THE BYZANTINE REVIEW

ByzRev 08.2026.033
doi: 10.17879/byzrev-2026-9702

ALFREDO CALAHORRA BARTOLOMÉ, The Great Palace (Cambridge Elements in the History of Constantinople). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2026. 100 pp. – ISBN 978-1-009-67552-9 (hardback), 978-1-009-67548-2 (paperback)

• JONATHAN BARDILL, Nottingham

With the publication of an English translation of the Book of Ceremonies[1] and the more recent appearance of a new edition of the Greek text with French translation and commentary,[2] it was inevitable that interest in the topography of the Great Palace in Constantinople would increase. The first indication of this was a contribution by NIGEL WESTBROOK.[3] We now have a short book by ALFREDO CALAHORRA BARTOLOMÉ, which is the subject of this review. It is the fifth instalment in the series *Cambridge Elements in the History of Constantinople* and condenses the results of the author's doctoral research, yet to be published in full.[4]

In the tradition of JULES LABARTE and JEAN EBERSOLT,[5] the author presents a room-by-room topographical discussion of the palace. He has also provided two detailed maps, the first showing only the surviving structures (plan 1), the second showing the same with his hypothetical reconstruction of the palace superimposed and a key to the numerous buildings that are on it (plan 2). It would have aided the reader's understanding had the author included in his text references to the numbered buildings that appear on his plans, although referencing is complicated by the fact that

1. ANN MOFFATT – MAXEME TALL (tr.), Constantine Porphyrogennetos, The Book of Ceremonies; with the Greek Edition of the Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae (Bonn 1829), 2 vols. (Byzantina Australiensia 18). Canberra 2012.

2. GILBERT DAGRON – BERNARD FLUSIN – et al. (eds.), Constantin VII Porphyrogénète. Le Livre des cérémonies. 5 vols. in 6 parts (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 52). Paris 2020. When citing this edition, I have used the page numbers in REISKE's now superseded Bonn edition, which are given in the margin, preceded by the letter B.

3. NIGEL WESTBROOK, The Great Palace in Constantinople: An Architectural Interpretation (Architectural Crossroads 2). Turnhout 2020.

4. ALFREDO CALAHORRA BARTOLOMÉ, Keleusate: arquitectura, arte y ceremonia en la gran palacio de Constantinopla. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Universidad Complutense de Madrid 2023.

5. JULES LABARTE, Le Palais impérial de Constantinople. Paris 1881 ; JEAN EBERSOLT, Le Grand palais de Constantinople et le Livre des cérémonies. Paris 1910.

each plan has a unique numbering system (thus, for example, the Chalke Gate is no. 11 on plan 1, but no. 30 on plan 2). Throughout this review, I give the numbers on plan 2.

Some of the surviving archaeological remains are identified by the author. Most of these identifications are based only on the fact that a structure happens to survive roughly where the Book of Ceremonies or other texts locate a particular building; consequently, they are possibilities rather than certainties. We may mention: a wall in the east flank of the hippodrome, which the author takes to mark the north flank of the Kathisma (p. 12; no. 12); excavations east of Hagia Sophia, which the author, following Çiğdem Girgin, associates with the Chalke Gate (no. 30); the surviving ramp tower, identified as St. Christina's staircase (no. 53); a nearby apse associated with the Triklinos of the Ovaton (no. 51); a spolia ensemble above the Boukoleon harbour, which the author considers to be the Porphyra (no. 100); the substructure of the Kapı Ağası mosque, identified with St. Demetrius (no. 104); structures in Amiral Tafdil Sokağı, which are decorated with a fresco of the Virgin, and which the author associates with the Hodegetria shrine (no. 120).

Calahorra Bartolomé devotes more detailed attention to the excavated Peristyle, the Paved Way that runs through it, and the adjacent Apsed Hall. That he concentrates so heavily on these structures (pp. 32–52), which were excavated by the Walker Trust of the University of St. Andrews in 1935–1938 and 1952–1954, is hardly surprising given their archaeological importance, which is greatly enhanced by the excellent state of preservation of the Peristyle's mosaic pavement. The Peristyle (no. 58), it is argued, should be associated with the Anticonsistorium (its designation at an early date) and the Onopodion (its name at a later date). The Apsed Hall (no. 59) is identified as the Consistorium, which is known to have existed as early as 467, when Leo I received the envoy of the newly crowned western emperor Anthemius there.[6] Should these identifications prove acceptable, the author would have made a significant contribution to our limited knowledge of palatial topography. Should they be wrong, the author's arrangement of buildings in the upper palace would require reformulation.

There are difficulties with the proposals.

Given the complexity of this topographical puzzle, there is a danger that a scholar of the Palace, excited at having devised a new solution, will disregard the evidence that does not fit. One indication of this may be the keen-

6. De Cer. B395.

ness the author shows for dating these structures to the reign of Justinian. This is apparently because Justinian is known to have relocated senatorial sessions to the Great Palace,[7] at which time, the author suggests, the emperor may have renovated the Consistorium by adding the Peristyle (pp. 46–47). Furthermore, the Anticonsistorium is mentioned in a chapter of the Book of Ceremonies that was written by Peter the Patrician in the sixth century (p. 42).[8] If the Peristyle were to be of a later date, the proposed identification would not be acceptable.

The date of the latest pottery in the earth dumped below the mosaic is currently believed to be ca. 500.[9] The author refers to older literature in which the terminal date for the pottery was estimated as 540 at the latest, and he infers that the mosaic can have been laid no later than that (pp. 36, 38, 46). However, the terminal date of the pottery in the dump provides only a *terminus post quem* for what lies over it, not necessarily an accurate date. Because the dumped material was brought from elsewhere, the latest material in it could be considerably earlier than the date it was dumped. Furthermore, above this dump, but below the figural mosaic, were found meagre remains of a black-and-white mosaic floor.[10] Consequently, we have two floors, both dating after 500. How long after 500 we do not know. We also do not know how much time passed between the laying of the first floor and the laying of the second. We may have a better idea when the long-delayed final report on the Austrian excavations of 1983–1997 is published, for pottery was also discovered in the 'Isolierschicht' immediately below the bedding for the figural mosaic. This pottery will, however, only provide a *terminus post quem* for the figural mosaic.

In an attempt to improve our dating of the structures, we may turn to construction techniques and brickstamps. A cistern was cut through when the

7. Lydus, De Magistratibus 2.9, ed. and trans. ANASTASIUS C. BANDY, Ioannes Lydus: On Powers or The Magistracies of the Roman State. Philadelphia 1983, pp. 96–97.

8. De Cer. B404, B407.

9. The author gives a terminal date of 475 on p. 34. For the terminal date of 500, see JONATHAN BARDILL – JOHN W. HAYES, Excavations Beneath the Peristyle Mosaic in the Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors: The Pottery from Site D, 1936. Cahiers archéologiques 50 (2002) pp. 27–40.

10. WERNER JOBST – HERMANN VETTERS (eds.), Mosaikenforschung im Kaiserpalast von Konstantinopel. Vorbericht über das Forschungs- und Restaurierungsprojekt am Palastmosaik in den Jahren 1983–1988 (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse: Denkschriften 228). Vienna 1992, pp. 33, 40–41, 42.

foundation of the south-west outer wall of the Peristyle was dug. I have observed elsewhere that the small sizes of the bricks discovered in the walls of the cistern may indicate that it was built in the post-Justinianic period. As a consequence, I proposed dating the Peristyle, too, later than Justinian. The author rejects this interpretation, pointing out that different brick sizes are known to have been used in a single period, and that the brickstamps in the walls of the cistern carry a name that is known on stamps firmly dated to the Justinianic period (pp. 38–39). This is true, but it overlooks the bigger picture. The two types of brickstamp found in the cistern have not yet been found elsewhere. They are absent, for example, among the large numbers of brickstamps recorded at St Polyeuktos, Hagia Sophia, and the Baths of Zeuxippos. This fact, taken together with the small size of the bricks, should cause us to hesitate before pronouncing that the cistern was built in the early or mid-sixth century.[11] That said, even if examples of these stamps were to be found in early or mid-sixth-century contexts, the Peristyle would be of a later date.[12]

The evidence from the substructures below the Apsed Hall and its vestibule is a little clearer. Here, the earliest structural phase is represented by two piers (Ia and Ib). The part of pier Ib that was exposed was of pure brickwork. Much more of Pier Ia was revealed, and here the pure brickwork was penetrated by an occasional course of greenstone. This technique is typical of early sixth-century structures, such as St. Polyeuktos, Hagia Sophia, Sts. Sergius and Bacchus, and the Baths of Zeuxippos. Furthermore, the average size of the bricks in the piers (reportedly 380 mm^2) is consistent with bricks of such early sixth-century buildings.[13] The excavators detected several construction phases after the building of these piers, phase II involving a raising of the floor-level by about 2 m, and phase V being the construction, using large stone blocks, of the Apsed Hall in its final form. Although it is difficult to determine how much time separated these construction phases, both phases II and V clearly represent major changes

11. For what it is worth, it may be noted that RICHARD KRAUTHEIMER was of the opinion that the three capitals from the cistern might be as late as 600: see DAVID TALBOT RICE (ed.), The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors: Second Report. Edinburgh 1958, p. 16.

12. The author claims that the cistern was built between 518 and the 540s (p. 39) and that the Peristyle was built in the 530s–550s (p. 47), which raises the question of why the cistern was destroyed so soon after its creation.

13. JONATHAN BARDILL, Brickstamps of Constantinople. Oxford 2004, vol. 1, p. 105 (where sixth-century bricks are shown to have lengths in the region of 351–387 mm).

to the structure. It therefore seems highly likely that the Apsed Hall of phase V was a post-Justinianic structure.

The author, however, prefers to imagine that Piers Ia and Ib date to the later fifth century,[14] which allows him to propose a date for the Apsed Hall (phase V) in the mid-sixth century. Such a date for the Apsed Hall is not, in my opinion, convincing. In successive phases of the structures below the Apsed Hall, the average size of brick diminished, and in the latest phase, phase V, the bricks measured on average 330–350 mm^2. Bricks of this average size were recorded in several locations: the south-west pier of the Triple Arch; the superstructure walls of the Hall; the substructures of the antechamber; and the substructure piers in front of the apse.[15] The consistency of the brick dimensions in these locations is striking and significantly different from the average size of the bricks in piers Ia and Ib. Bricks of these smaller dimensions are not typical of early or mid-sixth-century structures. They seem to have become common later in the century, certainly by the reign of Maurice and possibly as early as Justin II.[16]

Turning back to the Peristyle, bricks of similarly small dimensions were recorded in the walls of the Peristyle itself and in a conduit running below the mosaic in the north-west portico.[17] This would tend to support dating the Peristyle to the same period as phase V of the Apsed Hall, as the excavators suggested on structural grounds.[18] However, certainty eludes us.

For these reasons, I have argued that the Peristyle, figural mosaic, and Apsed Hall are likely to belong in the late sixth century. Calahorra Bartolomé, however, is not persuaded by the evidence of the small sizes of the bricks in phase V and attempts instead to use brickstamps to argue for a Justinianic date for the Apsed Hall and Peristyle (pp. 39–40). It is not surprising that we have many early and mid-sixth-century stamped bricks among those recorded by the excavators, but determining what this tells us is highly problematic because of the number of structural phases evident

14. This is implied on p. 40 ('in the fifth century there was already a significant complex standing in the location of the peristyle, judging by the Paved Way and the infrastructures [read: 'substructures'] of the Apsed Hall'). See also Calahorra Bartolomé, Keleusate, pp. 320–321.

15. Bardill, Brickstamps, vol. 1, pp. 143–144.

16. Bardill, Brickstamps, vol. 1, pp. 48, 106 (where bricks of the reign of Maurice are shown to have lengths of 314–350 mm, with a mean of 344 mm).

17. Bardill, Brickstamps, vol. 1, p. 141.

18. Talbot Rice (ed.), Great Palace: Second Report, p. 50.

on the site, because the majority of stamped bricks were found loose and cannot easily be associated with one phase or another, and because of the increasing frequency with which brick was reused in later periods.

To formulate our interpretations, we are, of course, reliant on the information presented in the published reports and preserved in excavation records, which is suggestive but not adequate to reach firm conclusions. Consequently, the chronological problems under discussion are only likely to be clarified by further archaeological investigation. Until then, no doubt, the uncertainty will continue to provide scholars with an opportunity to advance a variety of solutions, some of which will be more convincing than others.

Turning to topography, a crucial fact is that the Peristyle and Apsed Hall stand at the south-east corner of the Palace's upper terrace, which marks the boundary between the upper palace and the later lower palace. The author claims that this was the case with the Consistorium (p. 44(c)). But this is not a conclusion that can be drawn with certainty from the Book of Ceremonies, as is evident from the fact that I have previously argued that the Augusteus stood in the same position.[19] What does not emerge clearly from this short book is the difficulty of dealing with the information provided by the Book of Ceremonies: the orientations of the rooms, their sizes and, crucially, the distances between them, are rarely provided; events are described in ways that allow different readers to visualize the proceedings in different ways; and sometimes there are textual problems.[20] The nature of the Book of Ceremonies therefore allows the student of the palace a great deal of latitude when placing the various rooms on the map. For this reason, in an article in which I reflected on the problems of palatial topography, I decided to produce only a schematic plan of the Palace, showing the relationships between the rooms, rather than draw a map.[21]

The Book of Ceremonies indicates that, on leaving the Consistorium, it was

19. JONATHAN BARDILL, The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors and the Walker Trust Excavations. Journal of Roman Archaeology 12 (1999) pp. 217–230. Further reflections: JONATHAN BARDILL, Visualizing the Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors at Constantinople: Archaeology, Text, and Topography. In: FRANZ ALTO BAUER (ed.), Visualisierungen von Herrschaft: Frühmittelalterliche Residenzen – Gestalt und Zeremoniell (Byzas 5). Istanbul 2006, pp. 5–45.

20. The limitations of the text are noted in a single sentence but not explained (p. 6).

21. BARDILL, Visualizing, fig. 1. I prepared a version of this plan at the request of GILBERT DAGRON for publication in his edition of the Book of Ceremonies, but it was not included after his death.

possible to proceed through the Onopodion and the Golden Hand to the Augusteus,[22] and then obtain the lower palace by following one of three routes: through the Apsis and the Eidikon;[23] through the Apsis, Triconch, and Monothyros;[24] or through the Apsis, Covered Hippodrome, and Skyla Gate.[25] To place the Consistorium at the southern limit of the upper palace, the author is obliged to place the Onopodion (no. 58), Augusteus (no. 5), Apsis (no. 64), and Triconch (no. 62) to the north-west of the Consistorium. But it is just as likely that they were to the south – especially since they were all encountered on itineraries leading towards the lower palace. If that were the case, the Consistorium would have been further north than the author imagines, and therefore not identical with the Apsed Hall.

Calahorra Bartolomé has room to accommodate the Apsis, Sigma, and Triconch (nos. 62–64) to the north-west of the Peristyle because he has aligned the Covered Hippodome (no. 67) on a north–south axis. This arrangement has also made it possible to fit the Justinianos (no. 80) on the upper terrace (p. 55). The author has argued the case for this alignment of the Covered Hippodrome in another publication, citing comparanda at Sirmium and Milan.[26] It remains unclear how to reconcile this arrangement with the fact that, when Theophilus entered the Palace using the gate under the Kathisma, he 'went down through the Daphne to the Covered Hippodrome below'.[27] The author is of the opinion that the Daphne mentioned here was the Stama in front of the Kathisma rather than the Palace of Daphne behind it;[28] but if that is the case, one wonders why the emperor is said to descend while passing through it.[29] Also, it is uncertain that the gate beneath the Kathisma opened directly into the flank of the Covered Hippodrome, rather than into some part of the Daphne Palace, because the Kathisma (no. 12), which is placed opposite the Masonry Obelisk (no. 122)

22. De Cer. B9-10, B72–73, B97–98, B127–128, B162–163, B142, B181, B265.

23. De Cer. B174–175, B263.

24. De Cer. B180, B304, B347–348.

25. De Cer. B584, B588.

26. Alfredo Calahorra Bartolomé, On the Toponymics of the Great Palace of Constantinople: the Daphne. Byzantinische Zeitschrift 115 (2022) pp. 1–46, at p. 45.

27. John Haldon (ed.), Constantine Porphyrogenitus: Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 28). Vienna 1990, text C, 870–873.

28. Calahorra Bartolomé, On the Toponymics, pp. 29–45.

29. Alternatively, one might suggest that, having entered by the gate below the Kathisma, the emperor descended using ramps in the Palace of Daphne to reach the Covered Hippodrome.

on the author's plan, was in fact further north, possibly opposite the Serpent Column (no. 123).[30]

To test the author's proposed identifications for the Peristyle and Apsed Hall, we may note some significant features of the Onopodion and Consistorium.

The Consistorium possessed three ivory doors. These opened onto the Makrōn of the Candidati.[31] The term *makrōn* would suggest a long corridor or narrow room.[32] It was in the Makrōn of the Candidati that dignitaries waited before being admitted to the Consistorium, and the escort of honour awaited newly appointed dignitaries leaving the Consistorium. Through the Makrōn, one could reach the Scholae and Excubita.[33]

Adjacent to the Consistorium was the Onopodion. Coming from the Onopodion, there were three doors (a right-hand door, central door, and left-hand door) that opened onto stairs leading down directly into the Consistorium.[34]

The emperor is known to have gone from the Excubita, through the central

30. As implied by De Cer. B366 and Heron of Alexandria, Geodesia 5, ed. DENIS F. SULLIVAN, Siegecraft: Two Tenth-Century Instructional Manuals by 'Heron of Byzantium' (Dumbarton Oaks Studies 36). Washington DC 2000, pp. 120–123 with diagram 2; GILBERT DAGRON et al., L'organisation et le déroulement des courses d'après le Livre des Cérémonies. Travaux et Mémoires 13 (2000) pp. 1–200, at p. 119; JONATHAN BARDILL, The Architecture and Archaeology of the Hippodrome in Constantinople. In: BRIGITTE PITARAKIS (ed.), Hippodrom/Atmeydanı: A Stage for Istanbul's History. Istanbul 2010, vol. 1, pp. 140–141.

31. This is clear from the words: ἔξωθεν τῶν ἐλεφαντίνων πυλῶν εἰς τὸν μάκρωνα τῶν Κανδιδάτων (De Cer. B234 = ed. DAGRON 1.55.61–62). This may suggest that an emendation is required earlier in the chapter, where ed. DAGRON 1.55.48–50 proposes suppressing καί (DAGRON [ed.], Livre des cérémonies, vol. 2, p. 74 n. 12). However, MOFFATT and TALL understand an epexegetical καί and translate: 'the three ivory doors of the Consistory are closed, namely, those which go out to the Long Gallery [*makrōn*] of the Kandidatoi, and curtains hang at the three doors'. The three ivory doors are therefore not distinct from the doors opening to the Makrōn of the Candidati (whereas the contrary seems to be understood by CALAHORRA BARTOLOMÉ, Keleusate, p. 279).

32. DAGRON (ed.), Livre des cérémonies, vol. 5, pp. 33–34, 71.

33. De Cer. B260, R265.

34. De Cer. B62–63, B72–73. De Cer. B143, indicates that, having entered the Onopodion from the Augusteus and Golden Hand, there was, on the far side of the Onopodion, a door to the Consistorium. This presumably refers to the central door of three. The Onopodion's 'triple door' is also mentioned at B234. CALAHORRA BARTOLOMÉ, Keleusate, pp. 290, 330–331, needlessly distinguishes this triple door from the three doors opening towards the Consistorium, and suggests that it was at the opposite end of the Onopodion (i.e., at the north-east end of the passage running along the north-west flank of the Peristyle).

door of the three (ivory) doors of the Consistorium, and through the bronze door of the Church of the Lord. Having removed his plumed headdress there, he passed through the Passages of the Lord, and the Hemicycle of the Triconch to enter the lower palace, where he followed the Passage of the Forty Martyrs to reach the Chrysotriklinos.[35] The itinerary strongly suggests that the exit from the Consistorium that led to the Church of the Lord was different from the exits that led to the Onopodion and the Makrōn of the Candidati.

Although in his text the author does not provide a clear explanation of his reasoning, he appears to have interpreted the Book of Ceremonies differently, in a way that suits his preferred interpretation of the archaeological remains, but which is not persuasive. In the first place, he does not accept that the three ivory doors of the Consistorium opened directly on to the Makrōn of the Candidati.[36] This allows him to identify the three ivory doors with the three doors that opened from the Onopodion into the Consistorium.[37] The author is then left with a reference to the 'triple door' of the Onopodion, which the Book of Ceremonies clearly distinguishes from the three ivory doors of the Consistorium.[38] Rather than admit the most likely possibility, that this triple door is the same as the three doors leading from the Onopodion to the Consistorium, he claims that it must refer to a group of three doors at the other end of the Onopodion.[39]

When discussing the Peristyle and Apsed Hall, the author considers only some of the topographical specifications in the Book of Ceremonies. He proposes that the three ivory doors were above the Triple Arch that was excavated in the substructures of the Apsed Hall (p. 45 (b)).[40] They would therefore have opened north-westwards into the rectangular vestibule of the Apsed Hall. Yet the Book of Ceremonies indicates that the Consistorium's three ivory doors opened directly into the Makrōn of the Candidati. It ap-

35. De Cer. B107, B168–169.

36. Calahorra Bartolomé, Keleusate, p. 279, where the ivory doors of the Consistorium are distinguished from the doors of the Makrōn of the Candidati.

37. This equation is suggested on p. 42 n. 161, where De Cer. B63, B73, and B234 are all considered as referring to the Consistorium's ivory doors.

38. De Cer. B234 distinguishes clearly between the 'triple door' of the Onopodion and the three ivory doors of the Consistorium.

39. On the 'triple door' of the Onopodion see Calahorra Bartolomé, Keleusate, pp. 290, 330–331.

40. The excavators observed that 'the triple-arch system has no function below ground, and must assuredly reflect the upper plan': Talbot Rice (ed.), Great Palace: Second Report, p. 30.

pears that the author, quite reasonably, follows GUILLAND and others in thinking that the Makrōn of the Candidati was an alternative name for the Triklinos of the Candidati.[41] However, the author has placed his *makrōn*-cum-*triklinos* (no. 19) a considerable distance from the Consistorium (no. 59), which is contrary to the indications of the Book of Ceremonies.

CALAHORRA BARTOLOMÉ locates the Church of the Lord (no. 56) to the north of the Peristyle (p. 41) and postulates a corridor leading to it from the north-east end of the vestibule of the Apsed Hall, where it has not yet been possible to excavate.[42] From the Book of Ceremonies, however, we know that the exit from the Consistorium to the Church of the Lord was inside, not outside, the three ivory doors of the Consistorium.

The author has extended the same corridor (no. 57) so that it reaches the Makrōn of the Candidati and then turns back on itself (skirting a hypothetical peristyle courtyard) to connect with the triple door that he has placed at the north corner of the Peristyle. The Peristyle, he asserts, is to be identified as the Onopodion (p. 45). This produces a circuitous route for moving from the Church of the Lord via the triple door of the Onopodion and the Triconch to the lower palace. It is clear from the Book of Ceremonies, that, coming from the Scholae, Excubita, and the Makrōn of the Candidati, it was possible to obtain the lower (sacred) palace by passing through the Church of the Lord, the passages of the Lord, and the Hemicycle of the Triconch.[43] But in these itineraries, no mention is made of passing through the triple door of the Onopodion.

In favour of identifying the Peristyle with the Onopodion, the author advances two arguments. His first is that it would allow the name of the Onopodion (meaning 'little donkey foot') to have its origins in the fact that horses, brought by ambassadors as gifts for the emperor, were sometimes led into the Consistorium itself.[44] His second is that the 'door of the *poulpiton*', which is mentioned by the Book of Ceremonies as connecting the Golden Hand to the Onopodion,[45] should be identified with a door discovered on the west side of the Peristyle, and that the term *poulpiton* referred

41. This is the position adopted in CALAHORRA BARTOLOMÉ, Keleusate, pp. 290–291 n. 910.

42. TALBOT RICE (ed.), Great Palace: Second Report, p. 26.

43. Entering the lower palace: De Cer. B32, B35, B84, B107, B169. Leaving the lower palace: De Cer. 545.

44. De Cer. B405.

45. De Cer. B130, B231–232. This door may be the same as the bronze door leading from the Golden Hand into the Onopodion at De Cer. B72, B163, B176, B181, B264.

to the Paved Way. Apparently, we are expected to believe that the Paved Way possessed two names, Onopodion and *poulpiton*, and that the former was used as a synecdoche for the Peristyle as a whole.

By the time the Peristyle was built, the structure dubbed the Paved Way had almost certainly gone out of use, for its upper level was about 1.2 m below the floor-level in the Peristyle.[46] Admittedly, there was probably a paved path across the courtyard, which might have been used for horses, arguably explaining the name Onopodion. However, the author of the Book of Ceremonies is unlikely to have applied the term *poulpiton* to a mere path.[47] When the term is used elsewhere in the Book of Ceremonies, it refers to either a raised door threshold or a platform.[48] Thus we read of 'the *poulpiton* rising up into the great hall of the Magnaura'.[49] We are also told that the emperor, as he was going through 'the great door of the Excubita', might stand 'in the middle of the doorway' to appoint *skribōnes* before 'going down the great *poulpiton* and going into the Scholae'.[50] The 'door of the *poulpiton*' that connected the Golden Hand to the Onopodion is analogous, for it, too, was a doorway in which the emperor stopped—in this case to receive homage from the patricians and other dignitaries who fell down before him. It was, most probably, a door with a stepped threshold and a landing on which the emperor stood to receive obeisance.[51]

Setting issues of nomenclature aside, if the Peristyle was indeed the Onopodion, it would have possessed at its south-east end three doors and stairs leading down into the Apsed Hall. This raises two difficulties with the author's proposal.

The south-east wall of the Peristyle (which is identical with the north-west wall of the vestibule of the Apsed Hall) does not survive at superstructure level, and the two openings in the substructure need not necessarily indicate that there were only two doors above.[52] However, the excavations did

46. Talbot Rice, Great Palace, 23 with folder A.

47. As claimed by Calahorra Bartolomé, Keleusate, p. 330.

48. Dagron (ed.), Livre des cérémonies, vol. 5, p. 89.

49. De Cer. B574.

50. De Cer. B130–131.

51. Dagron (ed.), Livre des cérémonies, vol. 4, p. 31. We need not follow Rodolphe Guilland, Études de topographie de Constantinople byzantine. Berlin – Amsterdam 1969, vol. 1, pp. 88–89, in thinking that the designations 'door of the *poulpiton*' and 'curtain of the marble *poulpiton*' (De Cer. B130, B231–232) refer to the *poulpiton* in the Consistorium, and that the door led from the Consistorium to the Onopodion.

52. Talbot Rice, Great Palace, p. 21 with fig. 11 (observing that the substructure openings were possibly built to straddle pre-existing walls).

establish that the floor-level of the Peristyle was not higher than that of the Apsed Hall (as would be required if the former were the Onopodion and the latter the Consistorium) but lower.[53] The difference in floor-levels between the Onopodion and Consistorium is indicated in the Book of Ceremonies not only by specific reference to stairs but also by reference to 'going up' and 'going down' between the two rooms.[54]

The second difficulty concerns the author's claim that the three ivory doors of the Consistorium were in the south-east wall of the vestibule of the Apsed Hall. That would mean that the three doors opening from the Onopodion to the Consistorium were opposite (or, as the author would have it, identical to) the three ivory doors. However, the Book of Ceremonies suggests that the three doors from the Onopodion to the Consistorium faced in a different direction from the three ivory doors of the Consistorium, for the latter opened onto the Makrōn of the Candidati. This is an architectural requirement that the Apsed Hall struggles to satisfy because it appears to have been accessible only through doors on the side facing the Peristyle.

The preceding observations should be enough to illustrate the difficulty of reconciling the archaeology of the Peristyle and Apsed Hall with what is known of the Onopodion and Consistorium. It is, therefore, perhaps redundant to address the author's related hypotheses, but I do so for the sake of completeness.

In a chapter of the Book of Ceremonies written in the sixth century by Peter the Patrician, we have a reference to the Anticonsistorium, whose name indicates it was an ante-room to the Consistorium. It served as a waiting-room for visiting ambassadors and their entourages.[55] Since the author has identified the Apsed Hall as the Consistorium, it follows that the adjacent Peristyle ought to be the Anticonsistorium (later known as the Onopodion). Since Peter provides no information about the architectural form of the Anticonsistorium, we cannot establish whether it was a courtyard with a peristyle. It may be noted that GUILLAND drew attention to the Anticonsisto-

53. TALBOT RICE, Great Palace, folder A (floor-level in the antechamber of the Apsed Hall), p. 42 (even higher floor-level in the vicinity of the apse of the Apsed Hall).

54. Going up from Consistorium to Onopodion: De Cer. 809. Going down from Onopodion to Consistorium: De Cer. B26, B163, B193. The elevated floor-level of the Onopodion is also suggested by the fact that, coming from the Augusteus, one went up from the Golden hand to the Onopodion: De Cer. B163, B181, B265, B271.

55. The Anticonsistorium is mentioned at De Cer. B404, B407.

rium's function as a waiting-room, which suggested to him that it later became not the Onopodion but the Makrōn of the Candidati.[56]

Calahorra Bartolomé also draws attention to the Indoi, which is mentioned in only one chapter of the Book of Ceremonies, where, on two occasions, it is said to function as a changing room.[57] We are informed that, when a *magistros* was to be appointed, the senators changed in the Makrōn of the Candidati and the patricians changed in the Indoi because neither group was permitted to enter the Consistorium while the throne was in place.[58] The author claims that the Indoi was part of the Onopodion, specifically the north-west portico of the Peristyle (pp. 41, 47 with n. 176). This, he argues, finds confirmation in the iconography of the mosaic, in which he detects references to India that he considers to be appropriate for a place where foreign embassies were received (pp. 47–52). However, having donned their ceremonial dress, the patricians and senators were gathered outside the three ivory doors of the Consistorium that opened into the Makrōn of the Candidati and were then led into the Consistorium to witness the appointment of the *magistros*. That would tend to suggest that the Indoi was outside the three ivory doors of the Consistorium. Had the Indoi been inside the Onopodion, the patricians, having changed there, would have been able to reach the Makrōn of the Candidati only by passing through the Consistorium, which they were forbidden from doing.[59] It seems likely that the Onopodion and the Indoi were entirely separate structures.

In addition to producing a hypothetical map of the palace, the author has created a corresponding 3-D digital model, and he includes hypothetical views of several buildings, which are inspired by surviving structures elsewhere and depictions of buildings in art. Like the similar model made by Tayfun Öner for the Byzantium 1200 website (a model that follows the hypotheses of Jan Kostenec), it is useful in giving a general impression of what the agglomeration of buildings and porticoes may have looked like, and those who take time to compare the two models will acquire some ap-

56. Guilland, Études, vol. 1, p. 60.

57. De Cer. B234, B236.

58. De Cer. B234.

59. Besides the three doors leading down from the Onopodion to the Consistorium, the only other exit from the Onopodion led to the Golden Hand. According to the author's plan, the patricians would have left the Indoi using a second 'triple door' (at the north corner of the Peristyle) and have followed the Galleries of the Church of the Lord (no. 57) to the Makrōn of the Candidati (no. 19), from where they would have proceeded along the further extension of the same corridor to the Consistorium (Apsed Hall). As we have seen, however, this second 'triple door' is a fiction of the author's making.

preciation of where scholarly opinions diverge. The difficulty with such models, however, is that doubt cannot easily be conveyed. Consequently, for an appreciation of the model's weaknesses, the reader must depend on the modeller's explanatory text.

Certainly, the text highlights some notable matters of scholarly dispute: the position of the Kathisma (p. 12); the form of the Triklinos of the 19 Couches (p. 17); whether the Senate House was later used as the Magnaura (p. 27); the position of the staircase of St Christina (p. 30). However, not all the uncertainties are explored, and, in general, the unfamiliar reader is unlikely to realize that statements about the orientation of a building or its relationship with a nearby building often reflect the author's preferred interpretation rather than any explicit statement in the Book of Ceremonies. Furthermore, there are some factual inaccuracies.

For instance, the author states (p. 15) that the dining hall called the Triklinos of the 19 Couches must have been built by Constantine because Eusebius describes the celebration of the emperor's vicennalia as having taken place in a hall of the palace where there were seats on both sides and a coffered ceiling decorated with jewelled crosses. However, the hall with seats on either side was the venue for the opening of the council of Nicaea in 325 and was therefore in the palace in that city.[60] The banquet at the end of the council was probably held in the nearby palace at Nicomedia.[61] As for the ceiling with a jewelled cross, that was indeed in the palace at Constantinople, but Eusebius tells us only that it was in 'the most eminent building of all'.[62]

To take another example, the impression is given (p. 21) that there is no doubt that the excavated remains in the area of the Chalke (two piers projecting on either side of a gateway) correspond to the description of the gate provided by Procopius.[63] In the author's attempted reconstruction of

60. Eusebius, Life of Constantine 3.10.1, ed. FRIEDHELM WINKELMANN, Eusebius Werke, vol. 1.1. Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin. 2nd edn Berlin 1991 (the account of the council at Nicaea begins at 3.6.1 and ends at 3.21.22).

61. Eusebius, Life of Constantine 3.15. For the vicennalia being celebrated at Nicomedia, see RUDOLF HELM, Eusebius Werke, vol. 7. Die Chronik des Hieronymus. 3rd edn. Berlin 1984, p. 231e.

62. Eusebius, Life of Constantine 3.49.

63. Procopius, Buildings 1.10.11–14, ed. JAKOB HAURY, Procopius Caesariensis opera omnia vol. 4. Leipzig 1964. For the archaeological remains, see: ÇIĞDEM GİRGİN, La porte monumentale trouvée dans les fouilles près de l'ancienne prison de Sultanahmet. Anatolia Antiqua 16 (2008) pp. 259–290. The pillars are M1 and M9 shown in figs. 33 and 47. On pp. 271–273, GİRGİN advances the possibility that the remains are consistent

the remains (no. 30; fig. 11),[64] the four internal piers are placed in the corners of the building so that two sides of each pier abut the building's external walls. By contrast, Procopius states that only one side of each pier abutted a wall. Furthermore, the author's reconstruction incorporates only four vaults, whereas Procopius refers to four arches supporting the central dome and four additional arches at a lower level, two towards the north and two towards the south. The author's suggestion that these four additional arches were in fact pendentives will not do, particularly as they are said by Procopius to rest on walls.[65]

The author describes the east end of the Justinianos connecting to a staircase at the north end of the Lausiakos (p. 58; nos. 80, 81, 83). However, the Book of Ceremonies does not appear to support this arrangement, since the staircase is not referred to when moving between the Justinianos and the Lausiakos;[66] rather, it is mentioned only when passing through the Eidikon to or from the Lausiakos.[67]

Calahorra Bartolomé states categorically that the Chrysotriklinos, which was located in the lower palace, existed in 532 (p. 62). However, it seems unlikely that the 'heptaconch hall' that hosted a synod in that year was the same as the Chrysotriklinos. The hall concerned was in the Palace of Hormisdas and may, therefore, have been located to the west of the lower palace, close to Justinian's churches of Sts. Peter and Paul and Sts. Sergius and Bacchus, which are both known to have been in the Palace of Hormisdas.[68] Furthermore, the Chrysotriklinos was not a heptaconch; rather, its

with Procopius' description.

64. Additional views of the author's reconstruction are published in: Alfredo Calahorra Bartolomé, Una aproximación digital a la bizantinística: el caso de la puerta 'Chalke'. In: Vestir la Arquitectura: Actas del XXII Congreso Nacional de Historia del Arte 2019, pp. 1846–1851.

65. Pendentives: Calahorra Bartolomé, Keleusate, p. 192. Contrast the author's reconstructed plan with that in Richard Krautheimer – Slobodan Ćurčić, Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture. 4th edn. Harmondsworth 1986, pp. 241–242, fig. 194a, which follows the reconstruction in Cyril Mango, The Brazen House: A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople. Copenhagen 1959, pp. 30–31, fig. 1.

66. De Cer. B86, B89, B114, B122, B286, B288, B442, B518, B588, B596.

67. De Cer. B91, B174–175, B263, B297. The same staircase may be referred to at B518. For the connections between the upper and lower palaces, see Bardill, Visualizing, pp. 19–23.

68. Heptaconch hall: Eduard Schwartz (ed.), Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum, vol. 4/2, Concilium universale Constantinopolitanum sub Iustiniano habitum. Strasbourg 1914, p. 169. To allow the equation of the heptaconch hall with the Chrysotriklinos, the

central octagonal space was surrounded by eight 'vaulted spaces' (*kamarai*), but only that to the east was a 'conch' (*konchē*), i.e. an apse.[69] In this regard, the reconstruction presented in fig. 29 requires adjustment. As to the 'heptaconch hall', it is possible that its seven apses were distributed not radially but rather in a linear fashion, three to either side of the hall and one at the end, as in the hall excavated to the north-west of the Hippodrome.

The author identifies the spolia ensemble at the Boukoleon harbour as the Porphyra (p. 75).[70] This is a deduction from the accounts of two writers. The first is Pietro Zen, who describes a statue of a lion attacking a bull that was 'beneath the three ancient windows which have a lion at either side', which is unquestionably a reference to the spolia ensemble with which we are concerned.[71] The second is Anna Comnena, who describes the Porphyra 'looking out towards the sea and the harbour where the stone oxen and lions stand'.[72] The author is therefore not entirely accurate when he paraphrases Anna as saying that the Porphyra was a pavilion 'overlooking the sea, standing above the statue of the lion and the ox'. Anna's words appear to be a periphrasis for the Boukoleon harbour as a whole rather than an indication that the Porphyra stood directly above the statue.

Finally, the topographical uncertainties in the area of the Boukoleon are not highlighted. For instance, the author has placed the Theotokos of the Pharos (no. 106) to the south-east of the terrace of the Pharos (no. 103) and to the south-west of the Nea church (no. 111). This is difficult to reconcile with the itinerary of the feast of St. Elijah, in which the emperor went out from the Theotokos of the Pharos, passed through the terrace, along the

author hypothesizes (pp. 60–62) that the Palace of Hormisdas originally extended further east, incorporating the earlier palaces of Marina and Placidia (known to have been in Region I), but was reduced in size after a fire in 548, when Justinian connected part of it to the Great Palace. Note that the connection of the Palace of Hormisdas to the Great Palace probably occurred soon after the council of 532: JONATHAN BARDILL, The Date, Dedication, and Design of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus in Constantinople. Journal of Late Antiquity 10 (2017) pp. 66–73.

69. De Cer. B580, B581, B519.

70. The spolia ensemble may have been more than just a decorative façade, for the photolithograph of PIERRE TRÉMAUX shows that the structure had a west flank, and the drawing of MARY WALKER shows an arch (perhaps over a walkway along the top of the fortification) in that flank: see ALEXANDER VAN MILLINGEN, Byzantine Constantinople: The Walls of the City and Adjoining Historical Sites. London 1899, p. 274.

71. VAN MILLINGEN, Walls, p. 271.

72. Alexiad 7.2.4, ed. DIETHER R. REINSCH – ATHANASIOS KAMBYLIS, Annae Comnenae Alexias (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 40/1–2). Berlin – New York 2001, vol. 1, p. 205.

'narrow passage of the single door', descended the staircase of the Boukoleon (no. 108), and turned right into the narthex of the Nea church.[73]

In summary, an uninformed reader looking at the carefully executed plans and attractive digital reconstructions, and reading some of the unqualified assertions in the text, may be left with the impression that there is much more certainty about the architecture and layout of the Great Palace than there really is. Acknowledging areas of doubt and scholarly dispute need not prevent an author expressing a preferred view. That said, it is questionable whether it is appropriate to present a new and untested theory (such as the identification of the Peristyle and Apsed Hall) at length in a booklet where space is limited and the audience might expect breadth of coverage rather than detail. Those steeped in the intricacies of the palace may revel in the topographical conundrum, but others looking for a general introduction to the subject may be left wanting more on other matters, such as the ceremonies themselves, the officials involved, and their regalia.[74]

Despite the fact that this book largely presents the author's personal conception of the topography of the Great Palace without much qualification, it is likely to prove useful to those who require a short introduction to the known palatial buildings, a general idea of their topographical distribution, a selection of indicative illustrations,[75] and a suitable range of bibliographical references for further reading.[76]

Keywords

Great Palace; Constantinople; ceremonies; architecture; 3-D reconstruction

73. De Cer. B117, B120. For an attempt to explain this itinerary, see BARDILL, Visualizing, pp. 29–39, where it is proposed that the Pharos may have been located further west than is usually assumed. The author mentions this itinerary on p. 68 but does not note the problems it raises.

74. I should add that there are some linguistic errors that ought to have been caught during the editorial process, in particular the frequent use of 'infrastructure' for 'substructure' and of 'potern' for 'postern'. The adverbial use of 'likely' may jar with users of British English.

75. However, the interesting illustration of the Boukoleon harbour in the Madrid Skylitzes (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Vitr. 26/2), mentioned on pp. 72–73, is not reproduced. It is on fol. 17r (not 15r, as stated). The photolithograph of the Boukoleon in fig. 30 is correctly ascribed to PIERRE TRÉMAUX in the caption but wrongly to CHARLES TEXIER on p. 73.

76. Those who wish to get a flavour of the original texts that describe the palatial buildings may refer to the translations in CYRIL MANGO, The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453 (Sources and Documents in the History of Art). Englewood Cliffs 1972, which is not included in the bibliography.