.

However, despite the numerous obstacles to a comprehensive understanding of the Hippodrome ceremonies that arise within the text - and many passages are completely obscure - it is possible to piece together an intelligible delineation of the protocol that governed the organisation and staging of the races. The vast majority of confused and confusing passages refer to the practical administration of the games and, although it would be illuminating to arrive at a complete and definitive explanation of them, they in no way detract from the useful information about imperial involvement in the public entertainments staged in the Middle Byzantine Hippodrome contained elsewhere in the ceremonial book.

The first Hippodrome ceremony in the treatise is the Golden Hippodrome, the inaugural date in the racing calendar.<sup>33</sup> The protocol for the day of the celebration provides a model that is followed, with some variation, at each of the events described in the *Book of Ceremonies*. When it is combined with the general information of chapter 78 (69),<sup>34</sup> which, under a number of subheadings, contains a wealth of information, much of it largely indecipherable, about the conduct of the race officials and competitors and includes acclamations delivered to the Emperor, a fairly clear picture of the customary protocol for the ceremonies of the racing calendar emerges.

Since this picture has to be extracted from different chapters certain amendments have to be made. Most obviously, the ceremonies for the Golden Hippodrome and its reception only make reference to a single Emperor, whilst in the acclamations of chapter 78 (69) the majority are delivered to more than one Emperor, though here also, at times, the chants switch between the singular and plural. It is evident that the protocols are drawn up from different and numerous sources. For the sake of clarity,

---

<sup>32</sup> On the topography of the Hippodrome see *ibid.* Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine* (Paris, 1950), 177-188, contains a brief history of the development of the Hippodrome and a description of its principal features.

<sup>33</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 73 (64), Reiske, 284-293; Vogt, II, 94-101 and 77 (68), Reiske, 303-310; Vogt, II, 112-117.

the following description will assume that there is more than one monarch occupying the imperial throne. Furthermore, at certain points within the acclamations themselves alternatives are given amongst which the factions might chose. These are very similar in content and, therefore, only a selection need be examined here.

In addition to the Golden Hippodrome the ceremonial book provides descriptions of the annual races organised to celebrate the inauguration of Constantinople on 11<sup>th</sup> of May,<sup>35</sup> the “votive” games (τοῦ Βοτοῦ), organised at the instruction of the Emperor to mark a particular event,<sup>36</sup> and the final races of the calendar, called Lupercalia or μακελλαρικόν.<sup>37</sup> The chapter nominally concerned with the φακλαρέα, which we have seen was performed on the eve of imperial receptions, also contains passages about the Hippodrome ceremonies, which will be used to supplement the information contained elsewhere. After a discussion of the Golden Hippodrome and the general protocol, therefore, these events will be examined. They will be discussed here in the same order as they appear in the *Book of Ceremonies*, which represents a chronological sequence, beginning with the Golden Hippodrome and ending with the Lupercalia, although “votive” games might be organised at any date during the racing calendar.

Each ceremony functions through the repetition of set rituals and, in order to avoid the tedium of too rigorous an examination, which is not necessary for a thorough exploration of the exposition of imperial ideology at the Hippodrome, the following discussion will focus on key moments. Throughout the discussion there will be a concentration on those elements in the protocol relevant to the presentation of the Emperors and much of the additional information about the internal organisation of the races will be passed over. In this way it will be possible to integrate an analysis of the Hippodrome ceremonies into the overall discussion of Middle Byzantine imperial ceremonial and to focus the examination on the public appearances of the Emperors, rather than attempting to disentangle the mass of details contained within the text, much of which is irrelevant in the context of this enquiry.

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 78 (69), Reiske, 310-340; Vogt, II, 118-142.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 79 (70), Reiske, 340-349; Vogt, II, 143-150.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 81 (72), Reiske, 360-364; Vogt, II, 160-163.

Unfortunately, the calendar of Hippodrome events has not come down to us. However, from the information contained in the *Book of Ceremonies*, Gramel convincingly demonstrated that it ended, with the Lupercalia, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February or soon thereafter and began, with the reception of the Golden Hippodrome, on the second Monday after Easter.<sup>38</sup> The Hippodrome year was, therefore, dictated by the liturgical calendar. There were no races during the Lenten period, but at its end the people of Constantinople could look forward to the resumption of profane entertainments in the arena of the Hippodrome. In each of the events described in the ceremonial book the Emperors' presence is fundamental to the activity surrounding the races, both the preparation preceding the festivals and the competition itself. These chapters contain some of the most powerful statements about imperial rule and introduce a new dimension to the ceremonial life of the Middle Byzantine court: the relationship between the Emperors and the people of the capital. The following examination will, therefore, provide a useful addition to the previous discussion of imperial ritual as it traces the progression of the court and factions through each of the festivals described in the ceremonial book.

#### *The reception of the Golden Hippodrome*

The Golden Hippodrome is the only event for which the ceremonial book prescribes a reception.<sup>39</sup> This indicates the formality of the occasion and, no doubt, the desire to mark the opening of the racing calendar with extended ritual activity. The description of this reception conforms in all respects to the general protocol for imperial receptions outlined above. For example, on the eve of the reception the two factions perform the φακλαρέα and on the following morning the court comes to the palace where the *praepositus* has his customary meeting with the faction *demarchs* in the Triclinos of Justinian. On this occasion, however, an additional element is introduced. On the eve of the reception it is stated that the *peraton*, the imperial permit sanctioning the organisation of the races, is granted. This first reference is rather confusing since it is, in fact, on the following day, when the *praepositus* meets with

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 82 (73), Reiske, 364-369; Vogt, II, 164-168.

<sup>38</sup> Gramel, "L' Année des Jeux."

<sup>39</sup> Although *De Cer.*, I, 72 (63), Reiske, 283-284; Vogt, II, 93 states that the races on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May were preceded by an imperial reception the description of the Hippodrome event contained in *De Cer.*,

the faction *demarchs* and after he has received their *proskynesis* along with the booklets, that he hands over the *peraton*. Although each Hippodrome race is preceded by the granting of the *peraton* - usually on the morning of the day itself, though sometimes on the eve of the event - this formal, public transposition, which takes place in addition to and independently from that which takes place on the morning of the following day, is peculiar to the Golden Hippodrome and undoubtedly represents the official opening of the Hippodrome calendar.<sup>40</sup>

Having received permission to organise the races, the factions repair to their respective *phialae* where the receptions take place in accordance with the general protocol. When the receptions are over, the Emperors return to the Chrysotriclinos where they might make court promotions and the list of dinner guests is read. It is stated that the dances at the imperial table do not take place on this day and the *demarchs* dine, not with the Emperors, but with their factions in the *phialae*.

At the reception of the Golden Hippodrome, in preparation for the following day's entertainments, the court gathers at the heart of the Great Palace and all the usual ceremonial marking an imperial reception is observed, except that the dinner with which the celebrations is concluded is of a less elaborate type. This ritual marking the commencement of the Hippodrome year, after the end of the paschal period, involves a coming together of the dignitaries of the court and the two principal factions under whose colours the chariots will race on the following morning. By integrating the anticipation of the races into the established protocol of imperial receptions, in which we have seen the ritual is formulated around a number of requests from the factions to their ruler, the popular entertainments of the Hippodrome are introduced as manifestations of imperial benevolence, granted to the people in response to popular supplication. This sense of imperial control over the initiation of the races had already been cemented in the opening ceremony of the reception, when the Emperors, represented by the *praepositus*, granted the *peraton* to the faction leaders.

---

79 (70) confirms that the ceremonies observed on its eve did not conform to the usual protocol for receptions.

<sup>40</sup> See Gramel, "L'Année des Jeux," 434. Although Gramel does not mention the other appearances of the *peraton* during the Hippodrome ceremonies, he interprets this activity during the reception of the Golden Hippodrome as the official opening ceremony of the year's games.

## *The Golden Hippodrome*

Before sunrise on the following day the court dignitaries return to the palace and they gather to await the imperial procession. At the palace the *praepositus* receives the *kombinan*, the order of the races, from a silentiary and takes it to the Emperors. The Emperors reciprocate by granting the *peraton*, which the *praepositus* takes to the Augusteum where he presents it to the faction *demarchs* and the race officials.

According to the general protocol of chapter 78 (69), before returning to the palace, the *praepositus* might remain with the faction *demarchs* to hear any complaints they might have about their opposing team and a decision would be made in his presence, reinforcing the close imperial involvement in the practicalities of the races. When the *demarchs* return to the Hippodrome they approach their respective factions, making three signs of the cross and they are acclaimed:

Welcome, servant of the God-crowned Emperors; welcome, elect of our benefactors; welcome, *protospatharios*, obedient subject of the lords.

The benefactors, crowned by God and having received their dignity from God in a worthy manner, have today glorified you in a high dignity, as a well-loved and particularly dear servant, as you deserve, illustrious *protospatharios* and *demarch*, who favours the victory of the golden-Blue [or golden-Green] faction.

May we, the Blues, make a great day with our *demarch*.

We, the Blues, celebrate the Trinity, The Master of all things, our God, one indivisible divinity, power in three people and force existing before all ages and surviving in all ages, light which is a triple sun that lights the world. We glorify God in heaven, born for us of the Virgin. Being by her nature *philanthropos*, He became man to save the first man from his ancient sin and He took pity on the entire universe. Glory to His goodness.

After each line of the following the ordinary factions cry “Lord protect”:

Lord, protect *N* and *N*, Emperors of the Romans.  
Help the Augustae, You, Celebrated in the Trinity.  
Protect the Porphyrogeniti, You, Glorified in the heavens.  
May He augment the Empire and also the Blues.

Then:

Claqueurs:       Thrice Holy, help the Emperors  
The people:      Thrice Holy

Finally, the claqueurs deliver these lines, each of which the people repeat three times:

And, above all, watch over them  
Multiply the years of their lives  
With the pious Augustae, who love God.  
And the Blues, Your true servants  
Forever, thrice Holy, guard the Emperors  
All-Holy Spirit, protect the Augustae  
Mother of our God, guard the Porphyrogeniti  
Lord, their life for our life.<sup>41</sup>

In the Hippodrome itself, therefore, the celebrations are begun with a series of acclamations, delivered by each faction using identical chants to their *demarch*. Within these acclamations the faction choirs ask not only for success for their teams in the races but also for the protection of the imperial family and the *demarch*, elected by them. The formulaic repetition of the desire for divine protection for the imperial family, in particular the invocation of the Theotokos as guardian of the imperial children, is familiar from other acclamations in the ceremonial book, in particular those that accompanied imperial rites of passage and promotions. Here the Hippodrome is the setting for the expression of orthodox religious belief, in one indivisible God born of the Virgin for the benefit of mankind, and also of imperial ideology, the Emperors receiving their crowns from their heavenly protectors. It is clear that the sentiments expressed throughout the *Book of Ceremonies* in the laudations addressed to the Emperors are reiterated at other occasions, beyond the imperial presence, so that they form a context not only in which the factions might approach their imperial rulers, expressing the kind of servile devotion that would be expected in such a highly developed and long established autocratic system, but that also extends into the arena of their own activities and defines, at least as far as the ceremony is concerned, their internal relations.

At the beginning of the first day of Hippodrome ceremonies each faction welcomes its leader with words that combine the theological understanding of the Empire with that of its political institutions. This integration of imperial and religious themes has been a constant throughout the ceremonies, both religious and imperial, which now emerges in the most obviously secular context described by the ceremonial book and, therefore, reaffirms the difficulty in drawing any clear dividing line between the sacred and profane at Middle Byzantium. The Hippodrome games, like imperial

---

<sup>41</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 78 (69), Reiske 314-315; Vogt, II, 121-122.

promotions, receptions and appearances in the religious rites of the liturgical calendar, are understood and promoted in relation to an overarching reality, in which the divine is revealed not only through the incarnation of Christ, but also in the God-crowned Emperors and those raised by them within the institutions of the Empire.

When the *demarchs* have gone to the Hippodrome and the *praepositus* returned to the palace, the Emperors begin their procession from the Chrysotriclinos. They pass through the Daphne palace, lighting candles at the three oratories, as they were accustomed to do during religious processions. Although the route of the imperial cortege is the same at each procession to the Hippodrome, it is only at the Golden Hippodrome that this devotional activity in the oratories appears, confirming that this was a particularly important and solemn occasion. They continue through the Augusteus (Pl.3 20) to arrive at the church of St Stephen (Pl.3 22). This building linked the imperial palace and the Hippodrome by a secret staircase, which the Emperors now ascend to arrive at an elevated part of the Kathisma, from where they observe the preparations taking place below on the track. They wait while the races are organised in the Hippodrome: chariots and horses are brought out to their places; the common people fill the terraces; the army takes its place with its banners; the faction democrats take their seats behind their factions and the *demarchs* stand in front to await the Emperors' appearance.

When all is ready, the Emperors come down via a stone staircase onto the main level of the Kathisma. Despite the ignorance that exists about this palace, it is clear that this was the location of a number of rooms, including a large and small triclinos and a more private imperial chamber, which acts as a dressing room. Having come down, the Emperors enter the imperial chamber where they are dressed in their *chlamydes* by the *vestitores* and crowned by the *praepositus*. They then come out into the small triclinos, preceded by *cubicularii*, and an *ostiarioris* is instructed to introduce the patricians and *strategoï*, who perform *proskynesis* before their rulers. The cortege then processes to the large triclinos, in which the Emperors will later dine, where the principal receptions take place.<sup>42</sup> These receptions, although they do not conform in all respects to the usual ceremony,<sup>43</sup> involve the repeated acts of *proskynesis* by which

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 77 (68), Reiske, 305-306; Vogt, II, 114.

<sup>43</sup> Vogt, II, *Commentaire*, 124, suggests that these receptions were drawn from an ancient type.

the court regularly demonstrated its loyalty to the Emperors. Thus once again the Emperors' presence within a wider ceremonial context, as had been the case at the religious ceremonies, is accompanied by more intimate protocols in which they are honoured by their court and its internal order of precedence is maintained.

When the receptions are complete, the *master of ceremonies* takes the edge of the Emperors' *chlamydes* with each of which he makes a pleat. These he hands to the Emperors, who bless the assembly before processing to the imperial box, overlooking the racetrack. As they make their way the factions in the Hippodrome acclaim them. Either the Blue or the Green faction might have precedence at each Hippodrome event. It is possible that this was fixed for each meeting or that the factions gained precedence in some manner unknown to us, perhaps by their victory at a previous date in the calendar. However, it is highly unlikely that, as Vogt suggests, this faction would also undertake part financing of the races, which had, since the fifth century, been undertaken by the imperial administration.<sup>44</sup>

The acclamations delivered to the Emperors, enthroned in the Kathisma, are numerous. At the start, if it is the Blues who dominate, they begin: "Rise in glory, divine imperial power." If it is the Greens they chant: "Rise in glory, choice of the Trinity." A series of further acclamations instructs the Emperors and the Augustae to rise in glory and they conclude:

Make to shine upon your true servants the divine power of your duality, *N.*, autocrat, and *N.*, glory of the purple. Emperors, your people rejoice.

Rise in glory, power of orthodoxy.  
Rise in glory, loved of the Romans.  
Rise in glory, our joy and glory.  
Rise in glory, *N.* and *N.*, autocrats of the Romans.<sup>45</sup>

Once again, the appearance of the Emperors is greeted as a kind of royal epiphany of the type familiar in traditional *adventus*. The inclusion of the Augustae is not unusual, but its place here as the Emperors take their thrones and the instruction for them also to "rise in glory" strongly suggests that the female members of the imperial family attended the races along with their male counterparts. Once again the *Book of*

---

<sup>44</sup> See Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 11-13.

<sup>45</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 78 (69), Reiske, 317; Vogt, II, 123.

*Ceremonies* is silent on the conduct of the court of women, though later visitors to Constantinople bear witness to the Empress's presence at the Hippodrome.<sup>46</sup>

Arriving before their thrones, the Emperors again take the edge of their *chlamydes* with which they bless the people in the Hippodrome, first the crowds of Constantinople's citizens directly opposite, then the Blues, who occupied the terraces to the left of the imperial box and finally the Greens, who filled the terraces to the right. These areas, reserved for the supporters of the colours, distinct from the common crowd, were undoubtedly taken by the dignitaries of the factions and the members of the official supporters' clubs.<sup>47</sup> As they receive the Emperors' blessing the factions acclaim, wishing many years to the Emperors, "friends of Christ, victors in God."<sup>48</sup>

The next acclamations are delivered by each faction in turn. If the Blues have precedence they begin: "Ouranios", or, if it is the Greens: "Olympios." The other faction responds: "Crown our Emperors with victory" and, alternating between the factions, the following set of phrases is addressed to the imperial box:

Rule with them.  
Oh, Power on high.  
Desired by the universe.  
Imitate the clemency of God.<sup>49</sup>

Then the Greens intone "Power on high" and the Blues respond, "We, then, oh army, what must happen for us to put our enemies to flight?" to which the Greens answer: "It is necessary that God, who crowned the Emperors of the Romans, keeps the faith and piety of the Emperors." After which the claqueurs lead the people in wishing many years to the Emperors, "elevated by the Trinity."<sup>50</sup>

In this set of acclamations the combination of imperial rule through God, the universal dominion of the Byzantine Emperors, crowned by Him, their piety and victory

---

<sup>46</sup> Vogt, II, *Commentaire*, 119. See also, Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine*, 178-179.

<sup>47</sup> The groups assembled here are always referred to as the *demes* rather than *factions* confirming that a clear differentiation existed between the supporters' clubs and the factions charged with the practical organisation of the races.

<sup>48</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 78 (69), Reiske, 317; Vogt, II, 123.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, Reiske, 317; Vogt, 124.

emerges as it has done elsewhere. In this case, imperial success against unnamed enemies is rendered conditional on the piety and faith of the Emperors. This leads Vogt to conclude that these acclamations might have originated in the years after the Iconoclastic controversy.<sup>51</sup> However, this use of the amalgamation of notions of imperial orthodoxy and military success - it is after all the army to whom the question is addressed - is in keeping with the imperial ideology represented in the acclamations delivered on numerous occasions within the pages of the ceremonial book, which fused an understanding of the Emperors that demanded military strength with that which celebrated the orthodoxy of their faith, by subsuming both within a cosmological framework in which the divine powers were established as the source and guarantor of imperial power .

The Greens deliver the next set of laudations, which begin with the usual wish for many years to the Emperors, include the lines:

Claqueurs:	How great is the joy of the State to see its Emperors?
The people:	The State has much joy.
Claqueurs:	You are the joy of the Romans.
The people:	Holy
Claqueurs:	You are the loved of the Romans.
The people:	Holy <sup>52</sup>

The faction with precedence concludes: “*N. and N., victors in God*” and the phrase is repeated by the other senior faction as well as the Whites and the Reds and the people respond: “*N and N, Emperors, be victorious.*”

If it is the Blues who have precedence they cry: “You, the senate, rise, we lift our voices to the Emperors” and the people repeat the acclamation three times. If, on the other hand, it is the Greens who have precedence, they acclaim: “You of the guard (πεδατουρῶν), rise, we address our voices to the Emperors” and the words are taken up by the people and repeated three times. The claqueurs of whichever faction has begun the chants conclude: “Forever, to those we love, good years. For those we hate, bad years.” and the other three factions do the same. All respond: “He who does not love the Emperors will be lost, like Judas.”<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Vogt, II, *Commentaire*, 139.

<sup>52</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 78 (69), Reiske, 318; Vogt, II, 124.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, Reiske, 318; Vogt, 124-125.

Thus the theme of imperial victory is continued through the acclamations. The Emperors are welcomed, their appearance claimed as a source of joy for the factions who love them. In the final phrases, the factions express their faith that those they love, the Emperors, will experience eternal happiness whilst their enemies will be granted bad times and those who do not love their rulers are likened to Judas. This final condemnation of the enemies of the Emperors constitutes not only a particularly poignant identification but also a vivid reassertion of the association between the Emperors, who are entrusted to His care and invited to imitate His clemency, and Christ, whose betrayer is likened to those who have ill-feeling towards His earthly representatives.

The celebration of imperial success, through Christ, forms the subject of the penultimate acclamations when the organs play and the faction with precedence acclaims:

We thank you Christ, for dissipating the councils of pagans and smashing our enemies. For you have given marvellous signs of your magnificence to your people, oh Powerful. You have submitted our enemies to your power. You have aroused the force of our faithful Emperors by the prayers of Him who engendered You, He alone being full of mercy.

We glorify you, Christ  
Master, Emperor of all ages  
Only begotten Word of the Father  
Because You have visited and You illuminate  
Your people  
And in Your power You have delivered us  
And You have brought us  
To God the Father  
Through the mediation [of our Emperors]  
Alone being all-powerful.  
May God grant many years to your holy rule.<sup>54</sup>

This sequence, the lines of which are delivered by the people of the faction, after each of which the claqueurs intone a rhythmic, but meaningless, word to set the tone,<sup>55</sup> is repeated by the other principal faction. Finally, the faction with precedence begins the last set of laudations, which are alternated between the two:

Son  
of God.

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., Reiske, 318-319; Vogt, 125.

<sup>55</sup> The claqueurs sing variations on the word *Nava*.

Victory, victory, victory  
Holy, thrice holy, give them life and glory  
You who help the Emperors  
Only one God  
Keep them  
Yes, Lord<sup>56</sup>

The Reds and the Whites repeat this final group of acclamations, bringing to an end the *apocombia* directed towards the imperial box at each Hippodrome race. After this, further praises, which correspond to the feast being celebrated (in the case of the Golden Hippodrome, those designed for Easter), are delivered. The Emperors having achieved the benediction and received the acclamations, the patricians and *strategoi* are introduced. The *praepositus* summons them and they pass before the Emperors' thrones where they perform *proskynesis*. This done, they take their seats for the races.

The acclamations directed to the Emperors when they entered their box overlooking the Hippodrome, appearing before the people of Constantinople, are of the type that have regularly recurred in the previously discussed ceremonies described in Constantine VII's codification. Nonetheless, the repetitive nature of the praises with which the Emperors were greeted at a variety of different occasions, although it often makes a reading of the *Book of Ceremonies* less than exciting, does not detract from their importance. For the continued reassertion of certain established themes itself bears witness to the significance of the ceremonies as vehicles by which the ideas that underpinned an unconstitutional, in the sense that it lacked any clearly defined rules for its institutional basis, political system might be cemented in the minds of those who witnessed them.

The imperial box of the Kathisma was located roughly in the middle of the long south-eastern side of the Hippodrome, opposite the Theodosian column (PLAN 5).<sup>57</sup> Immediately in front of it was the *stama*. It has been noted that before the suspension of the *velon* on the main gates of the Hippodrome the Thessarios stopped at this area, on the level of the track, to make signs of the cross. This is also the place at which the winning charioteers stop to receive their prizes. The *stama* also refers to the terrace, also in the shape of a Π that stood below the imperial box, above the level of the track and where the imperial guard stood during the races, displaying their banners and

---

<sup>56</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 78 (69), Reiske, 319; Vogt, II, 125.

their shields. Therefore, when the Emperors appear at the imperial box of the Kathisma they not only dominate the arena, their military entourage forming a kind of barrier at their feet between them and the crowd, but are also in the full view, not so much of the factions or the dignitaries of the court who were on either side, but of the common people of the city.

The description of festivals at the Hippodrome is the first and only time in the ceremonies described by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus that the interaction between the Emperors and the people of the city is truly represented. For, although at certain religious ceremonies during which the imperial cortege emerged into the city a wider audience than was customary might be introduced, the ceremonial behaviour of the Emperors and their court has always been conducted in a relatively restricted environment. The Hippodrome ceremonies represent a markedly different kind of imperial display, one which exposed the Emperors to the gaze of the ordinary members of Constantinopolitan society who had come to enjoy the entertainments of the arena. Therefore, the Hippodrome races and the ceremonial that accompanied them provided an ideal opportunity for the ideas expressed and formulated in the ritual behaviour of the court throughout the *Book of Ceremonies* to be disseminated to a much wider audience.

The conduct of the court and the acclamations of the factions contained in the opening stages of the Hippodrome races of the gaming calendar demonstrate the degree to which the imperial authorities seized upon that opportunity. The appearance of the Emperors, greeted as “friends of Christ,” the “power of orthodoxy” and “servants of the Lord” and invited to “rise in Glory,” the continued expression of the joy of the State seeing its rulers and the participation of the divine in the government of the Empire as well as the public *proskynesis* of the patricians and *strategoï* in the imperial box must all be seen as means to influence the public perception of the Emperors.

Here the imperial box acts as a gateway onto the life of the imperial court from which the Emperors bless the multitude and are acclaimed with words that describe them in terms of their piety and orthodoxy and the nature of their power in terms of its divine

---

<sup>57</sup> On the position of the Kathisma see Vogt, “L’Hippodrome de Constantinople.”

Source and Protector. Within these acclamations, too, imperial victory is a predominant reference. This is in no way particular to the praises of the Emperors at the Hippodrome. However, in the context of the races, which are by their very nature competitive and will provide a tangible exposition of success and failure, it is particularly appropriate. The atmosphere on the terraces of popular sporting events is always highly charged and it is not difficult to imagine that these acclamations, which subsumed the rivalry within the arena under the canopy of the Emperors' successful struggles against the enemies of the Empire, would have ensured that the Middle Byzantine Hippodrome was the setting for feelings of national and metropolitan pride. The focus of that pride was the Emperors themselves, who dominated their surroundings throughout the day's events.

The day consisted of four races in the morning and four in the afternoon. Chapter 78 (69) provides the acclamations delivered to the victorious charioteers.<sup>58</sup> The fact that more than one competitor appears to be involved suggests that these were not delivered at each race, but rather after a number had been concluded. At certain Hippodrome races it is stated that the prizes are awarded after the fourth, at others after the third race, although at the end of this section of chapter 78 (69) we are given those which would be exclaimed after the second race. Unfortunately, the question of how many prize-giving ceremonies took place during the usual conduct of the calendar races remains unanswered. The winning charioteers drive their chariots to the *stama*, directly in front of the imperial box, where their faction acclaims them. In these acclamations the factions welcome their charioteers, though again it is the Emperors who are the focus of their praises. For example the charioteers are described as "servants of those crowned by God" and "elected by the benefactors."

As the charioteers receive their prizes, taken down from the Emperors by the *actuarios*, they are acclaimed again. The protocol at this point seems to assume that the Blues are the winning faction and occasionally specifies which sections should be sung by the Greens. This makes it difficult at times to identify who is speaking. However, it is clear that the following acclamations are delivered by the two senior factions and that the victorious one addresses the majority. Opening with demands for

---

<sup>58</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 78 (69), Reiske, 320-324; Vogt, II, 126-129.

many years to the Emperors, “the choice of the Trinity”, and to the Augustae and Porphyrogeniti, the faction cries:

Claqueurs:        Three [nomismas] for Ouranios [if Green: Olympios]  
The people:        Many years to you

As the claqueurs continue, the ordinary faction members respond “Lord, protect” after each phrase:

Lord, protect the Emperors of the Romans  
[We demand] worthy recompense, Emperors for the victory  
Lord, protect those crowned by You  
Lord protect the wealth of the subjects  
And also, Emperors, worthy recompense for the senate  
May the divine Word multiply your victories

For the next acclamations, the response “Holy” is given:

The senate loves you unanimously  
And also, Emperors, worthy reward for your victories over the barbarians  
Your enemies perish by the decision of God  
And also, Emperors, worthy recompense for the army  
May God help you with them  
And also, Emperors, worthy recompense for your people  
Come and praise your Emperors

Having given thanks to the Emperors the charioteers mount to their chariots and the faction, having wished the Emperors many years, acclaims:

Glory to God, for He has been glorified. To Him alone, the Creator of all things and Dispenser of mercy, we consecrate our lips, acclaiming you, magnificent benefactors, autocrats of the Romans. For truly those who have faith in you see all good things.

Or:

Who has ever had such benefactions, benefactors observing justice to all men and granting prosperity to the Blues? We have you who we love, like David, such that the State, after you, will not find your equal.

Or:

Joy shines with the Blues when the flower chosen by God bloomed rejoicing, being taken by the Blues.

Or:

When this faction is victorious the Emperors, in battle with the enemy, bring back victories and prosperity abounds in the city of the Romans. And this is why we praise the divine for giving victory and glory to the Blues always.

Alternative acclamations are provided for the winner of the second race of the morning, after which the faction declares its members “servants of the Emperors”<sup>59</sup>:

When I want to be silent the excellence of your virtues does not let me; for love, conquering fear, makes me praise you. Your success against the enemies is rising like thunder to the world’s end. All the love of the Romans is carried with you, for you reign fully with piety all over the world. Your power, Emperors, friends of good, resides in justice.

The two sets of acclamations delivered to the winning charioteers further indicate the way in which the races of the Hippodrome were organised around the imperial presence. Not only do the victorious competitors receive their prizes from the Emperors, via the intermediary of the *actuarios*, but the praises that accompany the ceremony celebrate, above all, the Emperors rather than the charioteers. It has been noted that this concentration on the praise of the Emperors also characterised the acclamations delivered to dignitaries recently conferred with their honours. Similarly, here, it is the figures standing in the imperial box who receive the main expressions of honour.

Thus both at the beginning of the day and at the conclusion of the races the Emperors are praised as the representatives of the divine, victorious over barbarian nations and loved by the people. As the charioteers wait before the imperial box the senate, army and people are integrated into the laudations and are, therefore, as the three principal institutions in the body politic, associated with imperial triumph. These acclamations are presented in such a way that they appear to be celebrating specific military achievements. It is, of course, possible that the scribe copied them from a source taken from a time during which the Empire had recently enjoyed success on the battlefield. However, once again, it is clear by their inclusion in the general protocol that these acclamations were considered suitable to provide a model for all future imperial appearances at the Kathisma during the calendar of Hippodrome races. Removed from their specific historical context, military triumphs are rendered the constant companion of imperial rule at Constantinople. In this way the acclamations serve to

encourage a belief in the eternal triumph of the Byzantine nation. Despite the inclusion of army, senate and people, it is the Emperors themselves who dominate the proceedings. In particular, the final set of alternatives amongst which the factions might chose to conclude the first group of acclamations succinctly express the ideas that underpin the imperial system. The theological foundations of imperial rule, the Emperors' Biblical prototype, David, their military strength, their justice and magnificence are all neatly interwoven with the victory celebrations of the winning team.

At the end of the morning races the Emperors return to the Kathisma, where their crowns and *chlamydes* are removed in their private chamber and they dine with the dignitaries of the court in the large triclinos. When the meal is finished and the races of the afternoon have been prepared the *master of ceremonies* informs the *praepositus* and the Emperors once again go to their private chamber to resume their crowns and *chlamydes*. Wearing the imperial insignia they process to the big triclinos, where an *ostiarios* introduces the patricians and *strategoï*, who perform *proskynesis* before them. Preceded by *cubicularii* they again mount to the imperial box, from where they will watch the four races of the afternoon.

As they mount to their thrones the Emperors are once again acclaimed by the factions, with an amalgamation of those delivered in the morning and again they bless the people before the patricians and *strategoï* are summoned to resume their seats. After the second race of the afternoon the general protocol of chapter 78 (69) states that crosses are brought down to the track and presented to the Emperors.<sup>60</sup> The cross carriers come down from the four factions carrying crosses decorated with flowers, which they present to the Emperors at the *stama*. The imperial box itself was not accessible from the track and it is likely that the *actuarios* descended from an adjoining box to receive the crosses on their behalf, as he had done to present the prizes to the winning charioteers. As the crosses are presented the claqueurs of the factions lead the acclamations, each phrase of which was repeated by the people:

Oh divine sign, help the Emperors.

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, Reiske, pp, 323-324; Vogt, 128-129.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., Reiske, 326-327; Vogt, 131.

By this you govern and by this you conquer.  
By this you destroy the pagan nations.  
Thrice Holy, help the Emperors.<sup>61</sup>

This presentation of floral crosses at a mid-point in the afternoon races brings into the arena of the Hippodrome one of the most powerful symbols of imperial rule and military victory. It has been observed that crosses appear frequently in the ceremonial life of the Middle Byzantine Emperors, both as objects of devotion and, when they processed to Hagia Sophia, as signs with which the factions and their *demarchs* greet their arrival. In the ritual at the Hippodrome, too, the cross makes an appearance and the acclamations that accompany its transposition to the Emperors confirm its identification as a sign of government through Christ and, above all, a guarantor of military victory over barbarian peoples.

At the end of the races the Emperors rise from their thrones and pass through the triclinos in which they earlier dined and the patricians and *strategoi* who line the walls wish them many good years. Having crossed the small triclinos they enter their private chamber where the *chlamydes* and crowns are removed and they put on their *sagia*. Coming down the secret staircase they pass from the church of St Stephen (Pl.3 22), through the Augusteus (Pl.3 20), the Abside (Pl.3 24) and the Triconch (Pl.3 29). The *protospatharioi* and the *manglavion* go to the semicircle of the Triconch and, as they pass, they acclaim the Emperors. The Emperors then return to the Chrysotriclinos where the staff of the cubiculum intones, “many good years” and they leave to return to their own houses. This ends the description of the day’s activity.

This standard protocol described in the *Book of Ceremonies* for the conduct of the imperial court and the factions during the Hippodrome ceremonies of the established calendar demonstrates the way in which many of the ideas associated with Emperors at the rituals in which they took part, both within the confines of the palace complex and during the religious feasts of the liturgical calendar, also find a place at the popular entertainments of Constantinople. Earlier chapters of the compilation described the ritual interaction between the Emperors, the Church and the dignitaries of the court. Here it is the ceremonial confrontation between Emperor and people that is described. The *Book of Ceremonies* makes it clear that the Hippodrome remained

---

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

an important place in the life of Middle Byzantine Constantinople. Here the Emperors' victory is a principal theme, but also their justice and virtue and, as always, their legitimacy through Christ.

In the long history of Roman and Byzantine Hippodrome celebrations the interaction between ruler and people had rarely been as predictable as the tenth-century ceremonial descriptions suggests.<sup>62</sup> Once again it must be highlighted that the document in which they are presented does not provide a disinterested record of the reality of the ceremonial life of the capital. In the idealised world described within its pages the Hippodrome, the least predictable of ceremonial environments, is the location of a universally amicable coming together of the Emperors and the masses, in which factions and people fulfil their role and deliver their acclamations by rote. Here, the Emperors are always victorious and always loved by the population, who are presented with a clearly defined formula expressed through a carefully chosen vocabulary with which to comprehend the political system in which they found themselves.

#### *The Celebration of the Anniversary of the Consecration of Constantinople*

Each year, on the 11th of May, a day of Hippodrome races was organised to celebrate the inauguration of Constantinople, "this God-protected city and capital of our Empire."<sup>63</sup> The 11<sup>th</sup> of May also had a religious aspect and was celebrated by the ecclesiastical authorities with a service at Hagia Sophia on the eve of the festival and on its morning by a procession, led by the Patriarch, to the Forum of Constantine.<sup>64</sup> It is noteworthy that this religious procession is not mentioned in the *Book of Ceremonies*, indicating that the imperial court did not involve itself in the ecclesiastical ritual, preferring to limit its activity to the Emperors' appearance at the popular celebrations conducted at the Hippodrome. The description in the *Book of Ceremonies* of this important Hippodrome event is typically confused. Once again the text is inconsistent about the number of Emperors involved, at the beginning of the chapter specifying just one and later changing to the plural. This indication that the

---

<sup>62</sup> The often hostile reception of the Emperor at the games in the Late Antique and early Byzantine Empires is examined in Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 157-192.

<sup>63</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 79 (70), Reiske, 340; Vogt, II, 143.

protocol was drawn up from different descriptions is supported by the disjointed arrangement of the protocol throughout. At the end of the chapter, for example, the author returns to the ceremonies on the eve of the races and provides acclamations that accompanied the procession of the *demarchs* and Hippodrome staff to the arena. This description, evidently extracted from the documents of the factions, is slightly different from that contained in the main body of the chapter. Within that main body, in the middle of a description of the behaviour of the imperial court at the beginning of the races, an additional section about the previous day's ritual is inserted rather clumsily into the narrative. This exacerbates the general confusion and one is left with the impression that the scribe himself is less than sure about the exact order of events that were observed.

In addition to the difficulties presented by chapter 79 (70) of the ceremonial book, the following chapter also contains information that is pertinent to the celebration of the inauguration of Constantinople.<sup>65</sup> Once again this is in the form of acclamations, this time those presented to the winning charioteers and again the description appears to contradict the order of the ceremony as it is laid down in the previous chapter. It has been observed that the protocol for the dances in the *phiale* of the Triconch that took place on the eve of imperial receptions is described in chapter 80 (71) and that the acclamations contained therein may have been intended for the celebrations on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May.<sup>66</sup> This in itself is problematic for, although chapter 79 (70) specifies a variety of ritual performances on the eve of the festival, these do not include either an imperial reception of the type discussed above nor the φακλαρέα. It is possible that the entire order of chapter 80 (71) was intended as a supplement to the previous chapter. However it is only in the case of the acclamations delivered to the victorious competitors that this is certain and this examination will therefore restrict its use of chapter 80 (71) of the ceremonial book to these *apokombia*. As was the case for the Golden Hippodrome, the following description will assume the presence of more than one Emperor throughout.

---

<sup>64</sup> Vogt, II, *Commentaire*, 156.

<sup>65</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 80 (71), Reiske, 354-357; Vogt, II, 154-157.

<sup>66</sup> See above, 9-10.

Despite the difficulties presented by the order of the text, through a loose amalgamation of the often randomly disposed information about each stage in the ceremony, it is nonetheless possible to reconstruct the day's events with some degree of clarity. Through such a reconstruction the organisation of both the factions and the imperial court during this most metropolitan of festivals emerges and the relationships formulated within the ritual, especially that between the Emperor and the people of Constantinople, opens itself up to examination.

The protocol of chapter 79 (70) begins on the eve of the celebration, when the *praepositus* approaches the Emperors to discover whether they want the races to take place. Having received their answer, he goes to meet the Thessarios, who receives the *peraton* in the Lausiakos (Pl.3 52) and then returns to the Hippodrome where the usual ceremonies are observed. In the afternoon the factions take their horses to their respective *phialae*, where they acclaim the Emperors. They then drive their horses into the Hippodrome. They enter by the main doors, on the side of the *carceres* and walk the length of the track as far as the *sphendone*, the curved end, which closed the arena on the opposite side. During this procession further acclamations are delivered and the Prefect of the City sits alongside the *actuarios* in the Kathisma. When the acclamations are over and the horses have been led from the arena he comes down from his position in the Kathisma and places his standard in the tribune of the judges of the games, situated in the *carceres*.<sup>67</sup> Here he summons the representatives of the two senior factions who examine the *orna*, which the Prefect of the City then seals to ensure its security until the moment when it is spun to decide the order of the colours in the races.

On the eve of the Hippodrome races, therefore, the horses that will race on the following day are brought from their stables and displayed, first in the faction *phialae* and then in the Hippodrome itself. At the beginning of the day the *peraton* is granted and, although the later protocol appears similar to that marking imperial receptions, it is possible that this ends the involvement of the Emperors and their court in the ritual observed on this day. It is likely that they would have processed to the *phialae*, which adjoined the imperial residence, to receive the acclamation of the factions as they

---

<sup>67</sup> Vogt, II, *Commentaire*, 158.

The people: The faith of the Emperors is victorious. The faith of the Augustae is victorious. The faith of the city and of the Blues [or Greens] is victorious.  
 Claqueurs: *N. and N.*, great Emperors, yes, say it, *N. and N.*, great Emperors.  
 The people: Yes, Lord, help.  
 Claqueurs: One God, protect them.  
 The people: Yes, Lord.

And finally, in front of the Hippodrome, they chant:

We who compete, we praise You. You, our God and Saviour, come and help the victories of the Blues [or Greens] and preside over the races of Ouranios [or Olympios] so that in the end we may dance in victory.

Or the junior factions<sup>69</sup> might acclaim:

As a powerful protection, Theotokos, and a firm solace for those who need you, we, the Blues [or Greens], ask you to grant us this: For Ikasios [or Anatellon] to shine through our victories with him in the race and for us to enter in joy.

The procession of the horses from their stables was evidently a highly regulated affair, with its own order of acclamations. These are very similar to those that were usually presented in the Hippodrome on the eve of the races when the *demarchs* went to examine the horses and fences of the track. Here, as there, the factions ask for success to be granted to their colours using the usual ceremonial titles of their charioteers. The constant invocation of divine figures, in particular Christ, the Heavenly Emperor, has been observed throughout the imperial ceremonies contained in Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus's codification. The acclamations delivered during the procession of horses from the stable to the Hippodrome and elsewhere demonstrate the degree to which the religious beliefs that informed the Byzantine political understanding are integrated into every aspect of the ceremonial life of Constantinople. Here, on the eve of the races, the progress of the factions towards the Hippodrome is punctuated by a series of statements that intertwine the hopes of the colours for their success on the following day with the overarching religious and political ideas that permeated the environment in which they took their place. The anticipated triumph of the charioteers is juxtaposed to the eternal victory of God and the factions, the city and the imperial family, both men and women, are united by their common faith.

Although the four colours are present during the habitual Hippodrome acclamations, the Reds and Whites usually simply repeat the acclamations of the Blues and Greens. Here, for the first time, alternative chants are provided for them. It has been observed that the Red and White factions were, essentially, the urban organisations of the Blues and Greens, whose supporters came from within the walls of Constantinople. It seems appropriate, therefore, that on the eve of this particularly metropolitan festival they should play a more prominent role. In particular the invocation of the Theotokos is significant since she was very strongly associated with Constantinople and its protection from without. That she should be the divine figure called on by the urban factions is, therefore, fitting. As they prepare for the anniversary of the inauguration of Constantinople, therefore, the factions reiterate their loyalty to the kind of ideas they were called on to express on a number of imperial occasions, in which, as always, the Emperors and Augustae occupy a central position with their divine counterparts.

Further information about the preparations on the eve of the 11th of May is contained within the protocol for the races themselves. It has been noted that in the middle of the text, after the procession of the court from the Great Palace and the imperial appearance in the box overlooking the track, the scribe has inserted lines that obviously correspond to the previous day's ceremony. He writes that after the Emperors have mounted:

The aforementioned silentiary [i. e. he who had introduced the first of the entrances inside the Kathisma] also goes up to the area reserved for the Greens and carries the *orna* with him. With him mount those members of the factions who are accustomed to do so. Then, having shown the seal of the City Prefect to all those who have gone up with him, he spins the *orna* and those who have gone up with the silentiary come down with him and on this side they pile up vegetables and on top they place cakes (*πλακουντας*). In the other part of the Hippodrome [i. e. that reserved for the Blues] and on many parts of the Euripos, they also place vegetables and cakes. This is done on the eve of the Hippodrome races and the space reserved for the Greens is guarded because it is there that the *orna* will be spun.<sup>70</sup>

These lines expressly refer to the preparations on the eve of the races and do not belong where they appear in the text. These preparations not only involved the sealing of the *orna* and its safeguarding in the area of the Green faction, whose precedence at

---

<sup>69</sup> Although the text says only that the Whites might say these lines (*De Cer.*, I, 79 (70), Reiske, 349; Vogt, II, 150) it is evident that they could be used by either the Whites or the Reds.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, Reiske, 343-344; Vogt, II, 145.

the races is indicated by this act, but also the piling up of foodstuffs on the level of the track. The exact location of the Euripos is not certain. Originally it had consisted of troughs filled with water, which were designed to protect the crowd from wild animals in the arena. This would suggest that it in fact lay between the terraces and the track. However, it is most commonly associated with the Latin *spina*, the raised platform that divided the arena in two, on which many monuments were raised at the Constantinopolitan Hippodrome, of which the Theodosian column, the serpentine column and the colossus of Constantine are still visible, in varying states of decay. For our purposes, the precise identification of the Euripos matters little, except that it was located on the level of the track and was accessible from the terraces occupied by the crowds.<sup>71</sup> Here, in anticipation of the following day's celebrations, members of the Hippodrome staff<sup>72</sup> deposit delicacies that will be offered to the people at the races.

The eve of the 11<sup>th</sup> of May was the occasion of a number of preparatory rituals, some purely practical, like the piling up of food on the Euripos, others more formal and accompanied by acclamations, like the procession of the factions and horses to the arena. These testify to the importance of the festival and ensured that on the day itself the celebrations would run smoothly. During these preparations the imperial court itself has played a minimal role, though as always the granting of the *peraton* established the Emperors as instigators in the commencement of the festival and their prominence in the acclamations ensured that they were never excluded from the ritual. It is on the following day that the Emperors and their entourage participate fully in their familiar, highly regulated manner in the ceremonial of the Hippodrome.

On the day of the races the Emperors, preceded by their usual escort, leave the Chrysotriclinos and pass through the palace to the church of St Stephen, from where they mount to the elevated area of the Kathisma overlooking the track. When the organisation for the races is complete, the Emperors are summoned and, as usual, they

---

<sup>71</sup> Arseven, *Constantinople De Byzance À Stamboul* (Paris, 1909), 130-131, draws a clear distinction between the protective barrier and the *spina*. Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine*, 180-181, states that they are one and the same thing. Vogt, "L'Hippodrome De Constantinople", 475, observes that Henri Martin proposed that the Euripe should be identified as the *spina* in 1854 and, whilst he does not decisively state his concordance with this view, the plan of the Hippodrome appended to his commentary on the *De Ceremoniis* confirms that he has portrayed the *spina* in accordance with Heron of Byzantium's description of the Euripe.

<sup>72</sup> Vogt, II, *Commentaire*, 159, maintains that the scribe is mistaken in crediting the factions with this action.

come down via the stone staircase to their private chamber where they are dressed in their *chlamydes* and crowned. As was the case for the Golden Hippodrome they first receive the *proskynesis* of the patricians and *strategoï* in the small triclinos before proceeding to the great triclinos for the rest of the entrances. The court wishes the Emperors many good years and the *master of ceremonies* makes a pleat in their *chlamydes*. After this customary rite in the Kathisma the Emperors go up to the imperial box where they bless the crowd.

It is at this point in the protocol that the scribe returns to the preparation of the *orna* on the eve of the event. The subsequent description of the morning's races is rather confused. It appears that at the conclusion of the first race representatives of the four factions come down to the *stama*, from where they present crosses decorated with roses to the Emperors and acclaim them, as was the case in the general protocol after the second race of the afternoon. The acclamations presented to the Emperors at this mid point in the races are given in chapter 80 (71).<sup>73</sup> Apart from specifying that the ceremony takes place after the second and not the first race these laudations fit exactly with the order of events as it is recorded in chapter 79 (70). They begin in the usual way, wishing many years first to the Emperors, who are described as the "choice of the Trinity" and "servants of the Lord," and then to the Augustae. As they continue, each group of praises is intoned first by the Blues and then repeated by the Greens. This suggests that in the description of chapter 80 (71) it is the Blues who have precedence, whereas in the former chapter it appeared to be the Greens who enjoyed that honour. This indicates that the precedence of one or other faction at any particular date in the Hippodrome calendar was not fixed, though the exact manner of gaining the advantage remains obscure. The significance of the precedence of the factions at the races in respect of their behaviour towards the imperial box is minimal since in almost all cases both the senior factions address identical praises to their rulers. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of May, after the calls for many years for the Emperors and Augustae the factions continue, after each phrase delivered by the *claqueurs*, the ordinary faction members responding "Holy, holy, holy":

Lords of the universe, receive the Blues who invoke you.  
Like slaves we dare to entreat you.  
With fear we supplicate the Emperors.

---

<sup>73</sup> See n. 92.

Hear favourably, with indulgence, oh benefactors.  
The prayer of your servants, the Blues.  
Official insignia for your servants, if you order it.

To the final phrases, the response "Lord protect" is given three times

Lord, protect the Emperors of the Romans.  
And may God help us with them.  
Lord protect the Emperors and the Augustae and the Porphyrogeniti.

The opening lines of these acclamations are identical to those delivered on the eve of imperial receptions for a newly crowned Emperor at which the factions ask permission to celebrate the accession.<sup>74</sup> Here, using the same formulaic phrases, they request rewards for their victorious charioteers and all is concluded with the familiar demands for God to protect the Emperors, Augustae and Porphyrogeniti. Thus the conclusion of the first or second race of the morning had its own ceremony, during which the Emperors were presented with floral crosses and the charioteers received their prizes. The action of the ceremony, during which the *actuarios* descends on behalf of the Emperors to present the rewards, is complemented by the acclamations, which express the servility of the factions and their humble request for imperial insignia, thus ensuring that the entire arena recognises the Emperors' domination of the proceedings. When the insignia have been granted and the competitors have returned to the *carceres* the racing continues.

The next ceremony takes place after the four races of the morning have been run. It begins with another prize-giving at which the winning charioteers receive the traditional laurel crowns portrayed, for example, on the decoration of the Theodosian column. Once again this ceremony has to be pieced together from the two chapters, the second of which provides the acclamations.<sup>75</sup> Having dressed in their insignia at the *carceres*, the charioteers return to the arena. They first go to the area immediately in front of their supporters, where they are presented with laurels from their faction. The faction choirs come down to the level of the track, and stand opposite the supporters while the *demarchs* remain up high in the terraces. Then the *claqueurs* below begin, while the people in the terraces give the responses:

---

<sup>74</sup> See above, 180.

<sup>75</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 80 (71), Reiske, 355-357; Vogt, II, 156-158.

Claqueurs: If God has glorified something.  
The people: Honour the Blues [or Greens].  
Claqueurs: He who comes to the aid of the Emperors.  
The people: One God.<sup>76</sup>

The charioteers, having received their laurels and acclamations, cross the length of the Hippodrome. During their progress their faction acclaims: "Exalt, Blues [or Greens], the Emperors have given the victory."<sup>77</sup> When they have arrived at the *stama*, the *tagmata* are summoned and they come down to where the food is piled and the factions acclaim the Emperors. They begin in the same way that they had after the earlier race, wishing the Emperors many years and proclaiming themselves slaves, daring to entreat their rulers, the "masters of the universe."<sup>78</sup> They continue, the Blues leading each set of acclamations, which are then repeated by the Greens and the familiar responses are each repeated three times, alternating between "Holy" and "Lord protect":

Crown your servants if you wish it

Lord, protect the Emperors of the Romans.  
Lord, protect those who have been crowned by You.  
Lord protect the Emperors with the Augustae and the Porphyrogeniti.  
We, your servants, have one more request.

That we may leave to dance, if you wish it.  
Lord, protect the Emperors of the Romans.  
Lord, protect those who have been crowned by You.<sup>79</sup>

When the acclamations are complete the Emperor gives the charioteers their crowns via the intercession of the *actuarios*, who comes down to the track and, having crowned the winners, commands them to dance in an orderly manner. The claqueurs respond that they will do so. As the charioteers make their way from the arena they are accompanied by their factions, who repeat the earlier acclamation: "Exalt, Blues [or Greens], the Emperors have given victory." When they arrive at the doors of the Hippodrome they cry: "Always make great the Empire and the Blues [or Greens]".<sup>80</sup> Finally the factions accompany the charioteers as they emerge onto the Mese. Chapter 80 (71) specifies that each process to a church, the Blues to one in the Dagisteus

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., Reiske, 356; Vogt, II, 156.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., Reiske, 356-357; Vogt, II, 157.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., Reiske, 357; Vogt, II, 157.

region of Constantinople, the Greens to another in the Diaconissa region.<sup>81</sup> Vogt is surely correct when he supposes that the factions dance not to the churches themselves but to the areas in which they were located.<sup>82</sup>

When the competitors and their supporters have left the Hippodrome the Emperors rise from their thrones and return to the Kathisma. This is the signal for the crowd to come down and snatch up the food that had, until then, been guarded by the troops of the *tagmata*. At the same time a large vessel filled with fish is taken and its contents are dispatched onto the ground for the crowd to also snatch up.<sup>83</sup>

The climax of the celebrations of the inauguration of Constantinople took place in the middle of the day, between the fourth race of the morning and the commencement of the competitions in the afternoon. Now the racetrack is transformed into a stage for dances that are continued out into the streets. Just as the various processions of the imperial court constitute a kind of taking possession of the palace and the city, here the factions and the victorious charioteers process out of the arena extending their celebrations beyond the immediate location of their success into the streets of Constantinople. Whilst the factions leave the Hippodrome, acclaiming the victory, granted by the Emperors, the crowds come down from the terraces to take up alternative imperial gifts, the food piled up in the arena.

During this activity in the Hippodrome the Emperors return to their private chamber in the Kathisma, where they are divested of their crowns and *chlamydes*. From there they go as usual to the large triclinos where they dine with the dignitaries of the court. When the preparations in the Hippodrome are complete and the arena has been cleared to make way for the races they are again dressed in their imperial insignia before crossing through the Kathisma, receiving the *proskynesis* of the court and mounting to the imperial box. As always, the patricians and *strategoï* remain at the bottom of the stairs and it is stated that the dignitaries of the cubiculum, two members

---

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Vogt, II, *Commentaire*, 167.

<sup>83</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 79 (70), Reiske, 345; Vogt, II, 147.

of the body of *manglavion* and *spatharioi* carrying their arms and swords join the Emperors in the imperial box “as at every Hippodrome race.”<sup>84</sup>

The protocol gives no information about the afternoon races. When they are complete the Emperors, having been divested of crowns and *chlamydes*, follow their usual route through the palace. At the Chrysotriclinos the *cubicularii* wish them many good years before returning home.

For the celebration of the inauguration of Constantinople the people gather at the Hippodrome for a day of racing. Here the Emperors attend with the usual displays of court and faction loyalty and subservience. On this occasion, however, the customary entertainment provided by the chariot races is augmented both within the arena and without. For not only do the colours and their supporters celebrate victory at the races, which is itself, as always, presented in the acclamations within the wider context of God-given imperial triumph, they further process into the city, thus widening the sphere of their revelry. Both on the previous day, when they brought their horses from their stables, and after the morning races, when they go out into the streets, the ceremony extends beyond the Hippodrome, encompassing the wider environment of Constantinople. This is the only instance in this group of ceremonies when the description includes rites observed outside the Hippodrome and palace. Although on other occasions the factions must have fetched their horses and brought them to the arena, it is clear that the anniversary of the inauguration of Constantinople was marked by heightened activity in the streets as the factions processed through the urban landscape.

At the same time in the Hippodrome itself the crowds are given food. On this particularly jubilant occasion the Middle Byzantine Hippodrome is the meeting ground for the people and the court where the factions express their joy through dance the crowds receive not only the blessing of their Emperors but are also invited to come down and grab the imperial largess deposited on the track. The city's celebrations at the Hippodrome, therefore, combine the usual proclamations of the Emperors' victory and their election by the Trinity with general feasting, elevating the

---

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 347; Vogt, II, 148.

celebration of the inauguration above the usual festivals of the Hippodrome without neglecting any of their customary observances, which, we have seen, focused the loyalty of the people on their divinely appointed, triumphant rulers.

### *The Votive Races*

The Hippodrome ceremonies discussed until now have all belonged to the established calendar. However, celebrations at the Hippodrome were not restricted to these events. In addition, the Emperor might organise races to mark a particular event, for example the birth of a Porphyrogenitus child or a successful military campaign. These festivals are referred to as “votive” (τοῦ Βοτοῦ) and are the subject of chapter 81 (72) of the *Book of Ceremonies*.<sup>85</sup> Such festivals could either be one-off celebrations or establish a precedent for an annual observance. For example, the *Kletorologion* of Philotheus informs us that a “pedestrian votive” race (βότος πεζοδρόμιος) took place each year on the eighth day after Christmas<sup>86</sup> and also on the 22 July, the feast of St Elijah, a tradition established by Leo VI to celebrate his liberation on that date.<sup>87</sup> The evidence of the *De Ceremoniis* and Philotheus’s treatise demonstrate that the Roman imperial practice of offering commemorative games at the Hippodrome was continued into the Middle Byzantine period.

Both sources seem to describe the same kind of ritual. In many respects the protocol conforms to the usual Hippodrome ceremony. However, there are a number of important differences. Firstly, the “votive” races are confined to the morning. Although the *De Ceremoniis* does not explicitly refer to pedestrian races, it appears that this type of gaming event may well have been run on foot, as is implied in the *Kletorologion*. Philotheus informs us that the pedestrian race on the Feast of St Elijah was followed two days later by a normal Hippodrome event and this is mirrored in the *Book of Ceremonies* when, at the end of the chapter, the scribe writes that the *velon* is suspended after the third race, confirming that the festival preceded future gaming in the Hippodrome.<sup>88</sup> Throughout chapter 81 (72) only one Emperor is involved in the

---

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 81 (72), Reiske, 359-364; Vogt, II, 160-163.

<sup>86</sup> *Klet.*, 178-180.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 216-218.

<sup>88</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 81 (72), Reiske, 364; Vogt, II, 163.

ceremony and the following description will, therefore, assume that only one ruler occupies the imperial throne.

On the eve of the races, as was the case at the celebration of the inauguration of Constantinople, the City Prefect goes to the Hippodrome where he is acclaimed and the *orna* is sealed. On the following day the court goes to the palace and escorts the Emperor as he processes to the elevated area of the Kathisma. Whilst the Emperor watches the preparations, a silentiary goes down to the track with the *orna* and, in the presence of the two factions, he spins it to decide the order of the competitors. The Emperor invites patricians, *stratego*i, dignitaries of the *cubiculum* and others holding high office to join him and he distributes tokens (σφραγίδας) to each, which will be given by them to representatives of the poor when they dine after the morning's competition.

Hippodrome races instituted by imperial will were marked by the same processional movement of the court and preparations by the factions as was observed during the usual calendar festivals. Despite its similarity to the customary ritual this protocol does give some indication that the "votive" games might have had a rather less formal atmosphere than other Hippodrome events. For example, there is no mention of the habitual meeting between the *praepositus* and the faction *demarchs* for the granting of the *peraton*. Rather, a verbal warning is given to the *master of ceremonies*, who must himself have informed the factions that they must organise the races. Similarly there is no mention of the *kombinan* that would normally be submitted to the Emperor before the races. This omission is explained by the fact that the *orna* is spun on the day of the races rather than on the eve. It is significant that the other occasion on which the granting of the *peraton* is carried out by the *master of ceremonies* is the final Hippodrome ceremony of the year, the Lupercalia, which is expressly differentiated from the other ceremonies and referred to as "pagan" (παγανόν).<sup>89</sup> In the light of the overall confusion in the entire group of Hippodrome ceremonies contained in the *De Ceremoniis*, especially the fact that no one chapter describes the ritual comprehensively from beginning to end, it is important not to make too much of subtle differences that emerge between them. However, this late spinning of the *orna*

---

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 82 (73), Reiske, 366; Vogt, II, 165.

and, we shall see, a less elaborate public ritual at the imperial box of the Kathisma, does seem to indicate that the “votive” races should be associated with the type of event represented by the Lupercalia rather than the more solemn protocol observed elsewhere. This is further indicated when the patricians and *strategoï* mount to the imperial box, where the usual *proskynesis* before the imperial throne does not take place. Rather, as at the Lupercalia, the patricians and *strategoï* go straight to their reserved seats, demonstrating the relative informality of the occasion.

The description of chapter 81 (72) does not give any details about the competition itself. However, it has been suggested that there is strong evidence that this did not consist of the usual chariot races, but that the competitors ran on foot. At the end of chapter 80 (71) some details are given about such events.<sup>90</sup> Although it must be remembered that pedestrian races might take place on other occasions, for example as part of the celebrations of Lupercalia, from the terminology used by Philotheus in his treatise, it seems that the morning of “votive” games may have consisted exclusively of this type of race. As the winner of the pedestrian race and his second receive their prizes the factions acclaim:

A little crown, Emperors, for the champion. Lord, protect the Emperors of the Romans. Lord, protect those who You have crowned. Lord, protect the Emperors with the Blues [or Greens]

Emperors, two [nomismas] to the champion. Emperors, one nomisma for the second. Lord, guard the orthodox power. Lord, protect the Emperors with the Augustae of the Romans.<sup>91</sup>

The tradition of popular supplication for the imperial granting of prizes is, therefore, maintained at the pedestrian races, though the prizes themselves are rather different.

When the fourth and final race has been run and the prizes given, the Emperor goes through the great triclinos of the Kathisma and is acclaimed by the dignitaries who stand on either side. He enters his private chamber where his crown and *chlamys* are removed and, dressed in his *sagion*, he goes down the secret staircase to St Stephen. He passes through the Octagonal Chamber of the Daphne palace (Pl.3 21) and, from there, to the Triclinos of Nineteen Couches (Pl.3 17). Here he sits with the *master of ceremonies*, the dignitaries of the *cubicularii*, the prefect of the *sakellion* and the

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 80 (71), Reiske, 358-359; Vogt, II, 159.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., Reiske, 359; Vogt, II, 159.

*actuarios*. At the table set below sit representatives of the poor “our brothers in Christ”.<sup>92</sup> When the meal is finished the Emperor returns to the Octagonal Chamber to resume the insignia before returning to the Chrysotriclinos, accompanied by *cubicularii*.

Although the *Book of Ceremonies* gives very little detail about the ceremony observed at dinner, this is the most interesting ritual in the chapter. The *Kletorologion* of Philotheus provides some additional information. It is stated here that the dignitaries dine with Emperor at his table, where they line up in order of precedence before taking their seats. The indigents sit at a lower table and each, in return for the token he has received from a dignitary, is given a small *apokombion*. On the eighth day after Christmas they received one *nomisma*,<sup>93</sup> whilst on the feast of St Elijah the *apokombia* contained an additional “*tritos*.”<sup>94</sup> It has been observed that the Hippodrome might be the setting for imperial largess towards the people of Constantinople, who were not only entertained there but on occasion also received food. After the votive races, in themselves gifts to the people from the imperial government, the Emperor receives the poor in the magnificent Triclinos of Nineteen couches, where they dine in the imperial presence and also receive *apokombia* “in the way of imperial *eulogia*.”<sup>95</sup>

Gifts to the poor have featured in previous imperial ceremonies, for example after the liturgy the Emperor might give money at the Holy Well of Hagia Sophia and, on the birth of a Porphyrogenitus child, food was distributed at the Mese. However, at the votive races the poor are integrated into the ceremony in an unprecedented way. Throughout this study the Great Palace has been presented as an exclusive space, where the Emperors and their court gathered in relative privacy. Here, for the first time, it is opened up to admit the most needy of Constantinople’s population. The lack of detail about the dinner with which the votive races are concluded prevents any detailed analysis. What it does do is to demonstrate the fact that the Hippodrome races organised by the imperial administration did not simply allow for the kind of triumphal display that characterised the usual races, nor the expansive instances of

---

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 81 (72), Reiske, 362; Vogt, II, 162.

<sup>93</sup> *Klet.*, 180-181.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 218-219.

imperial largess that took place in the arena on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May, but also provided the opportunity for a more private demonstration of the Emperor's care for his people.

When the Emperor went out into the city during the religious ceremonies he often included a visit to the hostelrys of Constantinople to offer alms to the poor and the elderly. Here too the indigent population of Constantinople benefits from the ceremony and, whilst the ritual behaviour of the court most often works through symbolic references and actions to bolster the public image of the political authorities, this practical example of benefaction is significant. For it demonstrates not only the way that the ceremonies might be organised to include gifts to the poor, but also that it was within the context of public imperial ceremonial that such gifts were presented. It should further be noted that the almsgiving is structured in such a way that the dignitaries who occupied an elevated position within the court hierarchy participate in the action by presenting the indigents with the tokens they exchange for *apokombia*. These tokens, received from the Emperor at the beginning of the day, integrate the courtiers into the proceedings such that it is not the Emperor in isolation but also the dignitaries of the court who combine to administer poor provision. The meal shared by the Emperor and the poor in the Triclinos of Nineteen Couches, therefore, acts to unite the court through a collective exercise of munificence.

### *The Lupercalia*

The final Hippodrome ceremony described in the *Book of Ceremonies* is found in chapter 82 (73) under the title, Περὶ τοῦ μακελλαρικοῦ ἵπποδρομίου τοῦ λεγομένου Λουπερκαλίου<sup>96</sup> This festival is particularly interesting for two reasons. Firstly, it was the final meeting of the Hippodrome calendar. Secondly, because it represents the maintenance of a traditional, Roman pagan festival into the Middle Byzantine period and its modification in the Christian Empire established in the New Rome.<sup>97</sup> As Grumel observes “le caractère cultuel païen” of the celebration must have

---

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 180-181.

<sup>96</sup> *De Cer*, I, 82 (73), Reiske, 364-369; Vogt, II, 164-168.

<sup>97</sup> It should be noted that the Lupercalia's survival at Constantinople is particularly interesting since it has been proscribed at Rome at least since the time of Gelasius I (492-6). Other “pagan” feasts, the *Vota* and *Broumalia* had been banned by Canon 62 of the Quinisext Synod of 691-2: George Nedungatt and Michael Featherstone eds., *The Council of Trullo Revisited* (Rome, 1995) contains Greek and Latin texts of the canons with English translations. Canon 62 is found at 142-145.

quickly disappeared in the Empire administered from Constantinople.<sup>98</sup> Nonetheless certain echoes remain within the tenth-century ceremony that unmistakably link it with the traditional Lupercalia.<sup>99</sup> Although it is not the purpose of this examination to trace the history of the festival, nor to simply repeat the arguments presented in Père Grumel's learned study, certain features of the rite as it is described in the *Book of Ceremonies* can only be understood in relation to the pagan festival and its transformation at the Byzantine Hippodrome. It is necessary, therefore, to explain these features in the context of the ancient rite.

However, the pagan characteristics of the traditional Roman feast would have been long forgotten at Middle Byzantine Constantinople and those that survive in the later ritual have been transformed and fully integrated into the Christian imperial ceremonies. The following examination will, therefore, concentrate on the ritual in its tenth-century manifestation and in relation to the previously discussed, contemporary Hippodrome festivals. In the *Book of Ceremonies* the Lupercalia is also referred to as μακελλαρισκοῦ, referring to meats. In the Roman Empire the festival had taken place on the 15<sup>th</sup> February and, as Grumel observes, in the Christian calendar this date usually falls after the last Sunday of Sexagesima; i. e. the final day before Easter when meat could be consumed.<sup>100</sup> Like the beginning of the Hippodrome calendar, therefore, its end was tied in to the liturgical year. This Hippodrome festival, therefore, not only closes the racing calendar but also announces the beginning of the period of Christian penitence and indicates that the progress of the Middle Byzantine year was not only defined by the holy festivals of the Church, but also the great celebrations of the circus.

The preparations on the eve of the Lupercalia correspond to those that marked the eve of "votive" games and on the following day the procession of the Emperor through the palace to the Kathisma and the ceremony conducted there is the same as that which preceded each appearance at the imperial box overlooking the Hippodrome, except that. The patricians and *strategoï* go straight to their seats and do not perform *proskynesis* in the imperial box.

---

<sup>98</sup> V. Grumel, "Le commencement et la fin de l'année des jeux à l'Hippodrome de Constantinople," *EO* 35 (1936), 431.

<sup>99</sup> Daremberg and Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités grecques et romaines*, 1401.

After the third race of the morning, the *actuarios* signals to the “urban administration” (τὸ πολίτευμα).<sup>101</sup> Throughout the chapter the term “urban administration” is used to denote the factions. That “faction”, or more properly “deme”, should be understood is confirmed in the acclamations appended to the ceremonial description and Vogt is certainly right when he states that these were the Reds and the Whites rather than the suburban colours.<sup>102</sup> The factions, each led by its *deuteros*, come from the Diipion, the central courtyard of the *carceres*, walking in two separate groups as far as the doorway, where they begin their acclamations:

Behold, Spring, sweet Spring which anew is sprung, [bringing] joy, health, life and prosperity, to the Roman Emperors, courage from God and victory, gift of God, against the enemies.<sup>103</sup>

They continue their progress, crossing the length of the track to arrive at the area reserved for the Greens. As they return, to stand at the *stama* in front of the imperial box, they continue:

Your city blooming again, *N.*, autocrat, exults, as she should, seeing your gentleness. She calls you another David. She sees the very wise herald of the faith, the apostle Paul, he who is dressed in Christ, turning away the arrows of foreign races and that is why you are strong and you reign as the Lord’s anointed.<sup>104</sup>

The references to Spring led Reiske to conclude that the Byzantine Lupercalia took place in May.<sup>105</sup> However, it is evident that the notion of rebirth is introduced as a symbol of the forthcoming “Spring” of the orthodox faith: Easter. In the ancient rite two young men had come down to the track, where they had been anointed with milk and the blood of sacrificial animals by the priest and laughed: “L’onction avec le lait est le signe de la purification, et le rire des victimes simulées celui d’une joyeuse résurrection.”<sup>106</sup> In the later feast, this celebration of renewal is placed firmly within the context of Christ’s resurrection and the rebirth of the faithful. In these acclamations it is expressed in such a way that there is no discontinuity with the earlier Hippodrome ceremonies. Once again they focus on the joy of the city seeing its

---

<sup>100</sup> Grumel, “Le commencement et la fin,” 431-432.

<sup>101</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 82 (73), Reiske, 364; Vogt, II, 164.

<sup>102</sup> Vogt, II, *Commentaire*, 174

<sup>103</sup> *De Cer.*, I, 82 (73), Reiske, 367; Vogt, II, 167.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, Reiske, 368; Vogt, II, 167.

<sup>105</sup> Grumel, “Le commencement et la fin,” 428-429.

rulers and imperial victory over foreign nations through God. The particular prominence of Biblical references in the second acclamation, as at the prize-giving ceremony of the general protocol, proclaiming the Emperor another David,<sup>107</sup> with the introduction of the apostle Paul in the destruction of the Empire's enemies, intensifies the religious aspect of the ritual.

When the factions have arrived at the *stama*, the City Prefect joins them and the assembled group performs *proskynesis* to the Emperor. At this point a young man steps forwards to lead the next set of acclamations, which begin, "The Help of the Emperors" to which the people respond, "One God". Although the entire sequence of acclamations is not given, this invocation of the divine is of the same type that is found, for example, at the end of the first acclamations of the general protocol and at the prize-giving ceremony on 11<sup>th</sup> of May.<sup>108</sup> The ritual is a transparent development of the ancient rite, the two young men who had cavorted with sacrificial blood now reduced to one, who addresses the imperial box with familiar statements confirming the involvement of God in the government of the Empire. When he has finished his laudation further acclamations, wishing the Emperor and Augustae many years, are delivered to the imperial box before the factions and the City Prefect leave and the fourth race takes place. These final acclamations are like those delivered on numerous occasions, except towards the end, when they are fitted to the occasion of the final calendar races:

Claqueurs:	Lord, protect the orthodox power.
The people:	Lord, protect (X3).
Claqueurs:	Lord, protect the renewal of the annual cycles.
The people:	Lord, protect (X3).
Claqueurs:	Lord, protect the wealth of the subjects.
The people:	May the Creator and Master of all things make long your years with the Augustae and the Porphyrogeniti (X3). <sup>109</sup>

At the end of the morning the Emperor goes, as usual, to the great triclinos of the Kathisma to dine and, when everything has been prepared he returns to the imperial box in anticipation of the afternoon's racing. After the third race, the charioteers come down to the place reserved for the Greens before driving their chariots as far as the

---

<sup>106</sup> Daremberg and Saglio, *Dictionnaire*

<sup>107</sup> See above, 46.

<sup>108</sup> See above, 16 and 34.

<sup>109</sup> *De Cer.*, I. 82 (73), Reiske, 368-369; Vogt, II, 167-168.

*stama*, where they receive their prizes. The fourth race does not involve the charioteers, but is run on foot “to end the year’s races.”<sup>110</sup>

The final races of the Hippodrome calendar, before they were suspended for Lent, had its roots in an ancient pagan festival that celebrated resurrection and renewal. This is also the subject of the ceremony described in Constantine VII’s codification. Here, however, the rite has been doctored to such an extent that its pagan antecedent has all but disappeared as it is subsumed within the norms of tenth-century Hippodrome ceremonies. At this festival the factions acclaim the Emperor as the divinely appointed, ever victorious monarch. They celebrate the rebirth of the city and entrust the renewal of the calendar to God. Within the ritual, however, the regularly recurring themes of the Hippodrome ceremonies are present.

At each of the events contained in the ceremonial book the Emperors dominate the proceedings. It is clear that the Middle Byzantine Hippodrome was the location for an exposition of an ideology that centred on the victory of the imperial authorities against external enemies and the joy of the capital in their communal triumph. When the Emperors are exposed to the gaze of the populace of Constantinople the ceremonies that surrounded them are carefully regulated to ensure that the correct messages about their authority are disseminated to the audience. The competition between the colours on the track is juxtaposed to the Byzantine confrontation with foreign peoples, in which the Emperors, supported by heavenly forces, are always victorious. The imperial ceremonies that accompanied the public entertainments of the Hippodrome thus serve to unite the people through fostering sentiments of civic pride and loyalty towards the political authorities.

In the idealised portrait of imperial ceremonial, which Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus wished to preserve and promote through his compilation, the Hippodrome, like the palace and the church, is the stage for a display of imperial authority that always worked in support of the individual who occupied the Byzantine throne by presenting him as the perfect fulfilment of a model of rulership that reflected the divinely-established order. The Hippodrome ceremonies take their place

---

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., Reiske, 367; Vogt, II, 166.

alongside the religious and imperial rituals as a powerful tool at the disposal of the imperial authorities, through which the ideas that underpinned the political system are integrated into the public life of Constantinople. They publicise notions of imperial legitimacy through birth, military success, piety, faith and justice and, always and above all, through the relationship between the Emperors and their divine counterparts.

## CONCLUSION

The field of Byzantine ceremonial is vast, not only because it was applied to a wide variety of circumstances – from the great celebrations of the Byzantine liturgy<sup>1</sup> to imperial triumphs,<sup>2</sup> from an Emperor's accession<sup>3</sup> to the popular entertainments of the Hippodrome and, no doubt, extending into the private lives of the population<sup>4</sup> – but also because of the long history through which it developed. It was suggested at the beginning of this thesis that the *Book of Ceremonies* offers the reader a portrait of performances through which s/he might discover the way in which the tenth-century imperial authorities sought to apply and advance this aspect of its cultural life in the particular circumstances of the Middle Byzantine period. Particular emphasis was placed on the centralisation of the government, the court-based administration and the inherent vulnerability of the throne. It was suggested that this “golden age” of the court at Constantinople came at the end of a period of profound transition, when many of the apparatus by which the Empire was governed and many of the structures of its social and cultural life had altered and that the ceremonial book was a source for our understanding of the impact of those alterations.

In the preface to his treatise, Constantine VII included amongst his reasons for taking State ritual seriously the fact that through them the majesty of the imperial power might be revealed and, therefore, honoured abroad.<sup>5</sup> It is worth highlighting that in reality ceremonies of the type laid down in his codification often failed to impress foreign guests. From Liudprand of Cremona, for example, comes not only the favourable

---

<sup>1</sup> On which see, for example, the section on Byzantium in John Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: the origins, development and meaning of stational liturgy* (Rome, 1987), which explores the relationship between the liturgical and urban life of the city. On the development of the Byzantine liturgy see Taft, *The Byzantine Rite: a Short History* (Collegeville, MN., 1992) and his *Great Entrance*, op. cit. Thomas Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (USA, 1971) explores the development of Byzantine architecture and changes in the liturgy after Iconoclasm but, surprisingly, uses the *De Cer.*, as a source for the early rite, because it describes the ceremony in the traditional basilicas of Constantinople.

<sup>2</sup> On which, McCormick, *Eternal Victory*.

<sup>3</sup> See, above, 115, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> So, McCormick, “Analysing Imperial Ceremonies,” 15.

<sup>5</sup> See, above, 4.

testimony from his time at the court of Constantine VII,<sup>6</sup> but also his account of a procession to Hagia Sophia during which the Emperor Nicephorus proceeded “like some crawling monster” accompanied by the acclamations of the throng.<sup>7</sup> Although Liudprand’s report must be viewed in the context of the failure of his mission to Constantinople, it describes vividly how different the impression given by imperial rituals might be from that intended. For other Western Europeans, too, the ceremonies proved unconvincing. Byzantine ambassadors to the court of Charlemagne in 811 were led from room to room unable to identify him until he was revealed, in mocking contrast to the Emperor at Constantinople: “Around him like the host of heaven stood his sons, daughters, wife, bishops and abbots, leading men and military household.”<sup>8</sup> The organisers of the Carolingian reception had identified in ritual a means of clearly demonstrating - to themselves though, one imagines, not to their guests - the different type of ruler they enjoyed at Aachen and its superiority over the highly ceremonial model they had encountered at Constantinople.

The arena of ceremony, its complexity and the prominence of its position at the Constantinopolitan court, therefore, exposed fundamental divisions between the political atmosphere of Byzantium and the emerging structures of Western kingdoms and these divisions were noted by contemporaries. Such misunderstandings prove how far the rituals of the Byzantine Empire were rooted in its culture and history and how easy it is for the outsider, which the modern reader no less than the ninth-century Carolingian must consider himself, to dismiss them as so much pomposity.<sup>9</sup>

In *Book of Ceremonies*, however, the Byzantine authorities of the tenth-century have provided the view of the other side – an insider’s guide to State ceremonial and a model for its ideal conduct. It has been argued, above, that the value of the document lies

---

<sup>6</sup> Liudprand, *Antapodosis*, book VI, cc. 8-10.

<sup>7</sup> Idem., *De Legatione*, cc. 9-10.

<sup>8</sup> Notger of St. Gallen, *Gesta Karoli Magni*, II, c. 6, 57, translated in J. Nelson, “Carolingian Royal Rituals,” in Cannadine and Price, eds., *Rituals of Royalty*, 171. See also K. J. Leyser, “Ends and Means in Liudprand of Cremona,” in Howard-Johnson, J. D., ed., *Byzantium and the West, c. 850-c. 1200: proceedings of the VIII Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Oxford 30 March-1 April 1984* (Amsterdam, 1988), at 140-141.

<sup>9</sup> Toynbee, above, 12, is an extreme example of this attitude.

precisely in the divorce of its content from the realities of performance. For here the inconvenience of an audience who might fail to be impressed by the ceremony, of participants who might act outside the bounds of its prescription, or circumstances, which might disrupt the harmony preserved therein, do not figure. Therefore, the ceremonial book preserves an ideal, one that was put together from all the sources at the disposal of the imperial scribes of the Great Palace, in which we have seen the articulation of imperial ideology and delineation of the court structure that is an unmistakable product of the Middle Byzantine period.

Through an examination of the first 83 chapters of Book I of the *De Ceremoniis*, this study has explored the way in which Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus sought to fix the ceremonies. Initially, it looked at the religious ceremonies; second, ceremonies concerned directly with the life of the Emperor and the court; and, finally, celebrations in the Great Palace and the Hippodrome. In each group, we have found rituals by which the Emperor emerged from his private apartments in the Chrysotriclinos to interact with members of the court and other agencies and it has been argued that all are united by underlying notions of imperial legitimacy and divinely sanctioned rule.

The *Book of Ceremonies* has been used as evidence of the limited involvement of the imperial authorities in the offices of Hagia Sophia. John Baldovin, for example, in his examination of the stational liturgy of Constantinople states: “[the Emperor] came in state to the Great Church only fourteen times a year, at least in the tenth century.”<sup>10</sup> However, a ceremonial procession to Hagia Sophia of the type outlined in the *De Ceremoniis* more than once a month seems an enormous undertaking. When combined with the religious festivals at which the Emperor went to alternative locations or remained inside the palace, the ceremonial book, far from suggesting a restricted imperial participation in the devotional life of the capital, integrates him into its festivals to an extent that, if an Emperor was to attend at every date for which his appearance is specified, would be difficult to satisfy.

---

<sup>10</sup> Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship*, 178. Mathews, *The Early Churches*, 113 makes the same point.

What is more interesting than its frequency, is the manner of the Emperor's participation in the ecclesiastical ceremonies. For, within this group, the *De Ceremoniis* describes intricate rites in which the spaces of the palace, of the Great Church and of the wider environment of Constantinople are brought together by the processional movement of the court. In them is found evidence of the fusion of religious and imperial spaces around the Middle Byzantine palace and their incorporation into performances that not only bring the Emperor into contact with the Church authorities, but in which his position at the head of the body politic is defined.

Although it should be highlighted that the court participates in ceremonies at a variety of locations within the palace and beyond, it is, above all, in his formal procession to Hagia Sophia and participation in the liturgy presided over by the Patriarch that we find the full range of ideological attitudes that underpin the ceremonies. As he made his way through the paths of the Great Palace towards the cathedral, a complex image of the Emperor was developed. On a basic level, the ceremony served to articulate the two fundamental relationships of the Middle Byzantine political structure: that between the Emperor and God and that between the Emperor and members of the court. We saw the way in which acts of religious piety by the Emperor were balanced by the reverence he was offered by his courtiers. However, more intricate layers were added to these relationships as the ritual unfolded.

In particular, the symbolism at the Emperor's emergence from the palace to be greeted by the *tagmata* and, further on, by the acclamations of the factions, was likened to the traditional ceremony of *adventus*, with its associations with military victory and royal epiphany. Thus we were presented with the manipulation of traditional imperial ceremonies to suit contemporary circumstances. Where the Empire was governed from the Great Palace at Constantinople by an essentially civil administration, the notion of military victory, which had always been part of imperial ideology, was brought into the regular urban ceremonies. Divorced from the necessity of success on the battlefield and into the arena of the court, the victory of the Emperors is made a permanent reference in

their processional outings. The dominance of the figure of Constantine I and of the cross, it was argued, as well as the presence of the standards of the troops and their arms, further served to accentuate the triumphant aspects of the ceremony. At the same time, these symbols placed the Emperor who was seen with them in a tradition of Christian government going back to the great Constantine, whilst the Roman *vela* and the Latin acclamations of the troops proclaimed his inheritance of imperial government from Rome. The procession to the church, therefore, both publicised the Emperor's humility before the heavenly sources of his authority and exalted his position, by establishing him in relation to symbols of divinely sanctioned imperial rule.

At the same time, we saw the articulation of relations within the court. Throughout, the Emperor was presented at its head and received the honour of the other participants. However, there were also aspects of the ceremony that produced a sense of identity between the court and its ruler, especially within the intimate environment of the imperial residence. As he emerges from the palace, the role of the tagmata, the court and the factions, indicates that these groups are able to represent the entire community to welcome his triumphal entrance and is the first indication that the people of Constantinople were not a major concern to the Emperors in tenth-century Byzantium. Rather, it is the court that emerges as the most important audience of the ceremonies.

Outside the church, the ceremonies provide an opportunity for members of the political administration and the Emperor's household to honour their ruler. Repeated acts of *proskynesis* and wishes for many good years articulate the subservience of the courtiers before their monarch. At the same time, both by confirming that subservience and by the rigid arrangement of its members in receptions during which they prostrate themselves before the Emperor, the court acts out an ordered structure. By regulating the conduct of the court within ceremonies that publicise the God-given nature of imperial rule, the institution is controlled and ambition restrained.

In the *Book of Ceremonies* the devotional feasts of the religious calendar are transformed into political displays in which the Emperor is hailed as God's elect and is seen in

relation to powerful symbols of imperial legitimacy. On every occasion, the messages expressed within the ceremonies are consistent and throughout there is a concern to regulate the court and bolster the authority of its head.

When the Emperor entered the church, there was a further development of his position. Although it has been argued that any temptation to view his actions in the church in terms of a priestly role should be resisted, we have seen that the Emperor's behaviour during the liturgy demonstrates his unique position amongst the laity. Participation in the little and the great entrance, his access to the holy realm of the sanctuary and the mutual *proskynesis* by which he greets and takes leave of the Patriarch all distinguish him from the congregation. At communion and the kiss of peace he is presented as an intermediary between the world of the priests and of the sanctuary and that of the nave and the court, a notion that is also evident, for example, at the Elevation of the Cross.

Nonetheless, it has also been observed that there are restrictions on his behaviour in the church, anticipated by the removal of his crown in the narthex and suggested by the material gifts with which he recognises his admittance into the holy spaces of sanctuary and church. Throughout the liturgy, an image of harmony between the Patriarch and the Emperor is maintained, a harmony that belies an inherent tension that existed between the spheres of their activity. The careful interaction of ecclesiastical and imperial authorities is especially visible during the church service, but it is a feature of every ceremony in which they come together. By structuring his compilation in such a way as to frequently integrate the ceremonies of the palace and those of Hagia Sophia, Constantine VII can be seen to promote amicable relations between the two powers, publicising the complimentary nature of their offices.

Examination of the religious ceremonies exposed a number of ways in which Middle Byzantine ritual might be used to stabilise the government and present an image of earthly authority in which each individual occupied his space in a carefully regulated manner. Turning to defining moments in the life of an Emperor, in particular his

coronation, it was seen how the understanding of imperial rule that is consolidated during the religious festivals was established.

Perhaps the most interesting ceremonies under discussion were those concerned with the conference of authority. It was in these, above all, that evidence was found for the difficulty of establishing permanent ceremonies and the need for ritual evolution to accommodate a shifting political structure. At the head of that structure stood the Emperor. We have seen that throughout the prescriptions of Constantine VII, both the religious ceremonies and those that might, hesitantly, be termed secular, the Emperor occupies the central space. In the *Book of Ceremonies* it is through his coronation at the ambo of Hagia Sophia, where he was clothed with the insignia of his office, that the Emperor took command of the Empire; this is the defining event in his assumption of power.<sup>11</sup> We have seen that the traditional bodies of the senate, army and people come together to witness the proceedings, but play no elective role in the ceremony.

Here the new Emperor is presented as God's elect, chosen to rule over His people and crowned by Him, through the intermediary of the Patriarch and, if there is one, senior Emperor. Although there is a tangible preference for a transfer of power from a senior to a junior Emperor, by stripping the ceremony down to the ritual surrounding the moment when the Patriarch and Emperor come together to invest the new ruler with the crown and the *chlamys*, the codification presents something that is close to a universally applicable rite.

On one hand, the necessity of abridging the ceremony to maintain the impression of an immutable rite reveals the impossibility of fixing the rituals, particularly in the Byzantine Empire where there was no institutionally grounded constitution or officially regulated method of appropriating the crown. Nonetheless, the coronation in the church imposed a level of clarity and finality on the inauguration that went beyond the recognition of an established fact. Here, the Emperor receives the *basileia* from God, who is invoked as the

---

<sup>11</sup> Above, 115-145.

sole source of temporal power. Significantly, no overt reference is made to the different routes by which an individual might have been brought to the cathedral.

During the ceremony, the imperial mission is sanctified and the new ruler is accepted by his subjects and reminded of his duties towards them. It was argued that this ceremony, far from limited by its concentration on the symbolic assumption of power, in fact encompassed the most powerful moment of any inauguration. In a system where the assumption of power was rarely straightforward, the events surrounding the elevation of the individual are subsumed into an overarching framework of divine participation in the political structure.

The establishment of the relationship between the Emperor and God was, of course, not new in the Middle Byzantine era. What does appear to be new is the particular concentration on the act of coronation to reveal God's choice. We have seen that the notion of imperial coronation by God was a particular development in the ideology of the Macedonians.<sup>12</sup> It is a notion that is particularly well suited to the kind of imperial government that emerged in the period, where relationships within the court might secure the throne as conclusively as birth or military victory.

If the ceremonial book of Constantine VII was to be followed by his successors it had to allow for the type of Emperor exemplified by Basil I, a product of the political system that had developed as Byzantium emerged from the dark age of the seventh and eighth centuries, where Emperors were resident in the capital and power was gained through one's conduct in relation to the reigning Emperor. It also had to accommodate the Emperor, like John Tzimiskes, who emerged from the military field. By focussing on the act of coronation, the compilers of the ceremonial book offer an inauguration ceremony that would work in all circumstances. In so doing, they demonstrate the way in which ceremonies and their symbolism – the coronation would remain the principal reference for the notion of divine election throughout an Emperors rule both in the rituals prescribed in the *De Ceremoniis* and in imperial portraiture – might enable any man who

---

<sup>2</sup> See above, 125/126.

had been brought to the ambo to be seen in the context of a universal understanding of imperial power and as a complete example of a model emperor.

Although the coronation would only be organised once the succession was decided, it would be a mistake to view the ceremony as it is featured in the *De Ceremoniis* as a symbolic adjunct to inauguration. In the world of its authors, the coronation at Hagia Sophia, performed by the combined efforts of the Patriarch and the Emperor, through whom the hand of God elected his earthly representative is the moment at which imperial power is conferred.

In the church members of the court gathered, the *tagmata* lowered their standards before their new leader and the factions acclaimed. Thus the military, political and popular aspects of inauguration are integrated into the ceremony. Returning to the palace, the private celebrations of the court were explored in the receptions at the Sigma, where the new Emperor was acclaimed as the factions danced and the court gathered for a banquet marked by further dancing. Although these rituals were judged more jovial than other occasions, it was also argued that they had a serious aspect, supporting the conclusions drawn elsewhere, by articulating familiar themes of imperial election by God for the government of His people and their joy.

Once the Emperor had been created, however, the *Book of Ceremonies* provides a number of rituals through which he might strengthen the throne, in particular through the establishment of an imperial family. Although there is no definite concept of an automatic right to the throne through blood ties, in the ceremonies surrounding the birth of a Porphyrogenitus child and in the marriage ceremony, the dynastic preoccupations of the Macedonian Emperors can be perceived. Here the notion of the imperial family, protected by God, was a central reference and it was argued that, in the absence of a formal concept of hereditary succession, such rituals could act as a useful support to the achievement of a smooth transition from one reign to the next, by promoting the legitimacy of the imperial children. In the ceremonial book, particularly in the acclamations, there is usually reference to more than one Emperor and often Augustae

and Porphyrogeniti are incorporated into the proceedings. Therefore, Constantine VII, member of the most successful dynasty of the Byzantine era, ensures that not only from his coronation as Emperor, but from his birth, a Porphyrogenitus was integrated into the rituals of the court.

Further evidence for a bolstering of the individual Emperor through his establishment of close bonds of imperial association was found in the promotions to office and dignity. In the majority of those ceremonies by which the Emperor raised members of the court below the rank of *nobilissimus*, the newly-elect was brought into direct contact with his ruler, from whom he would receive the insignia of his office, before whom he would prostrate himself and to whom would be offered acclamations. In the fragile society of the court, such ceremonies must have strengthened the system by, once again, proclaiming the Emperor, the source of all advancement, at its summit. In this way, the ceremonies both reflect the reality of the Middle Byzantine court and also reinforce its stability. In this respect, too, must be viewed the decision to organise many promotions to coincide with religious feasts, during which the Emperor would be seen in some of the most ideologically resonant actions of his ceremonial life. However, in the ceremonies for the promotion of a caesar or *nobilissimus* a different type of promotion was identified. Sharing many features of the coronation of an Augusta, these titles, which were usually conferred on members of the imperial family, appear to share in imperial honour. Like those of the Emperors and Augustae their insignia were sanctified through the prayers of the Patriarch and, like them, they receive the *proskynesis* of the court. The *De Ceremoniis* therefore, promotes a system of investiture by which an Emperor might associate colleagues, other than his co-Emperor, to share in his glory and to shield his authority.

In the imperial rites of passage and court promotions, therefore, we saw the way in which the ceremonial book sought to negate the inherent vulnerability of the Byzantine throne; both at the coronation and through the Emperor's control of promotions at the palace the *Book of Ceremonies* presents an image of unshakeable autocracy. At the same time, it develops support structures in which dynasties might be formed, though this is never fully realised in its prescriptions

Notger of Gallen, *Gesta Karoli Magni* ed. H. F. Haefele, *Monumenta Germaniae historica. Scriptores rerum germanicarum in usum scholarum ex Monumentis Germaniae historicis separatim editi* n.s. 12 (1962).

Philotheus, *Kletorologion, De Cer.*, II, Reiske, 702-791; ed. and trans. N. Oikonomidès, in his *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX<sup>e</sup> et X<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris, 1972), 65-235.

Photius, *Homilies* ed. and trans. C. Mango, *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1958).

Procopius, *Anecdota*, ed. H. Dewing (Cambridge, Mass., 1960).

Pseudo-Codinus, *De Officiis*, ed. J. Becker (Bonn, 1839).

*Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae. Propylaeum ad Acta SS Novembris*, ed. H. Delehaye (Brussels, 1902)

Theodore the Studite, *On the Holy Icons*, trans., C. P. Roth (New York, 1981).

Theophanes, *Chronographia*, trans. C. Mango and R. Scott (Oxford, 1997).

Theophanes Continuatus, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1838).

*Typikon of the Great Church*, ed. J. Mateos, *Orientalia christiana analecta*, 165-166 (Rome, 1962-3).

## Secondary works

Alexander, P. J., "The Iconoclastic Council of St Sophia (815) and its Definition," *DOP* 7 (1953), 35-60.

- *Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire* (London, 1978).

- *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople: Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 1958).

Branz, M., "Couronnement royal et autre promotions de cour," *Orientalia christiana Periodica* 56 (1990), 83-133.

Bruseven, *Constantinople de Byzance à Stamboul* (Paris, 1909).

Cardinal, J. F., *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: the origins, development and meaning of stational liturgy* (Rome, 1987).

Chadwick, H., *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium* (Oxford, 1957).

Chadwick, H., *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* (Connecticut, 1974).

Chadwick, H., "Byzantine Coronations," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 2 (1901), 359-392.

Chadwick, H., "A Dark Age Crisis: Aspects of the Iconoclastic Controversy," *EHR* 88 (1973), 1-34.

Chadwick, H., *Vision and meaning in ninth-century Byzantium: image as exegesis in the homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge, 1999).

Chadwick, H. and Herrin, J., eds., *Iconoclasm* (Birmingham, 1977).

- Burns, J. H., ed., *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1987).
- Bury, J. B., "The Ceremonial Book of Constantine Porphyrogenetos," *English Historical Review* 22 (1907), 209-227.
- "The Great Palace," *Byz.* 21 (1912), 210-225.
  - *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* (London, 1911).
- Cameron, Alan., *Circus Factions*, (Oxford, 1976).
- *Porphyrius the Charioteer* (Oxford, 1973).
- Cameron, Averil., "Images of Authority: Elites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium," *Past and Present* 84 (1979), 3-35.
- Cameron, Averil and Herrin, J., eds., *Constantinople in the Eighth Century: the Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* (Leiden, 1984).
- Cannadine, D. and Price, S. R. F., eds., *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge, 1987), 106-136.
- Charanis, P., "The Imperial Crown Modiolus and its Constitutional Significance," *Byz.* 12 (1937), 189-195.
- "The Crown Modiolus Once More," *Byz.* 13 (1938), 377-381.
- Corrigan, K., "The Ivory Sceptre of Leo VI: A Statement of Post-Iconoclastic Imperial Ideology," *Art Bulletin* 60 (1978), 407-416.
- Cross, F. L. and Livingstone, E. A., eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford, 1997).
- Cutler, A., *Transfigurations. Studies in the Dynamics of Byzantine Iconography* (Pennsylvania, 1975).
- Dagron, G., *Constantinople Imaginaire* (Paris, 1985).
- *Empereur et prêtre. Étude sur le "césaropapisme" byzantin* (Paris, 1996).
- Daremberg and Saglio, eds., *Dictionnaire des Antiquités grecques et romaines* (Paris, 1875-1917).
- Dersolt, J., *Constantinople* (Paris, 1951).
- *Le Grand Palais de Constantinople et Le Livre des Cérémonies* (Paris, 1910).
- Druslinn, W. "The Government and Administration of the Byzantine Empire," in Hussey, ed., *Cambridge Medieval History* vol. 4, part 2 (Cambridge 1967).
- Evans, H. C. and Wixom, W. D., eds., *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era* (New York, 1997).
- Geanakoplos, D. J. *Byzantium. Church, Society and Civilization Seen Through Contemporary Eyes*, (Chicago and London, 1984).
- Groag, S. *Byzantine Iconoclasm During the Reign of Leo III* (Louvain, 1973).
- *Byzantine Iconoclasm During the Reign of Constantine V* (Louvain, 1977).

- Giakalis, A., *Images of the Divine: the Theology of Icons at the Seventh Ecumenical Council* (Leiden, 1994).
- Gouillard, "Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie," *Travaux et Memoires* 2 (1967).
- Grabar, A., *L'Empereur dans l'Art Byzantin* (London, 1971).
- Grabar, A., and Manoussacas, *L'illustration du manuscrit de Skylitzès de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Madrid* (Venice, 1979).
- Gregory, T. E., "The Political Program of Constantine Porphyrogenitus," *Actes du XV<sup>e</sup> congrès international d'études byzantines* 4 (1980), 124-130.
- Grumel, V., "Le Commencement et la fin de l'année des jeux à l'Hippodrome de Constantinople," *EO* 35 (1936), 428-435.
- Guiland, R., *Études de Topographie de Constantinople Byzantine* (Berlin and Amsterdam, 1969).
- "Autour du Livre des Cérémonies, l'Augusteus, la Main d'Or et l'Onopodion," *REB* 6 (1948), 167-180.
  - "The Hippodrome at Byzantium," *Speculum* 23 (1948), 676-682.
  - "Autour du Livre des Cérémonies, le Grand Palais et les Quartiers Militaires," *BS* 18 (1957), 58-97.
  - "Études sur l'Hippodrome de Constantinople. Le Palais du Kathisma," *BS* 18 (1957), 39-76.
  - "Le Préposite." *BS* 22 (1961), 241-301.
  - *Récherches sur les institutions byzantines* 2 vols. (Berlin and Amsterdam, 1967).
  - "Les Hippodromes de Byzance: l'hippodrome de Sévère et l'hippodrome de Constantin le Grand," *BS* 31 (1970).
- Haldon, J. F., "Some Remarks on the Background to the Iconoclastic Controversy," *BS* 38 (1977).
- *Constantine Porphyrogenitus. Three Treatises on Military Expeditions* (Vienna, 1990).
  - *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* (Cambridge, 1990).
- Howard-Johnson, J. D., ed., *Byzantium and the West, c. 850-c. 1200: proceedings of the VIII Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Oxford 30 March-1 April 1984* (Amsterdam, 1988).
- Hussey, J. M., ed., *Cambridge Medieval History* vol. 4, in two parts (Cambridge, 1966-7).
- *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 1986).
- Inin, R., *Constantinople Byzantine* (Paris, 1950).
- *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantine* (Paris, 1953).
- Inkins, R., *Byzantium: the Imperial Centuries, A.D. 610-1071* (New York, 191966).
- Juvet-Lévy, C., "L'image du Pouvoir dans l'Art Byzantin à l'Époque de la Dynastie Macédonienne (867-1056)" *Byz.* 57 (1987), 445-470.

- Kantorowicz, E. H., *Laudes Regiae: a study in liturgical acclamations and medieval ruler worship* (L. A., 1946).
- Kazhdan, A. P., "On the Emergence of an Aristocracy in Byzantine Society from the Eighth to the Twelfth century," *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 11 (1968), 52-53.
- "Constantine Imaginaire.' Byzantine Legends of the Ninth century about Constantine the Great," *Byz.* 57 (1987), 196-250.
- Kazhdan and Epstein, A. W., *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley, 1985).
- Krautheimer, R., *Three Christian Capitals* (Berkeley, 1983).
- Lemerle, P., *Le Premier Humanisme Byzantin: Notes et remarques sur enseignement et culture à Byzance des origines au X<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1971).
- MacCormack, S. G., *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (California, 1981).
- Magdalino, P., *New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Cambridge, 1994).
- "Basil I, Leo VI, and the Feast of the Prophet Elijah," *JÖB* 38 (1988), 193-196.
  - "The Bath of Leo the Wise," *DOP* 42 (1988), 97-118.
- Maguire, H., "The Mosaics of the Nea Moni: An Imperial Reading," *DOP* 46 (1992), 205-214.
- ed., *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* (Washington, D. C., 1997).
- Majeska, G. *Russian Travellers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington, D. C., 1984).
- Mango, C., *The Brazen House: A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* (Copenhagen, 1959).
- *Byzantium, the Empire of New Rome* (London, 1980).
  - *Le développement urbain de Constantinople* (Paris, 1985).
  - *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312-1453* (Toronto, 1986).
  - *Studies on Constantinople* (1993).
- Mango, C. and Dagron, G., eds., *Constantinople and its Hinterland* (Aldershot, 1995).
- Mango, C. and Ševčenko, I. "A New Manuscript of the *De Ceremoniis*," *DOP* 14 (1960), 247-249.
- Martin, J., *A History of the Iconoclastic Controversy* (London, 1930).
- Matthews, T. F., *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (USA, 1971)
- McCormick, M., "Analyzing Imperial Ceremonies," *JÖB* 35 (1985), 1-20.
- *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (Paris, 1990).

- Mondzain-Baudinet, M-J. *Nicéphore, Discours Contre les Iconoclastes* (Paris, 1989).
- Nelson, J., "Symbols in Context," in Derek Baker ed., *Studies in Church History* 13 (1976), 97-119.
- Oikonomides, N., *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX<sup>e</sup> et X<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris, 1972).
- Ostrogorsky, G., *A History of the Byzantine State*, trans. J. Hussey (Oxford, 1968).
- Rambaud, A., *L'empire grec au dixième siècle. Constantin Porphyrogénète* (Paris, 1870).
- *Études sur l'histoire byzantine* (Paris, 1912).
- Sahas, D. J., *Icon and Logos: sources in Eighth-Century Iconoclasm* (Toronto, 1988).
- Schreiner, ed., "Hochzeit und Krönung Kaiser Manuels II. Im Jahre 1392," *BZ* 60 (1967), 76-79.
- Ševčenko, I., "Constantinople Viewed from the Eastern Provinces in the Middle Byzantine Period," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* III/IV (1979-1980), 712-747.
- Sheppard, J. and Franklin, S. ed., *Byzantine Diplomacy: papers from the 24<sup>th</sup> Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (Cambridge, 1990).
- Speck, P., "Die," *JÖB* 15 (1966), 323-375.
- Taft, R. F., *The Great Entrance: A History of the Transfer of Gifts and other Preanaphoral Rites of the Liturgy of John Chrysostom* (Rome, 1975).
- *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History* (Collegeville, MN., 1992).
- Troynbee, A., *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World* (Oxford, 1973).
- Creedgold, W., "The Revival of Byzantine Learning," *AHR* 81 (1979), 1245-1266.
- *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (California, 1997).
- Zogt, A., "L'Hippodrome de Constantinople," *Byz.* 10 (1935), 471-488.
- "L'Hippodrome Couvert," *EO* 37 (1938), 23-35.
- "Notes de topographie byzantine," *EO* 39 (1940), 78-90.
- Vryonis, "Byzantium: the Social Basis of Decline in the Eleventh Century," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 2 (1959) 161-170.
- Walter, C., *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church* (London, 1982).
- Wood, D., ed., "The Church and the Arts," *Studies in Church History* 28 (Oxford, 1992).
- Manopoulos, P., "Le Couronnement de L'Empereur à Byzance: Rituel et Fond Institutionnel" *Byz.* 61 (1991), 73-89.
- "Histoire et légende chez Constantine VII," *Byz.* 58 (1987).

TABLE 1

List of religious ceremonies as they appear in the Leipzig manuscript

Ch. 1	Procession to Hagia Sophia
Ch. 2	Acclamations for Christmas
Ch. 3	Acclamations for Epiphany
Ch. 4	Acclamations for Easter
Ch. 5	Acclamations for Easter Monday
Ch. 6	Acclamations for the Sunday after Easter
Ch. 7	Acclamations for Mesopentecost
Ch. 8	Acclamations for Ascension
Ch. 9	Acclamations for Pentecost
Ch. (10)	Ceremony for Easter Monday
Ch. 20 (11)	Ceremony for the Tuesday after Easter
Ch. 21 (12)	Ceremony for the Wednesday after Easter
Ch. 22 (13)	Ceremony for the invitation of the patriarch
Ch. 23 (14)	Ceremony for the Thursday after Easter
Ch. 24 (15)	Ceremony for the Friday after Easter
Ch. 25 (16)	Ceremony for the Sunday after Easter
Ch. 26 (17)	Ceremony for the Wednesday of Mesopentecost
Ch. 27 (18)	Ceremony for Ascension
Ch. 28 (19)	Ceremony for the Feast of St. Elijah
Ch. 29 (20)	Ceremony for the dedication of the New Church
Ch. 30 (21)	Ceremony for the Feast of St. Demetrius
Ch. 31 (22)	Ceremony for the Exaltation of the Cross
Ch. 32 (23)	Ceremony for Christmas
Ch. 33 (24)	Ceremony for the Feast of St. Basil
Ch. 34 (25)	Ceremony for the Vigil of Epiphany
Ch. 35 (26)	Ceremony for Epiphany
Ch. 36 (27)	Ceremony for Purification
Ch. 37 (28)	Ceremony for the Feast of Orthodoxy
Ch. 38 (29)	Ceremony for the Sunday of the first week of Lent
Ch. 39 (30)	Ceremony for the Annunciation (if it falls on the Sunday of the first week of Lent)
Ch. 40 (31)	Ceremony for the Vigil of Palm Sunday
Ch. 41 (32)	Ceremony for Palm Sunday
Ch. 42 (33)	Ceremony for Holy Thursday
Ch. 43 (34)	Ceremony for Good Friday
Ch. 44 (35)	Ceremony for Holy Saturday
Ch. 45 (36)	Ceremony for the Feast of the Union of the Church
Ch. 46 (37)	Imperial costume

TABLE 2

List of religious ceremonies with a development of Vogt's proposed rearrangement

Ch. 1 fol. 22 <sup>v</sup> -28 <sup>v</sup>	Procession to Hagia Sophia
Ch. 1 fol. 29 <sup>v</sup> -32 <sup>v</sup>	Ceremony for the Nativity of the Theotokos (8 Sept)
Ch. 31 (22)	Ceremony for the Exaltation of the Cross (14 Sept)
Ch. 30 (21)	Ceremony for the Feast of St. Demetrius (26 Oct)
Ch. 32 (23)	Ceremony for Christmas
Ch. 2	Acclamations for Christmas
Ch. 33 (24)	Ceremony for the Feast of St Basil (1 Jan)
Ch. 34 (25)	Ceremony for the Vigil of Epiphany
Ch. 35 (26)	Ceremony for Epiphany
Ch. 3	Acclamations for Epiphany
Ch. 36 (27)	Ceremony for Purification
Ch. 37 (28)	Ceremony for the Feast of Orthodoxy
Ch. 38 (29)	Ceremony for the Sunday of the first week of Lent
Ch. 1 fol. 32 <sup>v</sup> -33 <sup>r</sup> Ch. 39 (30)	Ceremony for the Annunciation Ceremony for the Annunciation (if it falls on the Sunday of the first week in Lent)
Ch. 40 (31)	Ceremony for the Vigil of Palm Sunday
Ch. 41 (32)	Ceremony for Palm Sunday
Ch. 42 (33)	Ceremony for Holy Thursday
Ch. 43 (34)	Ceremony for Good Friday
Ch. 44 (35)	Ceremony for Holy Saturday
Ch. 9 fol. 42 <sup>r</sup> -45 <sup>v</sup> Ch. 1 fol. 28 <sup>v</sup> -29 <sup>v</sup>	Ceremony for Easter
Ch. 4	Acclamations for Easter
Ch. (10)	Ceremony for Easter Monday
Ch. 5	Acclamations for Easter Monday
Ch. 20 (11)	Ceremony for the Tuesday after Easter
Ch. 21 (12)	Ceremony for the Wednesday after Easter
Ch. 23 (14)	Ceremony for the Thursday after Easter
Ch. 24 (15)	Ceremony for the Friday after Easter
Ch. 25 (16)	Ceremony for the Sunday after Easter
Ch. 6	Acclamations for the Sunday after Easter
Ch. 26 (17)	Ceremony for the Wednesday of Mesopentecost
Ch. 7	Acclamations for Mesopentecost
Ch. 27 (18)	Ceremony for Ascension
Ch. 8	Acclamations for Ascension
Ch. 9 fol. 41 <sup>r</sup> -42 <sup>r</sup>	Acclamations for Pentecost
Ch. 29 (20)	Ceremony for the dedication of the New Church (1 May)
Ch. 45 (36)	Ceremony for the Feast of the Union of the Church (between 6 and 12 July)
Ch. 28 (19)	Ceremony for the Feast of St. Elijah (20 July)
Ch. 22 (13)	The invitation of the patriarch
Ch. 46 (37)	Imperial costume

TABLE 3

The locations of the religious ceremonies

**A. Hagia Sophia:**

Exaltation of the Cross	Ch. 31 (22)
Christmas	Ch. 32 (23); Ch. 2
Epiphany	Ch. 35 (26); Ch. 3
Feast of Orthodoxy	Ch. 37 (28)
Annunciation	Ch. 1 fol. 32 <sup>v</sup> -33 <sup>r</sup>
Holy Saturday <sup>†</sup>	Ch. 44 (35)
Easter Sunday	Ch. 9 fol. 42 <sup>r</sup> -45 <sup>v</sup> ; Ch. 1 fol. 28 <sup>v</sup> -29 <sup>v</sup> ; Ch. 4
Sunday after Easter	Ch. 25 (16)
Pentecost	Ch. 9 fol. 41 <sup>r</sup> -42 <sup>r</sup>
Transfiguration*	Ch. 1 fol. 28 <sup>v</sup>

**B. Other Stations in the Capital:**

Nativity of the Theotokos	Ch. 1 fol. 29 <sup>v</sup> -32 <sup>v</sup>
Purification	Ch. 36 (27)
Annunciation (if it falls on the Sunday of the first week of Lent)	Ch. 39 (30)
Holy Thursday	Ch. 42 (33)
Good Friday	Ch. 43 (34)
Easter Monday	Ch. (10); Ch. 5
Tuesday after Easter	Ch. 20 (11)
Sunday after Easter	Ch. 6
Mesopentecost	Ch. 26 (17); Ch. 7
Ascension	Ch. 27 (18); Ch. 8
Feast of the Union of the Church	Ch. 45 (36)

**C. Inside the Palace:**

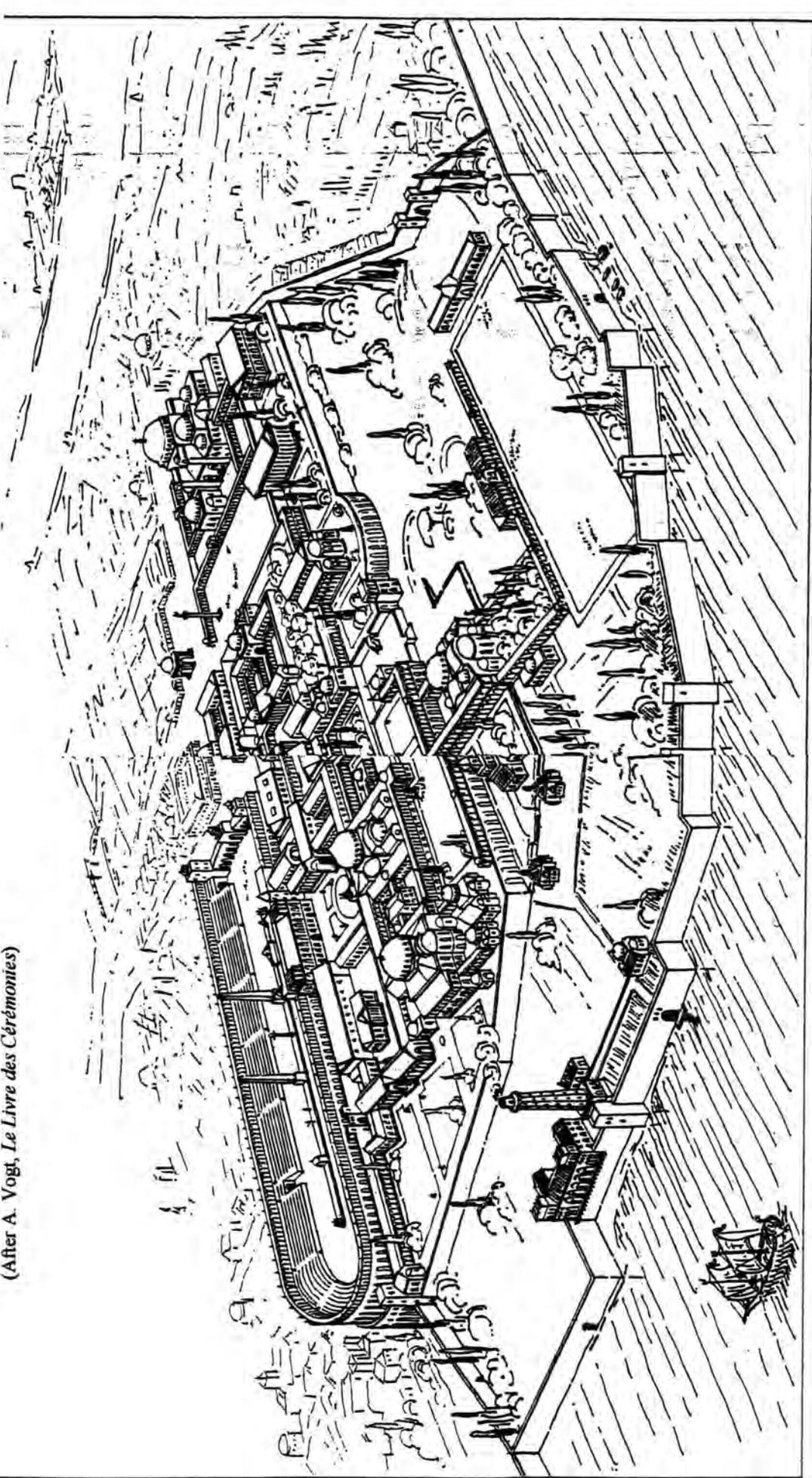
Feast of St. Demetrius	Ch. 30 (21)
Feast of St. Basil	Ch. 33 (24)
Sunday of the first week in Lent	Ch. 38 (29)
Palm Sunday	Ch. 41 (32)
Wednesday after Easter	Ch. 21 (12)
Thursday after Easter	Ch. 23 (14)
Friday after Easter	Ch. 24 (15)
Saturday after Easter*	Ch. 24 (15)
Dedication of the New Church	Ch. 29 (20)
Feast of St. Elijah	Ch. 28 (19)

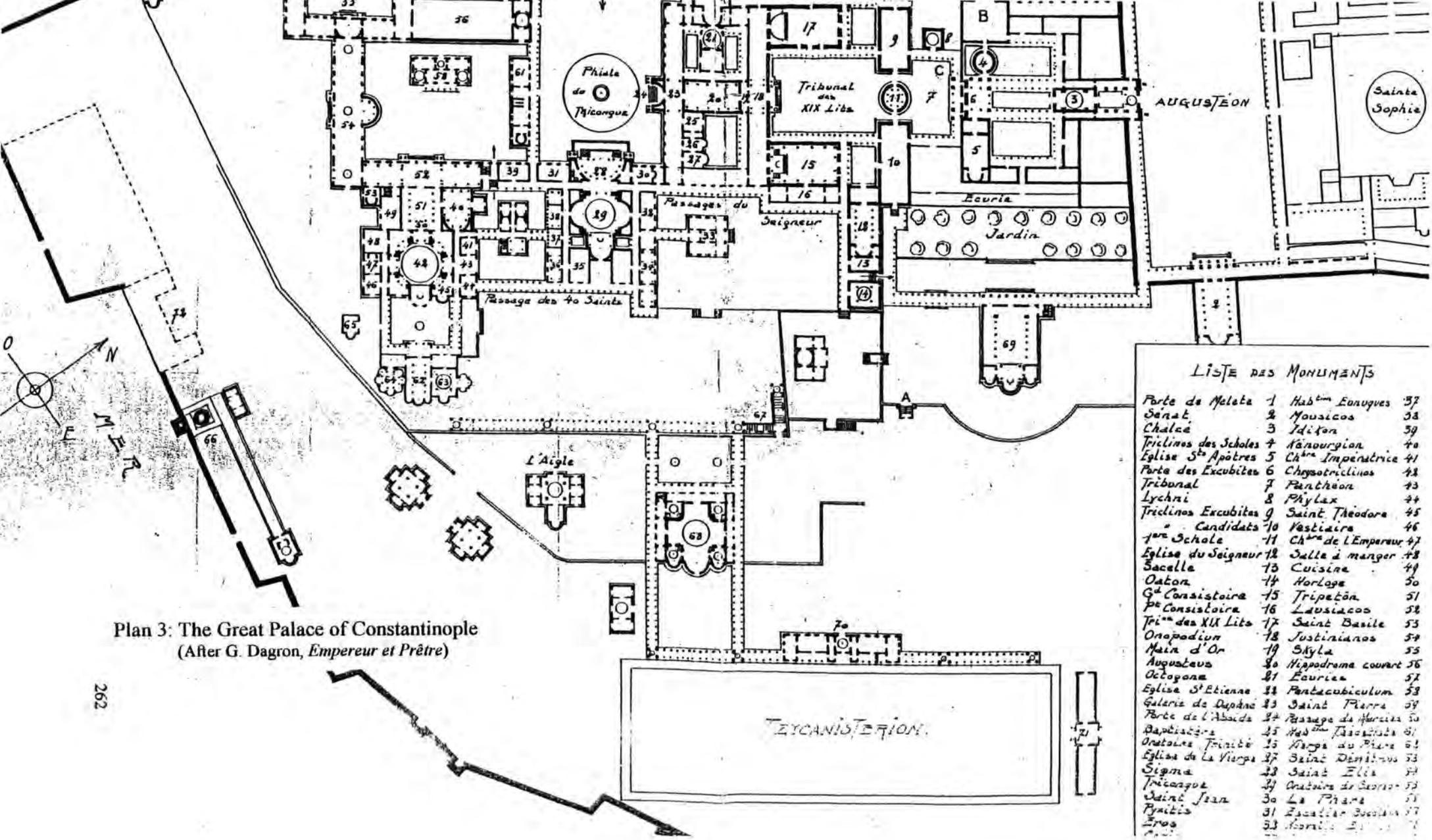
Although the ceremony for Holy Saturday involves the Emperor's participation at the Church of the Theotokos at Pharos in the evening, since the main event of the day is the procession to and from Hagia Sophia for the liturgy, it has been placed in the group of ceremonies that took place at the cathedral.

The *Book of Ceremonies* does not give the ceremonies for the Transfiguration or the Saturday after Easter. However, each is referred to in the text and its location given, demonstrating that the imperial court attended the liturgy on both dates. The place of reference is given in the right-hand column.



(After A. Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies*)

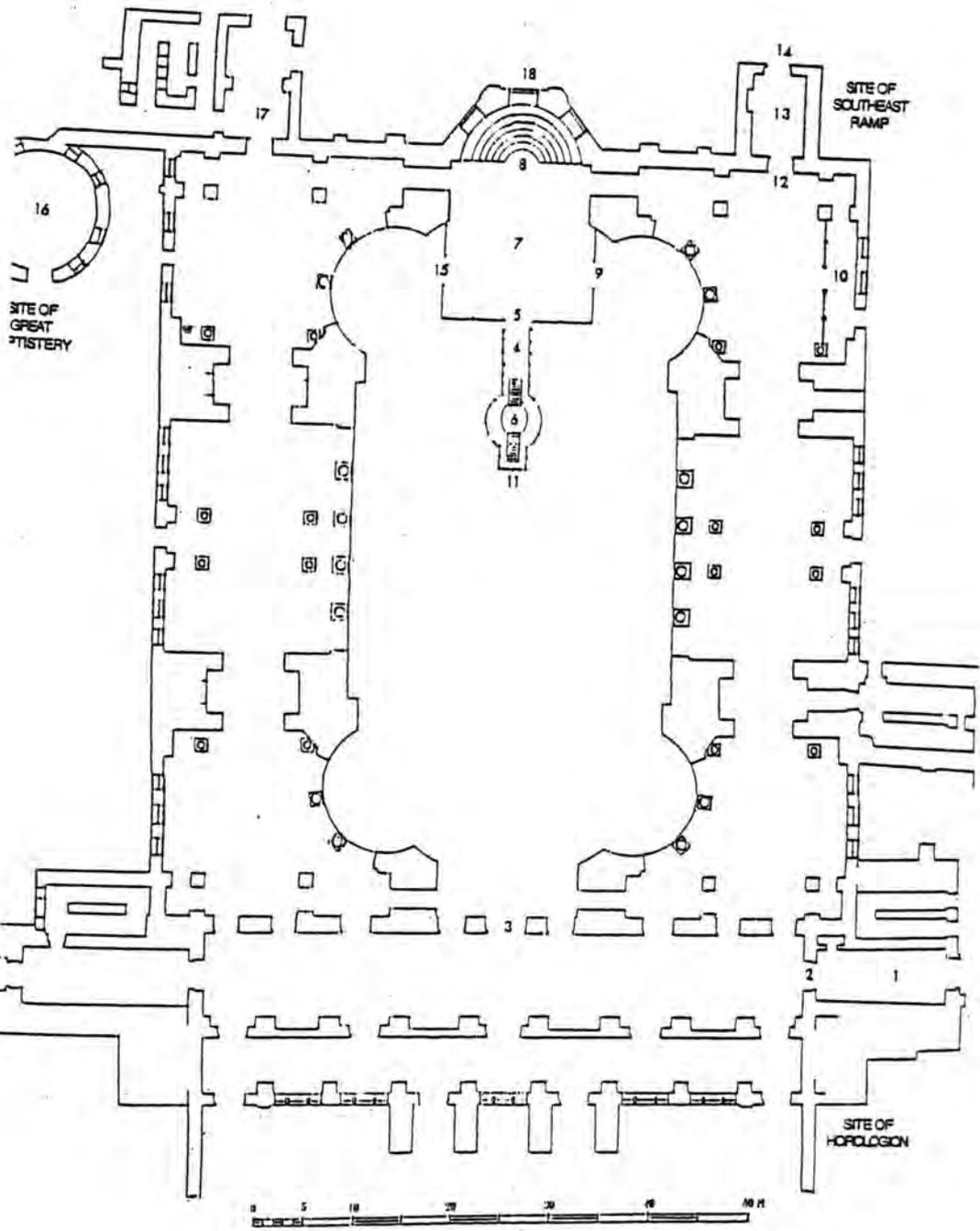




LISTE DES MONUMENTS

Porte de Melate	1	Hab <sup>tm</sup> Eunouges	37
Sénat	2	Mousicos	38
Chalce	3	Idéion	39
Triclinos des Scholes	4	Kanourgion	40
Eglise 5 <sup>ts</sup> Apôtres	5	Ch <sup>me</sup> Impératrice	41
Porte des Excubites	6	Chrysotriclinos	42
Tribunal	7	Pentéon	43
Lychni	8	Phylax	44
Triclinos Excubites	9	Saint Theodora	45
" Candidats	10	Vestiaire	46
1 <sup>re</sup> Ecole	11	Ch <sup>me</sup> de L'Empereur	47
Eglise du Seigneur	12	Salle à manger	48
Sacelle	13	Cuisine	49
Orator	14	Horloge	50
2 <sup>e</sup> Consistoire	15	Tripétion	51
3 <sup>e</sup> Consistoire	16	Lausiacos	52
Tri <sup>um</sup> des XIX Libs	17	Saint Basile	53
Onopodion	18	Justinianos	54
Main d'Or	19	Skyla	55
Augusteion	20	Hippodrome couvert	56
Octogone	21	Ecuries	57
Eglise S <sup>t</sup> Etienne	22	Pentacubiculum	58
Galerie de Daphné	23	Saint Pierre	59
Porte de l'Abade	24	Passage de Marcia	60
Baptistère	25	Hab <sup>tm</sup> Anastasie	61
Oratoire Trinité	26	Marq <sup>e</sup> du Pape	62
Eglise de La Vierge	27	Saint Demétrios	63
Sigma	28	Saint Elie	64
Triclinos	29	Oratoire de Socrate	65
Saint Jean	30	La Phare	66
Pythios	31	Escalier Sacellus	67
Tros	32	Horloge	68

Plan 3: The Great Palace of Constantinople  
(After G. Dagron, *Empereur et Prêtre*)



Hagia Sophia in Constantinople  
 Majeska, "The Emperor in His Church")