

**Blueprints of Power:  
Roman Statecraft and Politics in Konstantinos VII's  
*Book of Ceremonies***

by  
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## Abstract

Emperor Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos' tenth-century *Book of Ceremonies* is a vital source for Byzantine court culture. As such, it has helped reinforce many negative assessments of the “archaic” and “bureaucratic” nature of Byzantium. This thesis considers these recorded outlines of court ceremonies not as ritualistic formularies, but as moments of political dialogue. In doing so, it follows scholarly work on the history and culture of Eastern Roman politics — which no longer treats the Roman polity as an autocracy ruled by a God-given emperor, instead, understanding the Byzantine polity to be ruled by a form of “republican” monarchy accountable to “the people.” The present examination of ceremonies unfolds in two parts. First, the *Book of Ceremonies* is recontextualized as a product of tenth-century political life. Second, the ceremonial templates of the *Book of Ceremonies* are read in parallel with eleventh-century accounts of the attempted power grab of Michael V Kalaphates.

**Keywords:** The *Book of Ceremonies*; Political Dialogue, Statecraft, and Ritual; Ceremonial; Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos; Tenth- and Eleventh-Century Byzantium; Constantinople

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## Table of Contents

Declaration of Committee .....	ii
Abstract .....	iii
Acknowledgements .....	iv
Table of Contents .....	vi
List of Figures .....	vii
List of Abbreviations .....	viii
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1. Making a Ceremony: The historical underpinning of the <i>Book of Ceremonies</i> .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Chapter 2. Ceremonies in Action: The case-study of Michael V Kalaphates .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Appendix A – The Broumalion .....</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Appendix B – April 1042 .....</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Appendix C – May 1042 .....</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Appendix D – Byzantine Rulers from the Rise of the Macedonian Dynasty to the Komnenian Revolution.....</b>	<b>105</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1:	The Plan of the Great Palace and its Surroundings.....	7
Figure 2:	The Leipzig Manuscript of the <i>Book of Ceremonies</i> c. 959.....	19
Figure 3:	Depictions of Konstantinos VII on solidi.....	54
Figure 4:	Leon VI, penitent before Christ.....	56
Figure 5:	Map of Constantinople .....	63

## List of Abbreviations

Attaleiates, <i>Hist.</i>	Michael Attaleiates. <i>The History</i>
BOC	Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos. <i>The Book of Ceremonies</i>
DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
JÖB	<i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik</i>
ODB	<i>The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i>
Psellos, <i>Chr.</i> (Renauld)	Michael Psellos. “Chronographia.” In <i>Michel Psellos: Chronographie ou Histoire d'un siècle de Byzance</i> . Edited and translated by Émile Renauld.
Psellos, <i>Chr.</i> (Sewter)	Michael Psellos. <i>Fourteen Byzantine rulers: the “Chronographia” of Michael Psellus</i> . Text and Translation by E. R. A. Sewter.
Skylitzes (Thurn)	Ioannes Skylitzes. <i>Synopsis Historion in Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum</i> . Edited by Johannes Thurn.
Skylitzes (Wortley)	Ioannes Skylitzes. <i>A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811-1057</i> . Text and Translation by John Wortley.
VB	Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos. “Vita Basili” in Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos <i>Chronographiae quae Theophanis continuati nomine fertur liber quo Vita Basilii Imperatoris amplecitur</i> .

# Introduction

After six consecutive days of Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests across the United States following the brutal murder of George Floyd, on Monday June 1st, 2020, then-President Donald J. Trump processed across Lafayette Square to St. John's Episcopal Church. With aids and family members trailing noticeably behind him, he promenaded across the square as secret service staff flanked the entire entourage. As he arrived at the church, his daughter, Ivanka, pulled a Bible from her handbag and handed it to him, even as photographers prepared their equipment. The president proceeded to stand erect in front of the parish sign while cameras flashed; first holding the Bible in front of him, and then holding it up to his side at eye-level. When asked about the Bible from the onlooking media, Trump made a short speech about the state of America and its inevitable return to greatness. After a few more photographs, this time flanked by advisors in front of the stairs, the procession returned to the White House.<sup>1</sup>

Devoid of context this appears to be a standard presidential photoshoot. The Bible remains a prop in American official imagery, particularly on ceremonial occasions;<sup>2</sup> presidents' attendance at church, or lack thereof, generates its own media-based cottage industry;<sup>3</sup> even St. John's was a natural staging ground for this event — it is known as the “Church of the Presidents,” with every president since James Madison

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<sup>1</sup> Full video: C-SPAN: Your Unfiltered View of Government, “President Trump walks across Lafayette Park to St. John’s Church,” June 1, 2020, YouTube video, 0:00-7:25, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ShnqmiKLE8>

<sup>2</sup> Erin Schumaker, “The significance of the Bible Joe Biden is using on Inauguration Day,” *ABC News*, January 20, 2021, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/significance-bible-joe-biden-inauguration-day/story?id=75369058>

<sup>3</sup> A quick search can provide a plethora of articles on the religious attendance of American presidents. For Biden: Robin Givhan, “Joe Biden goes to church. Politics remains outside,” *The Washington Post*, December 8, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/12/08/joe-biden-goes-church-politics-remains-outside/> For Trump: Sarah Pulliam Bailey, Julie Zauzmer, and Josh Dawsey, “Trump mocks the faith of others. His own religious practices remain opaque,” *The Washington Post*, February 14, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/religion/2020/02/14/trump-mocks-faith-others-his-own-religious-practices-remain-opaque/> For Obama: Steve Benen, “Pointless scrutiny of Obama’s church attendance,” *MSNBC*, February 23, 2015, <https://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow-show/pointless-scrutiny-obamas-church-attendance-msnbc536106>

having used the site.<sup>4</sup> What made this scene so poignant to the American public and global observers was its unashamedly obvious manufacturing; this was Trump's bid to control, not only the contested space of a Washington park, but also the narrative of his handling of BLM.

Days earlier, Trump had been maligned in the media for his reaction to the protests, when he had been rushed into the presidential bunker in response to approaching protestors in DC. When news of this surfaced, it was received with almost universal derision, his prowess questioned, as the moniker "Bunker Boy" entered the nation's vernacular.<sup>5</sup> His response to this was the procession in question, which could not start until Lafayette Square was cleared of "unfriendly" crowds. This required riot police and military officials to disperse peaceful protestors through the use of flash-grenades and tear gas.<sup>6</sup> Trump's message was consistent, even if its delivery fell short: blending military might with religious symbolism, he wished to project earthly and divine order. His control of Lafayette Square and zero tolerance for dissension demonstrated this. And yet, this scene, which was broadcast live around the world, was met with near universal outrage; shock at the blatant instrumentalization of religious symbols,<sup>7</sup> disgust at the use of force against US citizens by a US president,<sup>8</sup> and chagrin at the obvious disconnect between the ruling and the ruled.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Bill Chappell, "'He Did Not Pray': Fallout Grows From Trump's Photo-Op At St. John's Church," *NPR*, June 2, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/02/867705160/he-did-not-pray-fallout-grows-from-trump-s-photo-op-at-st-john-s-church>

<sup>5</sup> Josh K. Elliott, "'Bunker Boy': Trump mocked for 'hiding' from protesters at White House," *Global News*, June 1, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7010462/donald-trump-bunker-white-house-george-floyd/>

<sup>6</sup> Tom Gjelten, "Peaceful Protesters Tear-Gassed to Clear Way for Trump Church Photo-Op," *NPR*, June 1, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/01/867532070/trumps-unannounced-church-visit-angers-church-officials>

<sup>7</sup> Sean Boynton, "Religious leaders 'outraged' over Trump photo op at DC church amid George Floyd protests," *Global News*, June 1, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7014684/george-floyd-protests-trump-church-photo/>

<sup>8</sup> Christina Wilkie and Amanda Macias, "Biden slams Trump's response to George Floyd protests: 'More interested in power than principle,'" *CNBC*, June 2, 2020, <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/06/02/george-floyd-protests-biden-slams-trump-over-st-johns-church-photo-op.html>

<sup>9</sup> Peter Barker, Maggie Haberman, Katie Rogers, Zolan Kanno-Youngs, and Katie Benner, "How Trump's Idea for a Photo Op Led to Havoc in a Park," *New York Times*, June 2, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/02/us/politics/trump-walk-lafayette-square.html>

This example of modern ceremonial — a procession, a photo-op and speech, and a response from media outlets both nationally and abroad — highlights the oft-unspoken role that ceremonies play in statecraft. It is easy to point to grandiose displays, such as royal weddings, presidential inaugurations, and military parades as “ceremony;” which they undoubtedly are. There is a certain lightness to these events, the obvious pomp of the event confirming a pre-set outcome. They are rarely seen as drivers of political action or change in and of themselves. Thus, Joseph R. Biden was understood to become the 46<sup>th</sup> president when the final votes were tallied in Pennsylvania; the January 20<sup>th</sup> inauguration did not cause this outcome, it merely confirmed it. Trump’s spontaneous procession, on the other hand, has been categorized as something else — a powerplay of an unhinged “authoritarian”;<sup>10</sup> a show of strength;<sup>11</sup> a foreshadowing of the riots that would occur a little over six months later in the same city<sup>12</sup> — but not a “ceremony.” Yet, this display contained many of the ceremonial elements that will be addressed in this thesis, albeit in an entirely different context: timelines of Trump’s decisions have been reconstructed;<sup>13</sup> the symbols of church and Bible have been interpreted and re-interpreted;<sup>14</sup> each participant in the procession has been identified both by their role in the procession and their governmental office;<sup>15</sup> and even Ivanka’s Max Mara purse has been scrutinized.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, apart from the tangible components that coloured this scene, this example demonstrates the political charge in ceremonies, “spaces” where opposing ideologies meet under the softening light of pageantry.

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<sup>10</sup> Susan B. Glasser, “#Bunkerboy’s Photo-op War,” *The New Yorker*, June 3, 2020, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/letter-from-trumps-washington/bunkerboys-photo-op-war>

<sup>11</sup> Victor Garcia, “Dana Perino says Trump’s visit to St. John’s Church was a good idea, but ‘not executed well,’” *Fox News*, June 2, 2020, <https://www.foxnews.com/media/dana-perino-trump-visit-st-johns-church>

<sup>12</sup> Rachel Chanson and Samantha Schmidt, “Lafayette Square, Capitol rallies met starkly different policing response,” *Washington Post*, January 14, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/interactive/2021/blm-protest-capitol-riot-police-comparison/>

<sup>13</sup> Peter Barker et al., “How Trump’s Idea for a Photo Op,” Led to Havoc in a Park,” *New York Times*.

<sup>14</sup> Interpreted: Daniel Burk, “Trump’s religious photo-ops aren’t about piety. They’re about power,” CNN, June 3, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/03/politics/trump-church-visit-religion-burke/index.html>; Reinterpreted: Ayesha Rascoe and Tamara Keith, “Trump Defends ‘Law And Order’ Symbolism Of Photo-Op At St. John’s Church,” *NPR*, June 3, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/03/868779265/trump-defends-symbolism-of-photo-op-at-st-johns-church>

<sup>15</sup> Peter Barker et al., “How Trump’s Idea,” *New York Times*.

<sup>16</sup> Barker et al., “How Trump’s Idea,” *New York Times*.

This thesis explores the political dialogue implicit in and facilitated by ceremonial displays in tenth-century Constantinople; a time when tweets were merely birdcalls and processions involved distributions of gifts, not tear gas. Opening with an episode from the Trump presidency, then, comes with its own pitfalls. Byzantine rulers and the 45<sup>th</sup> president both ruled over, in a manner of speaking, “republican” states,<sup>17</sup> and both may have used their respective polity’s capital city as their own ceremonial playground; but make no mistake Donald Trump bears little similarity to a Byzantine emperor.

Conversely, there is little evidence that Emperor Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos (r. 913-959 CE), the main character of our ceremonial exploration, was a certifiable narcissist. Rather, I use the example of Trump to challenge what one may automatically imagine when thinking of a “ceremonial display.” I seek to move away from, say, liturgical instances, or holiday traditions — ceremonies which may be most familiar to a modern reader — towards what I read as fully political moments of tension over contested spaces and ideas. Ceremonies, as studied here, are public displays of power within a specific cultural context, which contain symbolic elements and invoke a particular meaning.<sup>18</sup> The entire display is often packaged in soaring rhetoric delivered by immaculately coiffured men and women (how Trump thought he was projecting himself); or, on occasion, they manifest as harsh displays of brusque, Trumpian intimidation (how he was widely received). Regardless of style, the effectiveness of a ceremonial display depends on one’s audience; success will be measured differently by each ceremonial actor or engaged viewer (and, more broadly, perceiver) of said acts. Trump or Konstantinos may have sought to control the message, but the response to it was out of their hands. They held limited sway over the audience’s reading of each given

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<sup>17</sup> I will elaborate on the notion of the Byzantine “republic” later in this Introduction. This terminology derives from Anthony Kaldellis’ groundbreaking work on Byzantine political theory and practice: Anthony Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

<sup>18</sup> This definition is my own, amended through definitions and explorations of “ritual” and “ceremony” provided by: Alexander Beihammer, “Comparative Approaches to the Ritual World of the Medieval Mediterranean,” in *Court Ceremonies and Rituals of Power in Byzantium and the Medieval Mediterranean*, ed. Alexander Beihammer, Stavroula Constantinou, and Maria G. Parani (Leiden, NL: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2013), 1-4; Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 2009), 44; Jack Goody, “Religion and Ritual: The Definitional Problem,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 12:2 (Jun. 1961), 159; Vasileios Marinis, “Structure, Agency, Ritual, and the Byzantine Church,” in *Architecture of the Sacred: Space, Ritual, and Experience from Classical Greece to Byzantium*, eds. Bonna D. Wescoat and Robert G. Ousterhout (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 338.

ceremony. Ultimately, the ceremonial act is one cog in a larger mechanism: the ceremonial-political complex.

## Ceremonies & The Byzantine State

The study of ceremonies exists at the crossroads of history, sociology, anthropology, and religious studies. Consequently, the definition of “ceremony” is intentionally malleable in order to emphasize the specific characteristics of the field in question. For the purposes of this thesis, Byzantine ceremonies are public displays of power which contain symbolic elements and, within the physical and temporal context of Byzantine life, invoke a particular meaning.<sup>19</sup> While this definition is broad, there is a general three-part template that hones this ceremonial scope into a more manageable framework.<sup>20</sup> First, an engaged audience and the conductor of the ceremony are brought together in physical proximity. Second, a ceremonial action is performed in a chosen space. There is a broad spectrum for what this action might entail; most simply, it is the act from which the ceremony derives its name, the “coronation,” “baptism,” “royal wedding,” “funeral,” or any other instance which draws the participants and audience to a set location. This can be typified by a single act (i.e., the body has been laid in the tomb), or it can be an exchange between participants; a verbal dialogue, such as an oath, or an exchange of goods, such as the conferring of a title. Finally, the third part of this ceremonial template is the response from the participants which is evoked by the ceremonial action. This response can lead to the production and acknowledgement of a new meaning and/or the affirmation of an already understood consensus. Each of these parts — the bringing together of participants and audience (itself a potential participant), the ceremonial action(s), and the response — may contain ritualized formats or sub-

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<sup>19</sup> The sources on note 20 form this definition.

<sup>20</sup> This template is amended according to a three-step understanding of “rites of passage” ceremonies: Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1969), 94. Although Turner uses this three-part process in a limited context, I am comfortable using this as a broad encapsulation of the Byzantine ceremonial experience, as the same principles apply. For a wider conversation on step three, consensus building in the late antique world: Philippe Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 123-157; particularly the conclusions he draws in 155-156.

ceremonies which need to be performed for the main ceremony to be considered “proper.”<sup>21</sup>

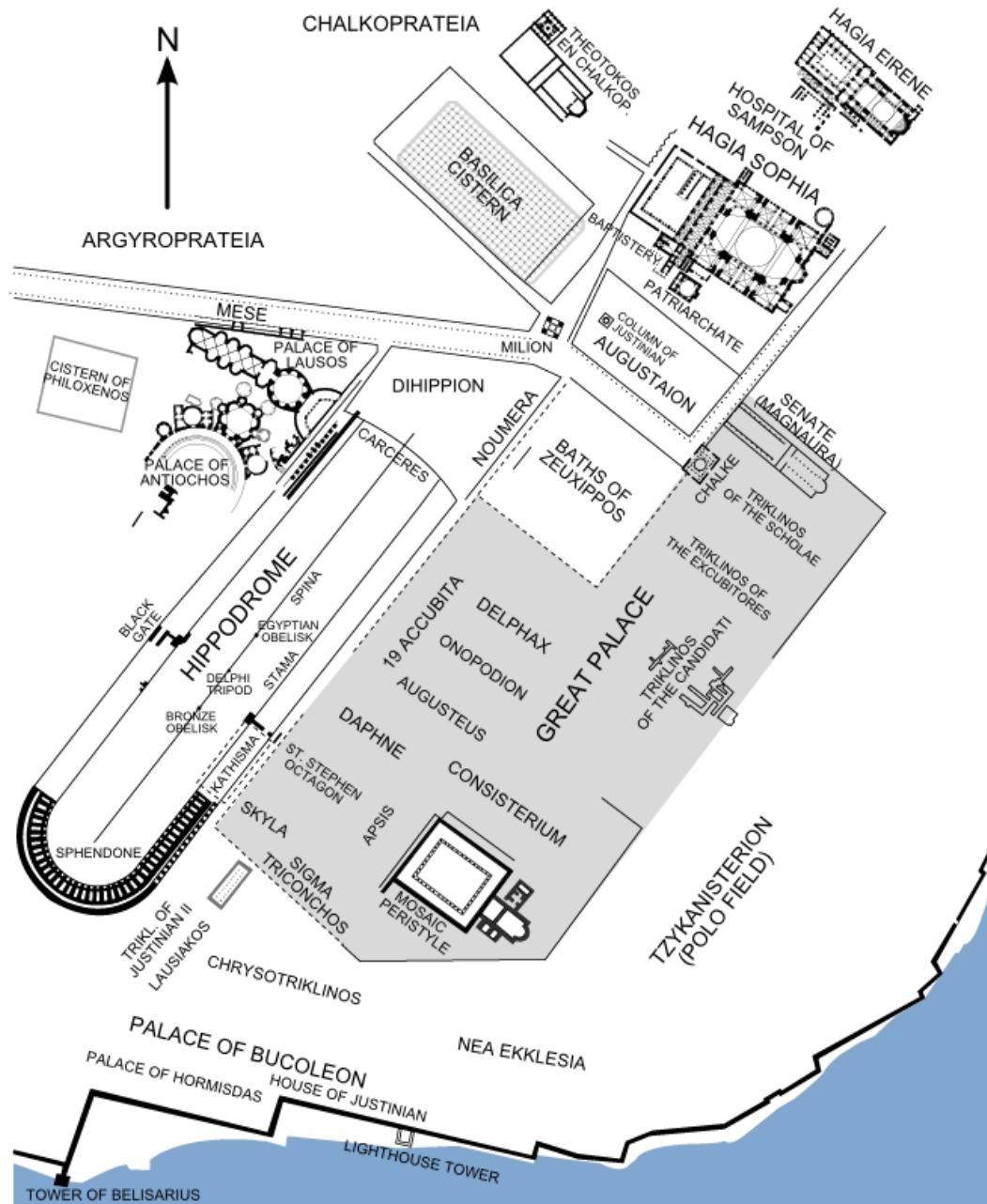
A Byzantine application of this three-part approach may be found in a common ceremonial performance: the emperor’s visit to Hagia Sophia, the great church of Constantinople, on major Christian feast days.<sup>22</sup> In order to carry out a “proper” procession to the church, the emperor staged six factional receptions in the Great Palace, promenaded with his retinue to the church, performed liturgical obeisance inside the church itself, and hosted five receptions upon his return to the palace as opportunities for popular response.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The need for “correct” ceremonial performance can be traced to a Republican Roman context. Within this society, it was believed that proper piety directly and positively impacted life in the polity. This will be discussed at length below, but for a full discussion: Dale B. Martin, *Inventing Superstition: From the Hippocratics to the Christians* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2007), 17.

<sup>22</sup> This is a common example of Byzantine ceremonial behaviour. The emperor would move in procession from the Great Palace to Hagia Sophia on each of the major church holidays. Due to its regularity in Constantinopolitan urban life and primary position in the *Book of Ceremonies*, this ceremony has received extensive analysis: Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 84-95; George P. Majeska, “The Emperor in His Church: Imperial Ritual in the Church of St. Sophia,” in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997), 1-12; Nigel Westbrook, *The Great Palace in Constantinople: An Architectural Interpretation* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers n.v., 2019), 91-96. For the full ceremonial template: BOC, 5-22.

<sup>23</sup> BOC, 5-22.



**Figure 1: The Plan of the Great Palace and its Surroundings<sup>24</sup>**

This processional template to Hagia Sophia does not afford the modern reader a concrete sense of Constantinopolitan responses to the ceremonial display: the mutability

<sup>24</sup> “Constantinople imperial district.png,” *Wikicommons*, accessed 8 June, 2021: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Constantinople\\_imperial\\_district.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Constantinople_imperial_district.png). Image by user Cplakidas, reproduced under a CC BY-SA 3.0 license: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>

of meaning-making and the paucity of sources means that each stakeholder may have had a different interpretation of the relative success of this or any other ceremony.<sup>25</sup> Our opening episode of Trump's procession clearly demonstrates this principle. Trump may have believed that "proper" ceremonial behaviour during the photoshoot was necessary to produce the "correct" intended meaning of "law and order."<sup>26</sup> The Australian reporter who was attacked when the streets were being cleared, however, could very well have taken a different interpretation from the day's events.<sup>27</sup> Thus, processing to Hagia Sophia is one example of a ceremonial "standard" that helps us translate the three-part system for understanding ceremonies from the modern context into a Byzantine one.

In Medieval Constantinople, the act of bringing together different stakeholders into physical proximity to celebrate ceremonial occasions — the aforementioned "first part" — could present an opportunity for subversive acts, as it broke down social and physical boundaries that marked the life of the city.<sup>28</sup> The ceremonial participants would often consist of the emperor, palatial staff, members of the army, bureaucrats, clergy, foreign dignitaries, and members of the urban populace of Constantinople. The latter, notably, would not typically meet with the emperor outside of these ceremonial contexts.<sup>29</sup> The ceremonies which brought together these different individuals, therefore, created a unique situation when diverse social groupings converged in previously inaccessible areas. Thus, on such occasions, the people entered public spaces of the Great Palace of Constantinople, a space usually reserved for the emperor and his

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<sup>25</sup> For ceremonial "gamble": Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual*, 8-9. Peter Van Nuffelen describes the ceremonial gamble in the fourth and fifth centuries in the context of religious processions. He outlines the ways that the conflicting ideological agendas of the emperor and patriarch would play out in the public sphere: Peter Van Nuffelen, "Playing the Ritual Game in Constantinople (379-457)," in *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, eds. Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 183-200.

<sup>26</sup> Ayesha Rascoe and Tamara Keith, "Trump Defends 'Law and Order,'" *NPR*.

<sup>27</sup> Rebecca Klar, "Park Police investigating officers who allegedly attacked Australian reporters," *The Hill*, June 3, 2020, <https://thehill.com/homenews/news/501039-park-police-investigating-officers-involved-in-attack-on-australian-reporters>

<sup>28</sup> For topographical and ideological boundaries in a religious context: Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 97. For the topographical boundaries of the palace: Westbrook, *The Great Palace in Constantinople*, 87-89, 148-150.

<sup>29</sup> This was the general rule of thumb, though exceptions existed, such as Justinian, as described in Prokopios, or Theophilos in Skylitzes, who made themselves receptive to most any Constantinopolitan. Prokopios. *The Secret History with Related Texts*, ed., and trans. Anthony Kaldellis (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2010), 61; Skylitzes (Wortley), 53; Skylitzes (Thurn), 50-51.

trusted notables.<sup>30</sup> Conversely, the emperor entered the “court of public opinion.” Whether seated in his box at the Hippodrome, the space where chariot racing occurred, or following a processional route along the Mese, the main thoroughfare of Constantinople, he opened himself to the people of the city.<sup>31</sup> By crossing physical boundaries and bringing diverse social strata together, ceremonies brought Constantinopolitan stakeholders into moments of dialogue. Such dialogue will be explored further in a few short paragraphs, as it is an essential component of the “ceremonial action” that makes up the second step of the ceremonial process. However, it is worth mentioning now that moments of dialogue could be volatile. In an ideal form, they were a means by which the emperor could gauge and sometimes form public consensus. On occasion, however, such interactions escaped ceremonial blueprints to assume a life of their own. The people could veer off “script” and express extreme displeasure at the emperor, remove him from office, or support a usurper to take his place. We will examine an example of this in Chapter 2.<sup>32</sup> Such actions on the part of the people must be seen as part and parcel of Byzantium’s Roman nature.

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<sup>30</sup> Jeffery Michael Featherstone, “Space and Ceremony in the Great Palace of Constantinople under the Macedonian Emperors,” in *Le Corti Nell’alto Medioevo: Spoleto, 24-29 aprile 2014*, by Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull’alto Medioevo (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull’alto Medioevo, 2015), 587-610; Jeffery Michael Featherstone, “The Everyday Palace in the Tenth Century,” in *The Emperor’s House: Palaces from Augustus to the Age of Absolutism*, ed. Jeffery Michael Featherstone, Jean-Michel Spiesser, Gulru Tanman, et. al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 149-158; Westbrook, *The Great Palace in Constantinople*, 51-109.

<sup>31</sup> For the Mese: *ODB*, s.v. “Mese,” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005). <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-3483?rskey=57mDEZ&result=1> (accessed March 13, 2021); Marlina Mundell Mango, “The Commercial Map of Constantinople” *DOP* 54 (2000), 189-207. For the Hippodrome in Constantinople: *ODB*, s.v. “Hippodromes,” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005). <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-2312?rskey=NvbLFO&result=1> (accessed March 15, 2021); Gilbert Dagron, *L’hippodrome de Constantinople: Jeux, people et politique* (Paris: Gallimard, 2011); Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions: Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 57-192; For triumphal processions and urban celebrations: Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 131-188, especially 159-178; For imperial and ecclesiastical processional routes throughout Constantinople: Albrecht Berger, “Imperial and Ecclesiastical Processions in Constantinople,” in *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography, and Everyday Life*, ed. Nevera Necipoğlu (Leiden, NL: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2001), 73-87.

<sup>32</sup> Byzantium’s volatile history has been well documented. Instances of popular uprising have been discounted as exceptional, rather than fitting into a broader history of popular political agency. One example of popular politics usurping an emperor’s expectations occurred in the fourth-century. When Emperor Julian greeted the populace in the Hippodrome, he was expecting

The Roman character of the Byzantine polity is central to any understanding of Byzantine ceremonial. “Roman-ness,” more broadly, helps us situate ceremonial exchanges in the political realities of Medieval Roman life and, therefore, requires further discussion. Constantinopolitans gathered for public participation in ceremonial exchanges as a means of political dialogue; a Roman legacy which began with the very founding of Constantinople and continued until at least the fourteenth century.<sup>33</sup> Historically, scholars of Byzantium willfully or unintentionally dismissed, ignored, or de-emphasized the Roman nature of the Byzantine polity. Instead, they described Byzantium as a state that blended “Roman political concepts, Greek culture, and the Christian faith.”<sup>34</sup> Of those three components, Byzantine education, which was grounded in Greek *paideia* has, been easy to focus on — the products of such scholarly enterprises are some of the precious few remnants from the Byzantine era.<sup>35</sup> Christianity and its legacy were also easily recognizable elements of Byzantine identity for the modern eye. Constantine the Great’s adoption of Christianity became a convenient benchmark for historical periodization: everything prior to this occasion was a product of imperial “Rome”; everything subsequent was taken to be a new “Byzantine” creation.<sup>36</sup>

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acclamations. However, he was met with derision during a public ceremony due to an ongoing food shortage: Lieve Van Hoof and Peter Van Nuffelen, “Monarchy and Mass Communication: Antioch A.D. 362/3 Revisited,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 101 (2011), 170-174. For further examples: Anthony Kaldellis, “How to Usurp the Throne in Byzantium: The Role of Public Opinion in Sedition and Rebellion,” in *Power and Subversion in Byzantium: Papers from the Forty-Third Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, March 2010*, eds. Dimiter Angelov and Michael Saxby (Farnham, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 43-56; Dimitris Krallis, “‘Democratic’ Action in Eleventh-Century Byzantium: Michael Attaleiates’ ‘Republicanism’ in Context,” *Viator* 40:2 (2009), 35-53.

<sup>33</sup> An early example of Constantinopolitan ceremony can be seen in the funeral of the city’s founder, Constantine the Great: Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, trans. Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 180-182. Ceremonies of the fourteenth century are compiled in a single volume: Pseudo-Kodinos, *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies*. text and trans. Ruth Macrides, J. A. Munitiz, & Dimiter Angelov (Surrey, England & Burlington, USA: Ashgate Publishing, 2013).

<sup>34</sup> George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. Joan Hussey (Rahway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969), 27.

<sup>35</sup> One example of this that will be explored further in Chapter 1 is the *Vita Basili*, where the figure of emperor Basileios I is reimagined as both an Old Testament caricature and a hero of Homeric legends.

<sup>36</sup> Depending on the scholar in question, this chronological split may be moved to the sixth century. Regardless, the divide exists. For more: Anthony Kaldellis, “Political freedom in Byzantium: the rhetoric of liberty and the periodization of Roman history,” *History of European Ideas* 44:6 (2018), 796, 798-800; Leonora Neville, *Byzantine Gender* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 1-4; Anthony Kaldellis, *Byzantium Unbound*. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 1-28.

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century humanists were content to blame Christianity for the “fall” of the Roman state. Byzantium became a rhetorical device, an easy stand-in for autocrats of the Enlightenment era.<sup>37</sup> While such instrumentalization of history has been dismissed by modern scholarship, the scars it left persist. Scholars still conflate religion with what passes as the “official political theory” of the Medieval Roman polity.<sup>38</sup> The vestigial “Roman political concepts” are subsequently dismissed as juridical fossils in a Christian world. The traditional view of Byzantium holds that its political ideology is grounded in the Christian portrait of an emperor painted by Byzantium’s first propagandist: Eusebius of Caesarea.

Eusebius’ perspective on Byzantine politics had two central pillars. The emperor was God’s representative on earth, and he ruled with absolute authority over an intended universal Christian empire.<sup>39</sup> For Byzantinists operating under Eusebian influence, the empire consisted of people who called themselves “Roman,” but this term was purely an empty antiquarian moniker, especially after the sixth century. “Christian” was deemed to be the more apt identifier for those ruled by Constantinople. As for the legacy of imperial Rome, it was not the Byzantines’ to really claim.<sup>40</sup> Ceremonies, then, were merely seen as ritual displays staged by an oriental, quasi-theocratic autocrat.<sup>41</sup> This hypothetical ruler was not answerable to his subjects,<sup>42</sup> and there were no

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<sup>37</sup> Such as Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Gibbon, as summarized in Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 5.

<sup>38</sup> For a more recent application of this theory: Averil Cameron, *The Byzantines* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2006), 1-5, 15-19, 96-115.

<sup>39</sup> Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 158, 172, 181.

<sup>40</sup> For a religious identity being stronger than a regional one: Cyril Mango, *Byzantium: The Empire of New Rome* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1980), 30-31; Gill Page, *Being Byzantine: Greek identity before the Ottomans*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), , 46; Cameron, *The Byzantines*, 1. “Christian imperialism was therefore Hellenic in principle with a sprinkling of the old Roman elements that had survived the invasion of Hellenism into Rome”: Francis Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy: Origins and Background* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1966), 646.

<sup>41</sup> Page, *Being Byzantine*, 46.

<sup>42</sup> Ceremonies have been described as the “ethical concept of groveling”: Alexander Kazhdan and Gilles Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium: An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1982), 125. For similar reductionist view of Hippodrome acclamations: Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 311.

<sup>43</sup> Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 30.

legitimate mechanisms to remove him.<sup>43</sup> Any attempt to challenge his authority was considered acts of sedition.<sup>44</sup> An unbridgeable gap existed between ruler and ruled.<sup>45</sup>

This image of the Byzantine polity is, however, not accurate. Usurpation was common, the people could become cantankerous and rise in rebellion. Even religious tensions, which traditionally have been used to mark whole centuries, may have been vastly overblown.<sup>46</sup> Building upon earlier work that did not find purchase, Anthony Kaldellis presents an alternative view of the Byzantine state, where imperial rhetoric is not the sole source for the study of Byzantine political ideology. Rather, Kaldellis turns to the full body of Byzantine texts.<sup>47</sup> With a widened scope, this new perspective presents Byzantium as a monarchic republic and a nation-state of the Romans, with a citizenry who self-identified as Roman because they were Roman.<sup>48</sup> The citizens of this polity

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<sup>43</sup> This principle was enshrined by Ulpian in *Digest* 1.3.31 through the concept of *princeps legibus solitus est*, the emperor was the legislator of the law: Koenraad Verboven and Olivier Hekster, “Introduction,” in *The Impact of Justice on the Roman Empire: Proceedings of the Thirteenth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire* (Gent, June 21-24, 2017), eds. Olivier Hekster and Koenraad Verboven (Leiden, NL: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2019), 4-7.

<sup>44</sup> Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 30; Kazhdan and Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium*, 9, 125.

<sup>45</sup> Physical separation was promoted by the emperor himself, perhaps as a means of self-preservation: Henry Maguire, “The Heavenly Court,” in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997), 247-258; Anthony Eastmond, “The Heavenly Court, Courtly Ceremony, and the Great Byzantine Ivory Triptyches of the Tenth Century,” *DOP* 69 (2015), 71-73. A peculiar micro-example of this is the recurring motif of the pi-shaped barrier formed either by human “shields” of the eunuch palatial staff, or the built infrastructure of the Hippodrome between emperor and people: *BOC*, 61-71; Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 97-103.

<sup>46</sup> For a more nuanced look into how to approach historiography during Iconoclasm: Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c. 680-859: A history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 787-799. Other examples include Tia Kolbaba’s exploration of the 1054 “schism” between Roman and Constantinopolitan churches. She examines the motivation behind the eleventh-century source of this schism, Humbert of Silva Candida. As Kolbaba asserts, he may have dramatized the actions of the patriarch in order to confirm his bias against the man: Tia Kolbaba, “On the closing of the churches and the rebaptism of the Latins: Greek perfidy or Latin slander?” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 29:1 (2005), 40-41.

<sup>47</sup> This full body of texts includes but not limited to historiography, such as legal texts, and military treatises. For works in the field that anticipate Kaldellis’ turn see: John Bagnell Bury, *A History of the Eastern Roman Empire: From the Fall of Irene to the Accession of Basil I (A.D. 802-867)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). For historiography: Hans-Georg Beck, *Res Publica Romana: Vom Staatsdenken der Byzantiner* (Munich: München Verl. Der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1970); Hans-Georg Beck, *Das byzantinische Jahrtausend* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 1978).

<sup>48</sup> Kaldellis’ conclusions about the “national” aspects of the Medieval Roman state are drawn from Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 1-7, 43-50,

constituted a “single historical political continuity defined by laws, institutions, religion, language, and customs,” namely, Roman ones.<sup>49</sup>

This Roman-ness was evident in all social, cultural, and political aspects of Byzantine life. The traditional Roman understanding of religion was grounded in the belief that properly performed public spectacles would result in divine favour.<sup>50</sup> Proper piety involved the entire polity’s participation, where, “as long as Rome’s citizens would not fail in showing *pietas* to the gods and displaying *virtus* [courage] in defense of their city, Rome would stand forever.”<sup>51</sup> Thus, the adoption of Christianity may have added theology to *religio*, but this did not change the causal nature of ceremonial performance: properly performed ceremonies were intended to win the favour of the Christian God.<sup>52</sup> Medieval Romans inherited the belief that properly performed religion was a matter of public policy.

The imposition of Christianity on the Roman religious experience may have added new doctrines and dogma to the religious universe, but it did not change the intended aim of religion: the strengthening of the Roman state. Intellectually, then, Roman religion was understood in the same way that other high-minded concepts were:

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<sup>53-62</sup>; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983, 2006), 4-7.

<sup>49</sup> Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformation of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 43.

<sup>50</sup> Martin, *Inventing Superstition*, 142; see also 55 to trace this perspective back to Socrates: “correct views about divine forces are necessary for social order and public morality.” Cameron, though dismissive of the “Roman” nature of Byzantium, admits this herself: Cameron, *The Byzantines*, 113.

<sup>51</sup> L. F. Janssen, “‘Superstitio’ and the Persecution of Christians,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 33:2 (Jun. 1979), 141. A case study of this can be seen in the history of Michael Attaleiates, an eleventh-century historian whose own work explains the causes of events as the blend of divine chance (*τύχη*) with human agency — an idea originating in the Roman historian Polybius: Dimitris Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline in Eleventh-Century Byzantium* (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), 171-199.

<sup>52</sup> Most notably, this is evidenced in the preface to the *Book of Ceremonies*: BOC, 8. Buc summarizes the Durkheimian view of political ritual “making visibly present an eternal, invisible order, which in turn legitimizes... the worldly-order.”: Philippe Buc, “Ritual and interpretation: the early medieval case,” *Early Medieval Europe* 9:2 (Feb. 2003), 183-186, quote from 186. This is not to say that Byzantine Christianity was a kind of double doctrine, wherein the religious elite had one dogma compared to that of the Byzantine populace: Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual*, 188. Of note, the uneducated Constantinopolitan would have had a limited knowledge of the content of the modern Bible, with most of their Old Testament knowledge originating in lectionaries: Meredith L. D. Riedel, *Leo VI and the Transformation of Byzantine Christian Identity: Writings of an Unexpected Emperor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 156-160.

“Like liberty, power, and authority [which] are neither born from the mind of the philosopher nor shaped by the tidiness of reason but forged in collective experiences that are messy, often ugly, and, … ambiguous.”<sup>53</sup> Kaldellis argues that this shared Roman identity also shaped how both individual autonomy and imperial authority were understood. To the Medieval Romans, “the emperor could be and often was held accountable by the polity.”<sup>54</sup> Thus, legitimacy was not something that was bestowed upon the emperor by his Christian Orthodox credentials. Rather, consensus and alliances were vital. In a world where “the Roman people remained the true sovereign of the political sphere,” it was the people, not the emperor or other religious institutions, who could bestow and revoke power.<sup>55</sup> This is why the bringing together of people and emperor in a ceremonial setting was paramount. It is also why tensions in the context of these exchanges could turn “frivolous” ceremonies into fraught, dangerous affairs.

With this short excursus on public participation in Byzantine political and ceremonial life, we can return to the three-part framework for managing ceremonial actions. As discussed above, the first part involved the bringing together of various stakeholders. The second part comprises of the ceremonial action itself. Turner refers to this second step as the “liminal” period, where the ritual actors are on the threshold between one ceremonial “state” and another.<sup>56</sup> In a Byzantine context, this may refer to instances such as the promotion to a specific office, or the time of an engagement, when an intended empress is affianced to the reigning monarch. The ceremonial action in this second step propels an individual from one “state” (untitled, unmarried) to another (a higher rank, married monarch).<sup>57</sup> This action could be signified by a coronation, the

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<sup>53</sup> Dean Hammer, *Roman Political Thought: From Cicero to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 3-4.

<sup>54</sup> Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic*, 8.

<sup>55</sup> Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic*, ix.

<sup>56</sup> Turner defines these “states” as a fixed point in a social structure and/or cultural conditions. Thus, the transition involves the breaking away from one state to another: Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 94.

<sup>57</sup> Eric Hobsbawm argues that symbolic actions are used within a polity to create ideological continuities where they may not exist. For example, he believes these actions can both reminisce on an idealized past and can be used to manufacture stability in a tumultuous present: Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1. Other purposes for ceremonial action are proposed by Gerd Althoff. He believes that rituals are either the product of rigid compulsion or of utilitarian-rationalism. The obvious mutability of Byzantine ceremonies discounts the former for the later. Gerd Althoff, “The Variability of Rituals in the

bestowing of a title, or the solemnization of marriage.<sup>58</sup> These moments of transition could, and often did, spur volatile dialogues among the ceremonial participants. The audience for these ceremonies were Romans, who had expectations of how they were to be governed. If they had concerns about the newly appointed official, or the newly crowned emperor, they had no qualms expressing that displeasure. The Roman expectation of active engagement in public political processes broadens the scope of who is considered a ceremonial participant. Ceremonial performance involved both those who were elevated to a new ceremonial state, and the broader polity. Ceremonies were occasions where public participation was an integral component of the Roman political process.

The positioning of ceremonial participants, then, reflected the social realities of the Constantinopolitan hierarchy; those of a higher rank — be they bureaucrats, senators, or army officers — would often be brought in first to interact with the emperor.<sup>59</sup> Only after the meeting with a coterie of ambitious statesmen and generals would the ceremonial audience widen to include broader swaths of the Constantinopolitan populace. The exchanges between notables and emperor were careful compromises of aspirations.<sup>60</sup> The emperor had his agenda for maintaining

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Middle Ages," in *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory, Historiography* eds. Gerd Althoff, Johannes Fried, and Patrick J. Geary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 73.

<sup>58</sup> Respectively: BOC, 193-196; BOC, 263-265; BOC, 207-216, particularly 205-207.

<sup>59</sup> For the legacy of the structure of the Roman court- a discussion of particular interest for this Medieval Roman configuration: Peter Fibiger Bang, "Court and State in the Roman Empire – Domestication and Tradition in Comparative Perspective," in *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires: A Global Perspective*, eds. Jeroen Duindam, Tülay Artan, and Metin Kunt (Leiden, NL: Brill Publishing, 2011), 127. An example of this proximity to the emperor can be found in the Easter Sunday ceremonial template: BOC, 24, 61-62; Kaldellis, "How to Usurp the throne in Byzantium," 48-50.

<sup>60</sup> For a broader discussion of competition: Christian Rollinger, "The Importance of Being Splendid: Competition, Ceremonial, and the Semiotics of Status at the Court of Late Roman Emperors (4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Centuries)," in *Gaining and Losing Imperial Favour in Late Antiquity: Representation and Reality*, eds. Kamil Cyprian Choda, Maurits Sterk de Leeuw, and Fabian Schulz (Leiden, NL: Brill Publishing, 2019), 39. For a historical perspective of competition in imperial courts: Rolf Strootman, *Courts and Elites in the Hellenistic Empires: The Near East After the Achaemenids, c. 330 to 30 BCE* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 1-27. While not mentioned explicitly, this conversation follows Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "social capital" defined as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition," as found in Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1986), 21. While Bourdieu's understanding of aristocracy does not fit with Byzantine organization

imperial power; the statesmen, their own for obtaining it. In Byzantium, this feat was achieved through favour and consensus rather than hereditary birthright.<sup>61</sup> At the most basic layer, the exchanges between emperor and his officials would be of an economic nature. The emperor distributed titles, wealth, or other tangible gifts to specific individuals or a wider audience in exchange for political allegiance.<sup>62</sup> These distributions were either planned — instances when a specific ceremony was initiated for the purpose of a titled promotion — or “spontaneous” acts of generosity.<sup>63</sup> Verbal exchanges were also common; the emperor would give an address or have a rhetorician do so on his behalf.<sup>64</sup> These speeches would reach even those who held the “nosebleed seats” in Byzantine spectacles, the people. The people may be collectively gathered in the Hippodrome or be represented by the circus factions in the palace. Either way, they would have the opportunity to respond to the ceremonial event they had just witnessed.<sup>65</sup> Their replies could, in turn, vary from ritualized acclamations towards God or the emperor to countering the official speeches with their own. These could even be opportunities for the expression of other emotional or physical states.<sup>66</sup> The responses

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of power, social capital is a valuable tool for considering ceremonies as a means of establishing and reinforcing symbolic relationships. I am avoiding the outright use of the term, “social capital” for the wider academic spat this term often invokes. Following the advice of Bourdieu, I avoid being constrained by scientific rigidity in the pursuit of scientific rigour: Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J. D. Wacquant. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 227.

<sup>61</sup> For an overview of social mobility of bureaucrats in the tenth century: Jonathan Shea, *Politics and Government in Byzantium: The Rise and Fall of the Bureaucrats* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020), particularly 1-6.

<sup>62</sup> This can be understood as the exchange from economic capital, tangible wealth, to social capital, an expected allegiance.

<sup>63</sup> Planned distribution of wealth occurred during the Broumalion: BOC, 600-607. A spontaneous distribution of wealth was seen in the ninth century when the usurper, Basileios I distributed some of his own wealth to the Constantinopolitan onlookers during his coronation. This may have eased some discomfort over the fact that he murdered his benefactor Emperor Michael III. Skylitzes (Wortley), 130; Skylitzes (Thurn), 131-132.

<sup>64</sup> Epiphany became a calendric occasion for such rhetorical displays. These were devoted to the praise of an emperor. Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *Secular Orations 1167/8 to 1179*, trans. Andrew F. Stone (Leiden, NL: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2013), 11-65; 67-130.

<sup>65</sup> This happened in the case of Anastasios’ rise to the throne. While Ariadne, the then empress, chose him, he was confirmed by the people. The people even made their request for the new monarch to Ariadne within the space of the Hippodrome. For a detailed discussion: Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic*, 106-108.

<sup>66</sup> An example of making demands of the emperor: BOC, 296-301. For an example of an emotional response to such a speech can be seen in the “funeral” oration of Leon VI during Lent, as recorded in Skylitzes (Wortley), 186; Skylitzes (Thurn), 191-192.

were variable, reflecting the uncontrolled nature of public ceremonies. For an emperor, a ceremony was an imperially mandated gamble.

The contested space of ceremonies lent itself to battles for public opinion. An ambitious rhetorician could use the public forum of orations to elevate his own status to a captive Constantinopolitan audience. A bookish emperor, precariously sitting on the throne, could try to win over reluctant notables by granting them titles and salaries. A public oath in service of the city could endear a newly minted *eparch* (a form of extra-strength capital-city mayor) to both the people and his staff. All three of these examples demonstrate how ceremonies facilitated the cultivation of public consensus for particular goals.<sup>67</sup> Ceremonies, then, were metaphorical “currency exchanges”<sup>68</sup> where economic capital, such as titles, could be exchanged for social capital, the allegiance of a notable (or the people). Social capital could be acquired, as an emperor endeared himself to the public by listening to their supplications.<sup>69</sup> Even cultural capital could be demonstrated — as in the case of smaller scale ceremonies, where true Greek *paideia* could be put on display. Bourdieu’s theories of practice may have been developed to describe a feudal system, but ceremonial networking was a very real phenomenon in Byzantium: capital in all forms could be acquired and spent, or, as alluded to above, gambled.<sup>70</sup>

The response to ceremonial displays, the third part to the ceremonial process, is more difficult to measure. Usually, in Constantinople, a ceremonial performance had a

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<sup>67</sup> All three of these examples occurred routinely in public life. The first of which would commonly occur in the delivery of an *ekphrasis*, occasionally *enkomion*, during Epiphany: Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *Secular Orations*, 11-65; 67-130; and Elizabeth Jeffreys, “Rhetoric in Byzantium,” in *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2007), 172. The second example describes Konstantinos himself: Skylitzes (Wortley), 229; Skylitzes (Thurn), 237-238. The third example can be found in the life of the eparch Romanos. He was so well liked among the palace staff that he married the then-dying emperor’s daughter and was proclaimed Romanos III Argyros: Skylitzes (Wortley), 353; Skylitzes (Thurn), 374.

<sup>68</sup> Bourdieu preferred the term “symbolic capital” as a means of converting one form of capital into another. He defines symbolic capital as “the theoretical construction which retrospectively projects the counter-gift into the project of the gift does not only have the effect of making mechanical sequences of obligatory acts … the fact that the giver’s undeclared calculation has to reckon with the receiver’s undeclared calculation, and hence satisfy his expectations without appearing to know what they are.” Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 112. For the global traveler, a currency exchange is a more apt imagery.

<sup>69</sup> The acquisition of social capital allowed the emperor to utilize the said capital to “transform all circumstantial relationships into lasting connections.” Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” 23.

<sup>70</sup> Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” 15-26; Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 114-121.

peaceful outcome. In instances when a title was conferred upon a new official, the response would come in the form of oral acceptance of this new officer. The official would be led to his home, usually with a member of the palatial staff.<sup>71</sup> Other times, the ceremonies would end with a feast to commemorate the occasion.<sup>72</sup> A successful ceremony was one that resulted in consensus that affirmed the shared values of the collectivity.<sup>73</sup> If consensus was achieved, the ceremony could transition to a moment of catharsis. If a consensus was not met, the situation could change rapidly.

Unsuccessful ceremonies, where the complex ritual event failed to create or affirm a consensus, were moments of disruption. If a ceremony deviated from the expected standard, the response could vary based on the nature of the change itself. Expectations existed for a ceremonial performance; each successful ceremony was built upon the memory of previously performed versions of the same event. When an emperor decided to change a ceremony to suit his own purposes, he was taking a calculated gamble.<sup>74</sup> First, how could he guarantee that, by changing the ceremonial action, the message he wanted to convey through ceremony would be received as intended? Any oral message passed on from one person to the next has the risk of the speaker or listener miscommunicating. A rhetorical display from one emperor to an audience of thousands dramatically increased the risk of misunderstandings. Second, was an emperor's relationship with the ceremonial audience strong enough that they would positively accept a change that deviated from *their* expectations for proper performance? Romans grappled with political concepts through collective action. Any

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<sup>71</sup> Appointment of patricians: *BOC*, 251.

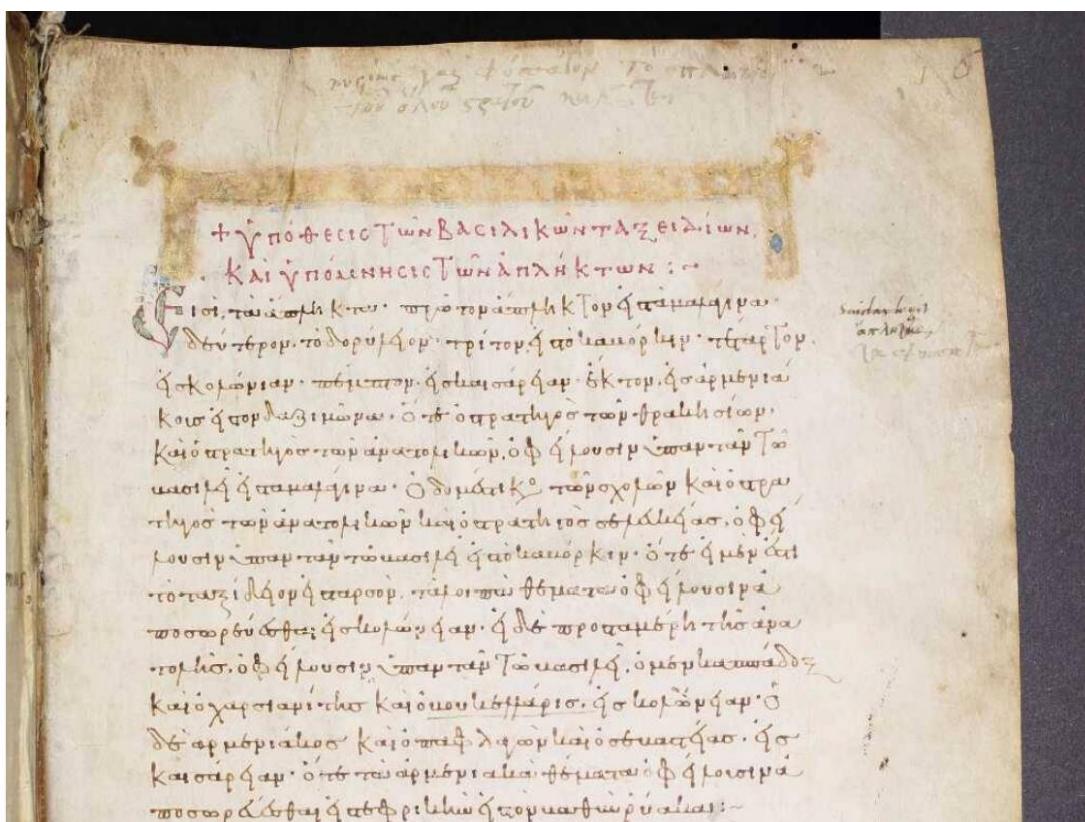
<sup>72</sup> Ending the feast of Epiphany with a banquet: *BOC*, 146-147.

<sup>73</sup> Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual*, 255-259.

<sup>74</sup> As considered in Gerd Althoff's works, both in "Introduction" and "The Variability of Rituals in the Middle Ages," in *Medieval Concepts of the Past*, 10-11; 71-75. There have been explorations of the contradiction of ceremonial behaviour by acknowledging that those who "controlled" the ceremony had to ensure the message they intended to convey was unambiguous; yet, by virtue of instituting a ceremonial change, these ceremonies could communicate an ambiguous and unclear meaning. Ceremonies were particularly strong mnemonic devices as they interacted with both semantic and episodic memory; meaning is attached both to the individual actions and to the narratives that are produced in them: Gerd Althoff, Johannes Fried, and Patrick J. Geary, "Introduction," in *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory, Historiography*, eds. Gerd Althoff, Johannes Fried, and Patrick J. Geary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 10-11; Althoff, "The Variability of Rituals in the Middle Ages," 71-75. For more on the interaction between memory and expectation: Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the end of the First Millennium* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 8-22.

individual act of an emperor which broke from Roman tradition would need to be accepted by the Romans, be it the circle of Medieval Roman elite, the people of Constantinople, or, ideally for the emperor, both. If the emperor had not properly endeared himself to his audience, they would not hesitate to respond to change with hostility. And finally, if the emperor lost the consensus in this ceremonial tug-of-war, what happened next? With these questions in mind, one can explore the written handbook on court ceremonies in Constantinople, the *Book of Ceremonies*.

## The Book of Ceremonies



**Figure 2:** The Leipzig Manuscript of the *Book of Ceremonies* c. 959<sup>75</sup>

Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos commissioned the *Book of Ceremonies* so that “the imperial power will have measure and order reflecting the harmony and

<sup>75</sup> Image adapted from: *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae Leipzig*, c. 959, manuscript 32.5 x 23.5 cm, Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Rep. I 17 (Leihgabe Leipziger Stadtbibliothek), Leipzig, accessed 8 June, 2021 <https://digital.ub.uni-leipzig.de/mirador/index.php#4165d3c0-9cc9-4ee9-9441-b0a260e27544>

movement of the creator in relation to the whole.”<sup>76</sup> The text covers a series of ceremonial templates which outline the people, places, objects, actions, chants, and songs deployed in a proper Byzantine ceremonial performance. The emperor and his team divided this work into two parts, “Book I” and “Book II.”<sup>77</sup> In the introduction to Book I, Konstantinos outlines the purpose of the document, that “the reins of power will be managed with order and beauty” and that this first volume was to act as an imperial “keepsake.”<sup>78</sup> Konstantinos feared that the ceremonial templates which previous emperors had adhered to were at risk of being forgotten and so he saw his work as an act of preservation.<sup>79</sup> Some of the ceremonial performances included in his work would have been anachronistic to a tenth century audience. Many of the titles mentioned, in fact, no longer existed in his time and some palatial spaces had either been renovated, abandoned, or outright destroyed by the tenth-century.<sup>80</sup> Book II, on the other hand, contains the templates of ceremonies that Konstantinos had performed himself during his reign and wished to maintain as a modern blueprint for subsequent rulers.<sup>81</sup>

Konstantinos’ influence is far more obvious in Book II, which covers contemporary ceremonies. Here, he does not hesitate to include his own commentaries on ceremonial templates. Often, he digresses into accounts of how *his* ceremonial performance varied from that of his father’s or grandfather’s.<sup>82</sup> Occasionally, he first provides a nondescript ceremonial template which identifies only the titles of the individuals involved, only to make an addendum where he describes the event in question, identifying specific contemporary courtiers who filled that specific ceremonial

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<sup>76</sup>BOC, 5. The document in its modern form comes to us in a tenth-century manuscript in the University Library of Leipzig, *Lipsiensis Univ., Rep.*, which was produced in 959, as reproduced in Figure 1.

<sup>77</sup> The designations of Book I and Book II are as scripted in the Moffat edition of the *Book of Ceremonies*. The latest edition may provide different designations for these two halves. Regardless, the work was divided in its ancient form in two parts: BOC, xxiii; John Bagnell Bury, “The Ceremonial Book of Constantine Porphyrogenetos,” *The English Historical Review* 22 (1907), 209-227.

<sup>78</sup> BOC, 5.

<sup>79</sup> BOC, 4.

<sup>80</sup> Such as the fountain courts within the palace, as celebrated in the Gold Hippodrome Festival: BOC, 284-293; 296-301; VB, 297-299.

<sup>81</sup> BOC, 517.

<sup>82</sup> BOC, 604-607.

role.<sup>83</sup> Finally, on the rarest of occasions, he writes veiled criticisms of his predecessor and father-in-law, Romanos I Lekapenos (r. 920-944).<sup>84</sup> Ultimately, Book II provides details which would have been recognizable to a tenth-century reader and gives the Byzantinist a glimpse into Konstantinos' understanding of the mutability of ceremonial performance, both from reign-to-reign, and from written text to lived reality.<sup>85</sup> Collectively then, these documents provide two ways of examining the same phenomenon: Konstantinos' desire for order on the one hand, and what ceremonial order looked like in the tenth century on the other. While this document may be read as merely a ceremonial handbook, it cannot be disconnected from the discussion of ceremonies as social bonds and consensus building exercises addressed above. Konstantinos' understanding of ceremonial expectations is, in fact, enshrined in the document. Both his expectations of how an emperor could run ceremonies but also the polity's interaction with ceremonial behaviour is made evident throughout the work. While Book II shows these expectations in a contemporary setting, the archival nature of Book I reveals a document carefully curated and propagated by Konstantinos to match his own understanding of the past.<sup>86</sup>

Konstantinos' crafting of both the archival volume (Book I) and the contemporaneous handbook (Book II) fit within the broader literary project of the so-called Macedonian dynasty. In an attempt to legitimize his nascent dynasty, Konstantinos' grandfather, Basileios I (r. 811 – 886 CE), emphasized the Roman and Christian motifs that marked his reign. His rise to power came at the tail end of the tumultuous eighth and ninth centuries, when religious conflicts and a challenging international scene shaped Byzantine social and political life. Resurgence under the Macedonian dynasty intentionally reflected Old Testament tropes; Basileios I took on the mantle of King David, a military man who consolidated power after his predecessor was

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<sup>83</sup> Compare *BOC*, 566-570 and *BOC*, 570-588.

<sup>84</sup> *BOC*, 606. This episode will be examined at length in Chapter 1.

<sup>85</sup> Konstantinos admits the variability of ceremonies himself in the preface to Book II: *BOC*, 516.

<sup>86</sup> Buc remains firmly ensconced in the belief that retrospectively written ritual propagates a manufactured consensus that did not exist in practiced ritual and, as such, should be examined with skepticism: Buc, "Ritual and interpretation," 199-201; Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual* 2-4, 248-250; Buc, "Text and Ritual in Ninth-Century Political Culture: Rome 864," in *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory, Historiography* edited by Gerd Althoff, Johannes Fried, and Patrick J. Geary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 137-138. However, the *Book of Ceremonies* leaves spaces for contestation and does not pretend to impose consensus. There is intentional room for variations in ceremonial behaviour for the people and the emperor: *BOC*, 516.

unfit to rule; Leon VI, “the Wise” (r. 866-912 CE), his successor, assumed the persona of King Solomon, updating law codes and codifying protocols.<sup>87</sup> Konstantinos followed his father, Leon’s, literary footsteps. He codified ceremonies, mapped the polity, thought about international affairs, supported teams of scholars who compiled massive compendia of ancient thought, and commissioned historical works, including an account of his grandfather’s reign, the *Vita Basili*.<sup>88</sup> This latter document succinctly demonstrates Konstantinos’ erudition and exposure to Classical Greek and Roman pedagogy. His rhetorical posturing is in line with Greek practice and the portrait of his grandfather is taken, sometimes directly, from Plutarch’s Lives.<sup>89</sup> While varied in subject matter and audience, then, the *Book of Ceremonies* is a document with an agenda, both a codified handbook and a rhetorical statement. Through written ceremonial templates, Konstantinos hoped to implement policy, “presented in the best possible light, courtesy of rhetoric.”<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> For the comparison between Old Testament and contemporaneous rulers: Henry Maguire, “The Art of Comparing in Byzantium,” *The Art Bulletin* 70:1 (1988), 91-93; Paul Magdalino, “Knowledge in Authority and Authorised History: The Imperial Intellectual Programme of Leo VI and Constantine VII,” in *Authority in Byzantium*, ed. Pamela Armstrong (Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2013), 194-197. It should be noted that Magdalino’s theocratic agenda is an oversimplification. For more see also: Leslie Brubaker, “To legitimize an emperor: Constantine and visual authority in the eighth and ninth centuries,” in *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> Centuries: Papers from the Twenty-sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St Andrews, March 1992*, ed. Paul Magdalino (Hampshire, UK and Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1994), 139-158.

<sup>88</sup> Full list of both Leo’s and Konstantinos’ works: Magdalino, “Knowledge in Authority and Authorized History,” 189-193. For a deeper, albeit dated, examination of Konstantinos’ work: Arnold Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 575-605. For more about the context of Leon’s works: John F. Haldon, *A Critical Commentary on the Taktika of Leo VI* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2014), 9-15.

<sup>89</sup> Rhetoric in Byzantium was transmitted through the study of rhetorical handbooks as described by Elizabeth Jeffreys, “Rhetoric in Byzantium,” 170-171; Romilly J. H. Jenkins, *Studies on Byzantine History of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1970), 71-73.

<sup>90</sup> Margaret Mullett, “Rhetoric, theory and the imperative of performance: Byzantium and now,” in *Rhetoric in Byzantium: Papers from the Thirty-fifth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, University of Oxford, March 2001*, ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys (London: Routledge Publishing, 2003), 155. Mullett’s full chapter unpacks the notion of Byzantine rhetoric, but her summary on page 163 is particularly valuable to our discussion. For the understanding of rhetoric in abridged or compiled documents: Catherine Holmes, “The rhetorical structures of John Skylitzes’ *Synopsis Historion*,” in *Rhetoric in Byzantium*, ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2003), 194-199.

## Outline of Thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the ceremonies recorded in the *Book of Ceremonies* as episodes of political dialogue between the emperor and the various social strata of Constantinople. The document was inspired by the first two monarchs in the Macedonian dynasty, was compiled by Konstantinos and his team, and its blueprint appears to have been in use all the way into the eleventh century and the last scions of said dynasty. I argue that the ceremonies discussed therein were not ritualistic displays staged by religiously overzealous churchgoers for the purpose of inflating an emperor's ego, but moments of tension, contestation, and dialogue among Romans. The Roman nature of said ceremonial meant that the people expected to have a role in the moments of dialogue instantiated by imperial ritual. This was a reality too potent for Konstantinos to ignore in the *Book of Ceremonies*. He therefore had to balance the precarious nature of his rule with the expected moments of action by his overly ambitious courtiers and the city population. The modern reader can see these moments of tension throughout the ceremonial performances included in the *Book of Ceremonies*.

This thesis examines the ceremonies recorded in the *Book of Ceremonies* as tenth century examples of political action in two acts. Chapter 1 introduces the key historical precedents that shaped and molded both the contents of the archival volume (Book 1) and how Konstantinos defined his own ceremonial behaviours in line with or in opposition to his predecessors (Book 2). We also get introduced to some of the key spaces of ceremonial contestation, and the players who influenced ceremonial performances. As I outline the ceremonial acts and performances of the three monarchs preceding Konstantinos — Basileios I, Leon VI, and Romanos I Lekapenos — the *Book of Ceremonies* becomes a document firmly grounded in the Roman realities of the tenth century. Chapter 2 argues for the far-reaching legacy of ceremonial templates within the *Book of Ceremonies* in Constantinople by means of the eleventh-century example of Michael V Kalaphates (r. 1041-1042). Michael's attempt to harness ceremonial expectations for his own political purposes in April and May 1042 aligns with the types of ceremonial manipulation Konstantinos witnessed from his father-in-law, Romanos. Michael attempted to gain sole rule for himself but was toppled by a politically motivated populace. His power grab is a case-study of imperial ceremonies in action and will be

reconsidered in a Roman context. While Michael's power grab proved unsuccessful, his example is nevertheless instructive.

Finally, this thesis is built, to a degree, upon a narrative technique utilized by Byzantine scholars to address the paucity of sources time has left us: plausible, informed historical speculation. This is a methodology wherein we engage with a full body of sources to reconstruct both historical events and the context that surrounds them.<sup>91</sup> These sources set our stage, but they can only do so much. Speculation — or, to put it in less offensive terms, revision and reconstruction, or even modeling — must enter where facts end, lest we be constrained to inhabit a half-formed world. We may not draw definitive conclusions, but we write about what *may* plausibly have occurred. We also study the logic that *may* have been deployed to tell full-bodied stories. Ironically, this methodology does not stray far from Konstantinos' methods. When interacting with foreigners unfamiliar with the Medieval Roman polity, Konstantinos encouraged his son to construct 'plausible speeches' (*λόγων πιθανῶν*) to avoid disclosing state secrets.<sup>92</sup> Modern Byzantine historians and this thesis cautiously and creatively deploy such techniques to better elucidate what still escapes us.

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<sup>91</sup> An example of this may be seen in the description of Attaleiates walking along the Mese in: Dimitris Krallis, *Serving Byzantium's Emperors: The Courtly Life and Career of Michael Attaleiates* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 88-97. A similar methodology is used in the study of enslaved women in the Caribbean. Here, Marisa Fuentes fills in the "absence of evidence with spatial and historical context [in order to shift our historical viewpoint] to the enslaved." Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 4.

<sup>92</sup> Paul Magdalino, "Knowledge in Authority and Authorised History," 207.

## Chapter 1.

### Making a Ceremony: The historical underpinning of the *Book of Ceremonies*

On January 27<sup>th</sup> 945 CE, three emperors entered the dining hall of the Great Palace of Constantinople to share a meal.<sup>93</sup> The three had been at odds since the previous December, when the senior ruler was toppled from the Constantinopolitan throne. The usurper-turned-senior-emperor Romanos I Lekapenos had been exiled from the palace and forced to take the monastic habit.<sup>94</sup> The ensuing power vacuum left each co-emperor on edge. It was a question of when, not if, one would make a play for sole control over the throne. Two of the men were unaware of the finality of the occasion; the third was the orchestrator of this last supper.

Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos, the eldest of the three, was the obvious outsider among the trio. His connection to the other two — the brothers Stephanos and Konstantinos Lekapenos — came through marriage. Konstantinos' wife, Helena Lekapene, had served as a nuptial bridge, connecting Romanos to Konstantinos. Her marriage granted Romanos, himself an imperial interloper, something his power grab lacked: imperial lineage. As the “purple born,”<sup>95</sup> Konstantinos was an issue of the so-called “Macedonian dynasty.” Established as a ruling family by Basileios I, the

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<sup>93</sup> The dining hall in question is not mentioned in the primary sources. There are two plausible locations where this meal could have occurred: either the Hall of the Nineteen Couches, a space used for grandiose feasts, or the smaller *Ioustinianos* (Justinianos) Hall. Both were used for dining, albeit for larger or smaller occasions. The choice of venue would have been dependent on how public the emperors wanted the spectacle of ousting the other to be. For more on these spaces: Featherstone, “Space and Ceremony in the Great Palace of Constantinople,” 591, 595; Westbrook, *The Great Palace in Constantinople*, 237-238, 265-267.

<sup>94</sup> Three views of this account: Skylitzes (Wortley), 225-228; Skylitzes (Thurn), 233-237; Symeon Logothete, *The Chronicle of the Logothete*, trans. Staffan Wahlgren (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2019), 251-253; Liudprand of Cremona, ed. P. Chiesa, *Liutprando di Cremona e il codice di Frisinga Clm 6388*, 1994; text and trans. Paolo Squatriti, *The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona*, (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 183-188.

<sup>95</sup> “Porphyrogennetos” in Greek means “purple born” referencing an apartment in the imperial chambers where the empress would give birth. ODB, s.v. “Porphyrogennetos,” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005).

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-4425?rskey=Zfx5HW&result=1> (accessed December 20, 2020).

Macedonians had ruled Byzantium for two generations before Romanos inserted himself into the imperial landscape.<sup>96</sup>

Basileios, Konstantinos' grandfather, had established the dynasty through less-than noble means. After murdering his patron Michael III, Basileios needed to ensure this act did not set a precedent — one should not kill just *any* emperor, after all.<sup>97</sup> He, therefore, reconciled himself with the offended clergy by becoming, or posing as someone, zealously religious. He also associated his rule with Old Testament figures and funded the establishment of churches in the palace and across the capital.<sup>98</sup> As for the secular officials, he won their favour through military success.<sup>99</sup> Ultimately, he left behind a stronger state than the one he had inherited. His son, Leon VI “the Wise,” was given the far easier task of continuing a legacy, rather than establishing one.

Leon’s imperial rule struck a different tone than that of his father’s. While Basileios presented himself as a “New David,” Leon was appropriately deemed a “New Solomon.” He left a literary legacy consisting of military handbooks and an updated law code.<sup>100</sup> By reforming Justinian’s venerable work, Leon consolidated power in a manner recognized by all Medieval Romans: attention to the law.<sup>101</sup> With a respectable reputation in place, Leon had left a clear path to succession for his heir... if only he had one. Producing said heir proved to be a greater challenge than anticipated. When his first wife died without bearing a son, Leon could, without canonical or legal pushback, take another. When the second wife died childless, he grew worried. When the third died delivering her stillborn son, Leon was in dire straits. The son and heir he so desperately

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<sup>96</sup> For a complete overview of the Macedonian dynasty from the ninth to eleventh centuries: Shaun Tougher, “Imperial Families: The Case of the Macedonians (867-1056) in *Approaches to the Byzantine Family* eds. Leslie Brubaker and Shaun Tougher (Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2013), 303-323.

<sup>97</sup> For political crimes: Μπουρδάρα Α. Καλλιόπη, *ΚΑΘΟΣΙΩΣΙΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΥΡΑΝΝΙΣ: ΤΟ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΟ ΑΔΙΚΗΜΑ ΣΤΟ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΟ, 8ος-13ος ΑΙΩΝΙΑΣ* (Athens: ΗΡΟΔΟΤΟΣ, 2015). See Chapter 2 of this work for the reign of Michael III and Chapter 3 for the crimes in the Macedonian dynasty.

<sup>98</sup> For more on this discussion, see below.

<sup>99</sup> Shaun F. Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (866-912): Politics & People* (Brill, NL: Brill Academic Publishing, 1997), 30-34; Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 457-458.

<sup>100</sup> Magdalino, “Knowledge in Authority and Authorised History,” 193-200. More on the discussion of “New Solomon” will be found below.

<sup>101</sup> For the imperial legacy of the laws of Leon VI and their connection to the Roman polity: Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic*, 9-14.

needed was born to him through a mistress, Zoe Karbonopsina.<sup>102</sup> Leon chose to marry her after the fact, making Zoe his fourth wife — an act he himself had banned years prior in his legislation.<sup>103</sup> This marriage threw the Constantinopolitan church into a schism which would outlive Leon.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, siring Konstantinos relatively later in life came with consequences: Leon died of dysentery while his heir was still a child. For all his attempts to create a clean succession, Leon left the Constantinopolitan throne vulnerable to external and internal threats.

The intervening years between Leon's stable reign and the rise of the regent Romanos featured a rotating cast of rulers, regents, and placeholders. Alexander (r. 912-913), Leon's brother, rose to the position of senior emperor after his brother's death. Alexander's imperial legacy is presented as overwhelmingly negative, though the picture is surely complicated.<sup>105</sup> According to one eleventh-century chronicler, he was a decadent fool, who died from every imaginable physical excess.<sup>106</sup> When separated from his infamous reputation, a modern re-examination portrays a more adept ruler than the sources credit.<sup>107</sup> Regardless of one's assessment of Alexander's character, his thirteen-month rule dramatically shifted the balance of power among the Constantinopolitan elite. By recalling the exiled patriarch Nikolaos and sidelining the empress Zoe, Alexander unknowingly set the stage for an imperial tug-of-war between the two.<sup>108</sup> When Alexander perished, Nikolaos took control of a committee of regents responsible for the

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<sup>102</sup> A broader discussion of the issue of tetragamy will be found below. For an apt summary of these questions of gender see Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, 133-163.

<sup>103</sup> Novel 90. Pierre Noailles and Alphonse Dain, *Les nouvelles de Léon VI, le Sage: texte et traduction publiés* (Paris: Société d'édition "Les Belles Lettres", 1994), 279-299. Further discussion of this legislation: Nicolas Oikonomides, "Leo VI's Legislation of 907 Forbidding Fourth Marriages: An Interpolation in the *Procheiros Nomos* (IV, 25-27)" *DOP* 30 (1976), 175-193. This also set the stage for a wider religious conflict discussed below.

<sup>104</sup> For immediate religious aftermath to Leon's actions see Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI* (866-912), 156-163.

<sup>105</sup> For Alexander's early years prior to becoming senior emperor, see Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, 219-232. For primary source accounts of his reign: Skylitzes (Wortley), 188-190; Skylitzes (Thurn), 193-196; Logothete, *The Chronicle of the Logothete*, 219-220.

<sup>106</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 190; Skylitzes (Thurn), 195-196.

<sup>107</sup> Patricia Karlin-Hayter suggests Alexander's infamous reputation may be the result of a concerted smear campaign launched on two fronts. Alexander was notoriously anti-aristocratic compared to his brother and implemented a levy against the churches. Powerful stakeholders may thus have intended to smear Alexander's legacy for their own purposes. Patricia Karlin-Hayter, "The Emperor Alexander's Bad Name," *Speculum* 44:4 (1969), 594-596.

<sup>108</sup> Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, 233.

state.<sup>109</sup> This regency would not rule unopposed. Ambitious stakeholders wanted to take advantage of the apparent vulnerability of the child-king Konstantinos. His mother, Zoe, did exactly that. She returned from exile to take the reins of the state but failed to stabilize the tumultuous capital. The looming threat of the Bulgarians and the rumors of a civil uprising overwhelmed her.<sup>110</sup>

Romanos, also known by his surname as Lekapenos, was a successful naval officer who leveraged his military reputation to vie for the vulnerable throne. On the pretense of protecting the young heir, he was promoted to the rank of *Kaisar*, and then had himself declared co-emperor.<sup>111</sup> Once he had achieved imperial rule, Romanos exiled Zoe for good and had his sons promoted as co-emperors as well.<sup>112</sup> These acts effectively sidelined Konstantinos from the practical aspects of governing the Roman state. As a living memory of a previous dynasty, his role in statecraft was purely ceremonial. Functionally imprisoned in the palace, Konstantinos' nevertheless had a claim to the throne because of his imperial pedigree. Thus, Romanos' exit from Constantinople in December 944, after 25 years of effective rule, only removed one obstacle from Konstantinos' path to the throne: Romanos' sons Stephanos and Konstantinos remained.<sup>113</sup> Konstantinos may have been the obvious choice for sole rulership since his Lekapenoi counterparts had achieved power by way of the "regency," but his sole rule was not a foregone conclusion.

Stephanos Lekapenos, the middle co-ruler, was the one with the most to lose that evening of January 27<sup>th</sup>. Forty days prior, he had weighed the risk and deemed it

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<sup>109</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 191; Skylitzes (Thurn), 197.

<sup>110</sup> This will be discussed extensively below, but for a summary: Skylitzes (Wortley), 195-202; Skylitzes (Thurn), 201-209.

<sup>111</sup> This progression can be followed on the numismatic record: Hugh Goodacre, "The Story of Constantine VII, Porphyrogenitus, from his Solidi," *The Numismatic Chronicle and Journal of the Royal Numismatic Society* 15:58 (1935), 114-119. For a historical account of this: Steven Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and his Reign: A Study of Tenth-Century Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), 58-62.

<sup>112</sup> Romanos believed Zoe intended to have him killed. He had her tonsured and exiled to a monastery in response: Skylitzes (Wortley), 204; Skylitzes (Thurn), 211-212. The elevation of Romanos' sons happened over time. His eldest son Christopher was crowned in 921. His middle sons Stephanos and Konstantinos were crowned co-emperors in 924: Skylitzes (Wortley), 206, 213; Skylitzes (Thurn), 213, 220-221.

<sup>113</sup> Christopher had died in 931: Skylitzes (Wortley), 219; Skylitzes (Thurn), 226-227.

worthwhile: he orchestrated the ousting of his father to the island of Prote.<sup>114</sup> He believed that by removing Romanos *he* could rise to sole rulership. While Romanos' demotion and exile may have been executed without a hitch, the second part of the plan went awry in a most unexpected manner. Once they learned of Romanos' removal, the Constantinopolitan populace marched to the palace demanding to see Konstantinos. The people feared that Konstantinos had also fallen victim to Stephanos' plot. The only thing that could quell their wrath was the Macedonian himself. After he peered through a palace window, the crowds dispersed peacefully: the Porphyrogenetos was alive and untonsured.<sup>115</sup> Stephanos' endgame was paused, albeit momentarily. The two elder emperors were forced into an uneasy truce. Any action that Stephanos took was bound to rile a volatile populace; Konstantinos had to live with the threat of two scheming Lekapenoi co-emperors.

And what of the youngest Lekapenos brother, Konstantinos? What does he add to our understanding of this fateful evening? If Konstantinos Porphyrogenetos introduces us to dynasties and succession, and if Stephanos' actions bring us to the intersection of the Constantinopolitan public with the affairs of the emperor, Konstantinos Lekapenos' role, albeit limited, highlights the inner workings of the Constantinopolitan court. The sources tell us that Konstantinos Lekapenos "was of a very intractable character," a trait which made him an unappealing choice for a co-conspirator.<sup>116</sup> This was evident in Romanos' exile, an act which the younger Lekapenos opposed. While primary sources give conflicting accounts of who exactly was involved in Romanos' exile, Ioannes Skylitzes, presents an omnipresent puppet-master: Konstantinos Porphyrogenetos. Using his familial and courtly loyalties, the Porphyrogenetos had his childhood friend Basileios Peteinos manufacture this removal. Working through the proxy of Peteinos, a palace guard (in the ἔταιρεία unit), Konstantinos convinced

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<sup>114</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 227; Skylitzes (Thurn), 235-236.

<sup>115</sup> Liudprand, *Complete Works*, 185. In Byzantium, monasticism was epitomized as revoking the earthly world in exchange for singular devotion to Christian worship. Through the act of tonsuring a monk was physically identified as "other." This separation disqualified monks from achieving an imperial position. Consequently, deposed emperors or failed political upstarts were often exiled to monastic establishments, such as in the case of Romanos Lekapenos. For more on monasticism see *ODB*, s.v. "Monasticism," (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005).

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-3601?rskey=rFx8Mi&result=1> (accessed July 25, 2021).

<sup>116</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 226; Skylitzes (Thurn), 234-235.

Stephanos to remove Romanos.<sup>117</sup> When Stephanos tried to recruit his brother, the “intractable” Konstantinos, he refused to participate. Konstantinos encouraged Stephanos to remain loyal to the family. Konstantinos Lekapenos appears more sensible than the elder, he appropriately recognized that the Porphyrogennetos was not to be trusted.<sup>118</sup> He was right to be mistrustful. Once Romanos was removed, Helena Lekapene chose marriage over blood and entreated her husband, the Porphyrogennetos, to rid himself of her brothers.<sup>119</sup> The battlelines were established, the players set, and now it was time for dinner.

On January 27<sup>th</sup> 945, the Lekapenoi invited the Porphyrogennetos to dine with them. The pretense for the meal was to make amends among feuding family lines. In actuality, the Lekapenoi had hidden guards throughout the dining chamber, poised to grasp Konstantinos at an aural cue. Konstantinos had his own counter-ambush of loyal pro-Macedonian soldiers set to seize the Lekapenoi. At the sound of a shield strike, only one side acted. Liudprand of Cremona, a valuable foreign witness of Constantinopolitan affairs, states that the Macedonian surprise counter-ambush overpowered the Lekapenoi brothers.<sup>120</sup> The Logothete Chronicle, a tenth century work which shows no affinity for the Macedonians, provides an alternate telling. Here we find no Lekapenoi ambushers. Rather, the Lekapenoi brothers are hapless victims, seized unexpectedly “while food was in their mouths.”<sup>121</sup> Both storylines note that the brothers were thrown on the next departing vessel, confined to separate monasteries, and exiled from the capital forever.<sup>122</sup> We are not given Konstantinos’ reaction to this turn of affairs. Perhaps his triumph at gaining sole rule had to be muted, lest he break the filial harmony in Psalm

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<sup>117</sup> ODB, s.v. “Hetaireia,” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005). <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-2281?rskey=Jfr5Q8&result=1> (accessed May 25, 2021). For Konstantinos and Peteinos: Skylitzes (Wortley), 226; Skylitzes (Thurn), 234-235.

<sup>118</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 227; Skylitzes (Thurn), 235-236.

<sup>119</sup> Skylitzes has Helena acting as the voice of reason: Skylitzes (Wortley), 227; Skylitzes (Thurn), 235-236. Liudprand has an alternative account, where a conspirator of Stephanos, Diavolinus, double-crossed his benefactor and revealed Stephanos’ scheme to Konstantinos: Liudprand, *Complete Works*, 186-187.

<sup>120</sup> Liudprand, *Complete Works*, 187.

<sup>121</sup> Logothete, *Chronicle of the Logothete*, 252.

<sup>122</sup> Logothete, *Chronicle of the Logothete*, 252; Skylitzes (Wortley), 228; Skylitzes (Thurn), 236-237.

133.<sup>123</sup> With the threats to his throne eliminated, all we know is that Konstantinos turned his attention to strengthening his regime. He removed any suspicious individuals from his inner court and crowned his son co-ruler.<sup>124</sup> Having waited years, Konstantinos could claim senior rulership at the age of thirty-nine.

There are two reasons why I open this chapter — a chapter which explores a written handbook, the *Book of Ceremonies* — with a seemingly unrelated tale of court intrigue. First, as mentioned briefly in the *Introduction* to this thesis, the Macedonian dynasty had a well-known interest in literary production. Konstantinos VII Porphyrogenitos, the author/compiler of the *Book of Ceremonies*, followed in the literary footsteps of his father Leon VI. Leon produced legal, military, and courtly handbooks. Konstantinos expanded upon the courtly work (the *Book of Ceremonies*) and widened the guidebook collection to include volumes on foreign and domestic policy (*De Administrando Imperio, De Thematibus*). Konstantinos also commissioned historical writings to produce a narrative of his grandfather, Basileios', reign (*Continuator of Theophanes and Vita Basili*).<sup>125</sup> Finally, he set teams of scholars upon the task of excerpting ancient historical works and organizing them according to themes — those deemed necessary for properly ruling the Roman state.<sup>126</sup> Because of its prodigious size and the sheer scale of the accomplishment, Konstantinos' scholarship overshadows the man himself. This is even more so because his literary corpus comprises some of modern Byzantinists' most comprehensive guides into Byzantine court culture, literary preoccupations, and international affairs. Consequently, we know much about Konstantinos the author and scriptorium director, often at the expense of Konstantinos the politically engaged ruler.

This chapter aims to free Konstantinos from this literary sarcophagus and instead highlight his political acumen. Recall that Konstantinos was able to achieve sole rule in January 945 by correctly assessing two different factors. First, Konstantinos understood

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<sup>123</sup> Psalm 133, NIV.

<sup>124</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 228; Skylitzes (Thurn), 236-237.

<sup>125</sup> For complete list of Konstantinos' written works: Paul Magdalino, "Knowledge in Authority and Authorised History," 191-193; Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, 575-580. For more on Leo's literary endeavors: Riedel, *Leo VI and the Transformation of Byzantine Christian Identity*, 3-7.

<sup>126</sup> András Németh, *The Excerpta Constantiniana and the Byzantine Appropriation of the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 1-2, 88-95.

that his brothers-in-law were a threat. He heeded the rumored threats against his life and successfully performed a pre-emptive strike against them. Second, he correctly wagered that the name of the Macedonian family still held political sway. He hoped that the populace of Constantinople would not object to his actions like they had to Stephanos' the previous month. His faith in them was rewarded. While his passion lay in his writings, it was his political acumen, not his written work, that propelled him to sole rule.<sup>127</sup> Given Konstantinos' political acumen, the *Book of Ceremonies* can also be understood as this man's guidebook to navigating courtly life. Thus, instead of treating it as an impersonal handbook, I aim to reorient it towards Konstantinos' political reality in the tenth century. He had to grapple with his imperial baggage — a dynasty-founding grandfather, a Church-dividing father, a power-hungry father-in-law — and the day-to-day threats assailing any and all Byzantine monarchs. The document, then, is not just the product of a meticulous event planner — although Konstantinos certainly was one — it is also a written record of Konstantinos' appropriation of the past to suit his lived realities.<sup>128</sup>

The second reason I open this chapter with palace intrigue, rather than a choreographed procession, concerns the vulnerability of an emperor in the Medieval Roman state. As demonstrated by the events of winter 945 and Konstantinos' rise to the throne, the people of Constantinople were actively engaged with the comings and goings of the Great Palace. The people were also active participants during ceremonial occasions, brought together in close proximity with the emperor and other political stakeholders.<sup>129</sup> If the people, courtly officials, and city notables were displeased with the emperor, ceremonies were an excellent means to voice their frustration.<sup>130</sup>

This chapter places the *Book of Ceremonies* in its tenth-century context by comparing records of performed ceremonies to those recorded by Konstantinos and his scholars.<sup>131</sup> While this examination will be focused on the emperor (it is *Konstantinos'*

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<sup>127</sup> Like us all, Konstantinos bemoaned that he did not have more time to write: VB, 8-11.

<sup>128</sup> For tenth-century intellectual engagement with the past: Németh, *The Excerpta Constantiniana*, 14, 165-184.

<sup>129</sup> See the discussion of the three-part ceremonial process this in the *Introduction* of the thesis.

<sup>130</sup> Michael V Kalaphates will be discussed at length in Chapter 2.

<sup>131</sup> An excellent micro-example of similar analysis is offered by Claudia Rapp. As we have both the ceremonial template for how the burial of an emperor was to be performed and an extensive historical account of Konstantinos' own burial in the chronicle of Theophanes Continuatus, she compares formulaic and lived realities. See Claudia Rapp, "Death at the Byzantine Court: The

book after all), we should recognize that the *Book of Ceremonies* is more than just an emperor's day planner.<sup>132</sup> Konstantinos also records aspects of the ceremonial lives of military officials, clergymen, bureaucrats, circus factions, foreign ambassadors and many more. Even though these ceremonial actors often orbited the “star” of the emperor, he was not the only one pushing a political agenda during ceremonies. Courtly allegiances could be made, reinforced, or broken during court ceremonies.<sup>133</sup>

The two-part Lekapenoi banishment was a moment of social and political upheaval, where the strength of Constantinopolitan social bonds was tested. Each step exemplified the different ways Constantinopolitan social ties could be weaponized in moments of political transition. First, Romanos' ousting stirred popular displeasure and brought the masses to the palace. When Constantinopolitans believed they were wronged, they could, and often did, mobilize as one. Singularly focused, they were unafraid to express their displeasure to (and sometimes against) the emperor.<sup>134</sup> The second instance, the standoff between the three co-emperors, highlights the delicate social dynamics of Byzantine court culture. Konstantinos was able to use his social connections, particularly his childhood friendship with the palace guard Peteinos, to his advantage. These social chains tied Byzantine officials to each other and to their emperor; ceremonies were opportunities to reinforce such ties.<sup>135</sup> As mentioned in the *Introduction* to this thesis, ceremonies were one method by which an emperor could acquire and spend social capital. An emperor could expend this social capital for his own political purposes, such as reclaiming one's “stolen” throne. This example of palace intrigues demonstrates the imperial power struggles that could, and often did, occur in the tenth century.

With the ninth- and tenth-century in mind, this chapter presents the ceremonial formalities of the *Book of Ceremonies* as an intersection between imperial power and

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Emperor and his Family,” in *Death at Court* eds. Karl-Heinz Spiess and Immo Warntjes (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012), 273-275 (template), 275-278 (lived reality).

<sup>132</sup> Van Nuffelen, “Playing the Ritual Game in Constantinople (379-457),” 185.

<sup>133</sup> See the discussion of the creation and expending of social capital also in the *Introduction* of the thesis.

<sup>134</sup> For unified popular political action: Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 23.

<sup>135</sup> For patronage and social relations among bureaucrats: Aleksandar Jovanović, “Michael VIII Palaiologos and the Nikaian Generation: Roman Political Culture in the Years of Exile.” (PhD diss., Simon Fraser University, 2019), 55-90; Shea, *Politics and Government in Byzantium*, 33-38.

popular action in Constantinople. This requires a grounding in both the dynastic tendencies of the Macedonians and an understanding of the social bonds linking the Constantinopolitan populace. Both these factors made ceremonies contested affairs rather than choreographed displays. The written templates reflect this reality. In Konstantinos' work there are unwritten "gaps" in ceremonial templates.<sup>136</sup> For example, in the first volume of the *Book of Ceremonies*, the archival document, there are occasions when an action is not fully recorded. Instead of a lengthy description of what behaviours were to occur, an injunction was inserted asking that whatever was "customary" be performed.<sup>137</sup> Sometimes we can reconstruct what might have filled these spaces from the context of the preceding ceremonies.<sup>138</sup> On other occasions, however, we are left with silence. In the second volume, which includes ceremonies contemporaneous to Konstantinos, tensions exist between his ceremonial procedures and those of his forefathers — Basileios I, Leon VI, and Romanos I.

Konstantinos' pen dictated how his predecessors were portrayed and how he aligned himself with or against them. With simple rhetorical flourishes, he could define himself in solidarity with them or include a scathing critique of their actions. Konstantinos' only constraint was memory: his descriptions had to be plausible. Only three generations existed from Konstantinos to Basileios. The ceremonial displays of Konstantinos' predecessors would have lived in the memory of Constantinopolitans. If they had not been first-hand witnesses, they would have heard tales of previous monarchs from parents or grandparents who had been present for the occasion. Thus, Konstantinos' writing was shaped by the bonds he had to his predecessors and the memories the people had of them. As we shall see, this ceremonial past affirmed the present realities of Medieval Roman power: emperors were susceptible to political

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<sup>136</sup> This methodology, described as reading "against the grain," is utilized in colonial studies to utilize the full potential of primary source materials: Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance," *Archival Science* 2 (2002), 99-101; Antoinette Burton, "Archival Stories: Gender in the Making of Imperial and Colonial Histories," in *Gender and Empire* ed. Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 291-292.

<sup>137</sup> This principle is evident on the Monday the week after Easter. Here the factions are often left to do, "what is customary." *BOC*, 284-293.

<sup>138</sup> For example, the four variations on the procession to the Great Church. First, Konstantinos provides a standardized template for the procession. Next, he provides four vignettes which can be inserted into the generalized templates, as a means of filling said gap. *BOC*, 5-22 for the main entry, and 22-26, 26-33, 33, and 33-35 for the variations.

upstarts and popular uprisings.<sup>139</sup> Ceremonies and memories of ceremonies put the precarious of a reigning monarch's position on display.<sup>140</sup> Let us navigate this shaky ground with Konstantinos and observe Roman politics in action.

## The Macedonian Dynasty – Basileios I “the Macedonian”<sup>141</sup>

The legacy of a Medieval Roman emperor was mutable, dependent upon the men (and, on one occasion, a woman) who recorded imperial reigns for posterity. The modern reader must peel away authorial motivations and rhetorical flourishes to determine the plausibility of a historical account. Consider the case of Nikephoros I, a reviled ninth century-iconophile emperor. Theophanes the Confessor, one of our sources on Nikephoros' reign, affirms his religious error (which had little to do with dogma) and condemns the man and the sum total of his policies, administrative, military, and religious.<sup>142</sup> Yet, Nikephoros' fiscal policy was apparently so well-suited to the contemporaneous needs of the Roman state that Theophanes was required to slip praise into his work, lest his informed readers, who understood the administrative realities of the state call the legitimacy of the writing into question.<sup>143</sup> While this one example comes from the ninth century, it frames how we need to consider Konstantinos' engagement with the past. Konstantinos had skin in the game: the *Book of Ceremonies* recorded the actions of his family members. In writing about his ancestors, Konstantinos

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<sup>139</sup> Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic*, 118-164.

<sup>140</sup> For the vulnerability of the emperor and for ceremonial as a means of generating popular consensus, see the *Introduction*.

<sup>141</sup> For a discussion on dynasty in the Roman world and the mutability and usage of the term see Mark Humphries, “Family, dynasty, and the construction of legitimacy from Augustus to the Theodosians,” in *The Emperor in the Byzantine World: Papers from the Forty-Seventh Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* ed. Shaun Tougher (London: Routledge Press, 2019), 15-23.

<sup>142</sup> A summary of sins which Theophanes lists can be found concisely in Jakov Nikolaević Ljubarskij, “Man in Byzantine Historiography from John Malalas to Michael Psellos,” *DOP* 46 (1992), 181-182.

<sup>143</sup> All of Theophanes' comments are with the biting edge that Nikephoros loved money, yet the informed reader cannot help but see that some of the fiscal policies were for the benefit of the state: Theophanes, *The Chronicle of Theophanes: An English translation of anni mundi 6095-6305 (A.D. 602-813), with introduction and notes* trans. by Harry Turtledove (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1982), 164, 168; Bury, *A History of the Eastern Roman Empire*, 6, 8-15. For a balanced discussion of Nikephoros: Patricia Varona and Óscar Prieto, “Three Clergymen Against Nikephoros I: Remarks on Theophanes' Chronicle (AM 6295-6303),” *Byzantion* 84 (2014), 485-509. Finally, see Dimitris Krallis, “Historiography as Political Debate” in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium* eds. Anthony Kaldellis and Niketas Siniossoglou (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 602-604.

had to balance his personal opinions of the three men with their popular legacies. The court officials who read the document, would certainly have had their own perceptions of the preceding monarchs.<sup>144</sup> Konstantinos had to navigate these two, sometimes contradictory, forces.

Konstantinos' engagement with his grandfather, Basileios I "the Macedonian," is a case-study in rehabilitating a complicated past. Given its temporal distance from Konstantinos' reign, Basileios' rule offered the greatest flexibility for interventions in the realm of memory. Within the biography he commissioned, the so-called *Vita Basillii*, Konstantinos scrubbed clean Basileios' usurpation and bloody rise to power. Konstantinos wanted to immortalize the dynasty's founder as "a standard of virtue — a statue, and a model for imitation — to be erected for his progeny within their own halls."<sup>145</sup> He presented the Macedonian dynasty as a foregone conclusion, rather than the offshoot of one ambitious peasant's actions.<sup>146</sup> By presenting Basileios as both a Greek mythological hero and an Old Testament archetype, Konstantinos gave his grandfather some much-needed legitimacy.<sup>147</sup> Finally, Konstantinos retroactively attributes to Basileios specific ceremonies to legitimize their tenth-century counterparts as resurrected in the *Book of Ceremonies*.<sup>148</sup> For the purposes of this chapter, Basileios' reign demonstrates one way an emperor might utilize ceremonial displays: the construction of dynastic legitimacy.

Even though Konstantinos intended Basileios to serve as a measuring rod of virtue, Basileios' rise to power would have been difficult to replicate. He came to the imperial capital from the backwaters of Thrace and Macedonia. He was ignoble and, in a way, poor in both funds and connections. However, neither of those factors limited his

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<sup>144</sup> Questions of the audience of the *Book of Ceremonies* have been considered: Anthony Kaldellis, *Streams of Gold, Rivers of Blood: The Rise and Fall of Byzantium, 955 A.D. to the First Crusade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 23.

<sup>145</sup> VB, 11.

<sup>146</sup> See divine foreshadowing: VB, 19, 23-27, 33.

<sup>147</sup> For Konstantinos' writing style: Jenkins, *Studies on Byzantine History of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries*, 71-77; Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, 599-605.

<sup>148</sup> Recall that the first volume of the *Book of Ceremonies* is written with the intent to restore ceremonies which were at the verge of falling into disrepute. BOC, 4.

social mobility once he was inside the imperial capital.<sup>149</sup> Rather, his upward trajectory through social and imperial ranks can be attributed to both skill and affability. He started his career in the imperial stables for a relative of the reigning monarch. By positioning himself to impress his imperial benefactors, he rose to the position of chamberlain. Once inside the palace, he leveraged his martial prowess to acquire the title of *magistros*,<sup>150</sup> and serve as *strategos*,<sup>151</sup> and finally be acclaimed co-emperor by the then-ruler Michael III (r. 842-867).<sup>152</sup> In fact, his coronation is indicative of his public persona: Basileios was crowned not at Michael's request but as the result of intense senatorial pressure.<sup>153</sup> Basileios gained the imperial crown during the publicly celebrated Feast of Pentecost.<sup>154</sup> When Michael independently decided to promote a second co-emperor, Basilikos — a man whose only qualifications appeared to be his chariot-racing skill — Basileios was threatened by the potential heir. Now that his succession was no longer guaranteed, Basileios had Michael assassinated.<sup>155</sup> Konstantinos, writing about his ancestor's usurpation, needed to tread carefully. He could not condone the killing of the reigning

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<sup>149</sup> Basileios also serves as an indicator of new social realities facing Byzantium after the eighth century, when social mobility was driven by an individual's skills rather than social connections or economic status. See Shea's discussion on social mobility in Constantinople for bureaucrats in Chapter 2 of Shea, *Politics and Government in Byzantium*, 32-33. To see how this expanded even further in the eleventh century see Claudia Ludwig, "Social Mobility in Byzantium? Family Ties in the Middle Byzantine Period," in *Approaches to the Byzantine Family* eds. Leslie Brubaker and Shaun Tougher (Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2013), 233-242.

<sup>150</sup> *ODB*, s.v. "Magistros," (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005).  
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-3247?rskey=iZ59RQ&result=1> (accessed April 14, 2021).

<sup>151</sup> *ODB*, s.v. "Strategos," (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005).  
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-5162?rskey=os9VJL&result=1> (accessed April 14, 2021). VB, 71. For the difference between titles and offices: Shea, *Politics and Government in Byzantium*, 6-10.

<sup>152</sup> This upward trajectory can be traced here: Treadgold, *History of the Byzantine State*, 455; Skylitzes (Wortley), 121-128; Skylitzes (Thurn), 120-129; VB, 73. See also Tougher's conversation on social mobility: Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, 25-30.

<sup>153</sup> Konstantinos may have added the detail of the senate to impose a social consensus that was not reality: VB, 73. However, this claim is independently repeated in the eleventh century by Skylitzes, indicating plausibility: Skylitzes (Wortley), 128; Skylitzes (Thurn), 128-129. Regardless, Konstantinos' interest in the widespread acceptance of his grandfather highlights the importance of the polity in the Medieval Roman state.

<sup>154</sup> VB, 73. The feast of Pentecost became a precedent for the coronation of Macedonian rulers for two generations.

<sup>155</sup> His involvement is a matter for debate. The anti-Macedonian bias of the Chronicle of the Logothete places him as an active enabler to the scene of execution: Logothete, *Chronicle of the Logothete*, 192-194. Skylitzes and the *Vita Basillii* present his action as a defensive act: Skylitzes (Wortley), 114-115; Skylitzes (Thurn), 113-114; VB, 91-109.

monarch at the risk of receiving the same treatment. Basileios himself had had to ensure his usurpation did not inspire another. By being complicit in Michael's assassination, he was vulnerable to justified public scrutiny both by the Constantinopolitan elite and the populace.<sup>156</sup> Consequently, both Basileios in his own time and Konstantinos two generations later performed damage-control for this action across their separate reigns.

Basileios' redemption tour began immediately after the coup by first mollifying the Constantinopolitan populace. He distributed large sums of his own wealth to crowds of onlooking Constantinopolitans during his crowning as senior emperor.<sup>157</sup> The Logothete Chronicle places this coronation during the Christmas festivities in Constantinople, which would have only swelled the population within the capital.<sup>158</sup> The ceremonial details of such celebrations would have increased Basileios' visibility to the populace. The Christmas processional route was more public than a regular coronation.<sup>159</sup> Yet, when Konstantinos records the template for the coronation of an emperor, he does not include a distribution of wealth. There are ceremonies during which the emperor pays the court<sup>160</sup> and there are separate ceremonial templates for the coronation of an emperor and for the Christmas celebration.<sup>161</sup> However, Konstantinos does not include monetary distributions in either the Christmas celebration or coronations.<sup>162</sup> Perhaps Konstantinos interpreted this distribution of wealth as something his grandfather was forced to perform. Bribing the populace was a balm to the dynastic wound Basileios had just opened. Konstantinos could tip his hat (or *chlamys*, as was often an emperor's gesture)

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<sup>156</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 29. For evidence of the publicity of Michael's killing, consider the house of Toxaras the *manglabites*. He was the one who murdered Michael and subsequently, his house became a public attraction: Anonymous. *Accounts of Medieval Constantinople: The Patria*, trans. Albrecht Berger (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 2013), 187.

<sup>157</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 130; Skylitzes (Thurn), 131-132.

<sup>158</sup> Logothete, *Chronicle of the Logothete*, 196.

<sup>159</sup> The Christmas celebrations included eleven receptions with the emperor and the people's representatives, the factions. A coronation, for example, would not include the same face-to-face engagement. Compare "Procession to the Great Church": BOC, 5-22 and "Coronation of an Emperor": BOC, 128-136.

<sup>160</sup> Such as the Broumalion and the distribution of the purses during the Reception of the Gold Hippodrome Festival: BOC, 293-296; 606-607; Nicholas Oikonomides, "Title and Income at the Byzantine Court," in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997), 199-216.

<sup>161</sup> Konstantinos prefers to use the safe language of performing what is "customary," (*ἡ συνήθεια*). This phrasing would have granted him ceremonial flexibility: BOC, 193.

<sup>162</sup> Not found in any of Konstantinos' ceremonial templates: BOC, 5-22, 35-41, 128-136, 187-191, 369.

to the ceremonial skill of his grandfather, while freeing himself from the economic commitments that Basileios' specific circumstances warranted. If Konstantinos believed that the Macedonian dynasty would continue, subsequent Macedonian rulers would not need to win the people over in a similar manner.

Basileios' second means of penance was religiously inflected: he enmeshed himself with Old Testament archetypes. Konstantinos, quill in hand, helpfully trailed behind his grandfather to inscribe these claims into written canon.<sup>163</sup> First, Basileios presented himself as a new King David.<sup>164</sup> Like Basileios, David came from the backwater of his country, Bethlehem, to the capital, Jerusalem. He found himself in the court of King Saul and rose through military service. When God abandoned Saul, David was granted divine favour to take the throne.<sup>165</sup> While David never killed Saul, the comparison was close enough for Basileios and Konstantinos' purpose. While Basileios presented himself as a new David, Konstantinos worked to make Michael III as Saul-like as possible. In the Old Testament, Saul was tormented by a demon. His mental anguish was only soothed when David played the harp. On one such occasion, Saul, in the throes of madness, threw a spear at David aiming to kill him.<sup>166</sup> Echoing the Old Testament precedent, Konstantinos writes Michael as an unstable benefactor. When Michael was ailed by an escalating madness, he too, attempted to murder his ward, Basileios, with an errant spear.<sup>167</sup> Basileios and Konstantinos worked hand-in-hand across generations to craft their Old Testament parallels.

Konstantinos does not pull any punches in demonizing Michael. He ensures the audience of the *Vita Basili* fully accepts that Basileios was the appropriate choice to lead the Roman state. One of Michael's sins, described at great length is his endorsement of a plethora of mock-priests. These entertainers would perform satirical renderings of

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<sup>163</sup> One way Konstantinos does this is through the insertion of visions throughout the early life of Basileios, making his ascension to the throne a foregone conclusion: Alexandra Karagianni, "Purple Dreams of the Macedonian Dynasty of Byzantium in Manuscript Illuminations," in *Dynastic Change: Legitimacy and Gender in Medieval and Early Modern Monarchy* eds. Ana Maria S. A. Rodrigues, Manuela Santos Silva, and Jonathan Spangler (London: Routledge Press, 2020), 161-169.

<sup>164</sup> Particularly evident when Basileios had Photios construct a Davidic origin for him: Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, 32; Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 199-200.

<sup>165</sup> 1 Sam. 16: 19; 2 Sam. 2; 2 Sam. 5 NIV.

<sup>166</sup> 1 Sam. 19: 9-10 NIV.

<sup>167</sup> VB, 95.

liturgical events, most notably interrupting a patriarchal procession with their own *factionarch*-led display.<sup>168</sup> While it is easy to see this critique as coming from a place of pious indignation, the sheer detail of these profane ritual acts betray Konstantinos' investment. Konstantinos describes the garments of a fake patriarch, the ceremonial objects that were included in these displays, and even the sounds of the chants performed.<sup>169</sup> All of these elements — garments, objects, chants — which we find in the *Vita* are also details that Konstantinos included in the “proper” ceremonial templates in the *Book of Ceremonies*. When Skylitzes records an abridged account of the same event, he glosses over the ceremonial details Konstantinos seems eager to provide indicating that this emphasis on pageantry was perhaps peculiar to Konstantinos.<sup>170</sup> Konstantinos the Christian appears offended by this subversion of patriarchal authority, just as Skylitzes, the Christian historian, was. However, given the sheer level of detail given in the episode, it may be that Konstantinos the event planner is equally appalled by the perversion of ceremonial propriety. His historian counterpart was content to ignore such ritual pedantry.<sup>171</sup>

Perhaps as an attempt to cast Michael's satirical performances in a negative light, Basileios instituted several pious ceremonies centred on his patron saint, the Prophet Elijah. Basileios believed Elijah's direct intervention was responsible for his imperial success.<sup>172</sup> When atonement was required for the murder of Michael, Basileios made numerous religious offerings to the saint. One such form of material atonement is the ninth-century copy of the *Homilies* of Gregory of Nazianzus.<sup>173</sup> Within the illustrated manuscript, Basileios is depicted between the archangel Gabriel and Elijah, who are handing him imperial vestments. Gabriel, according to Dagron, was a “harbinger of universal joy”, while the presence of Elijah signified a “guarantor of victory against the

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<sup>168</sup> *VB*, 85, 87.

<sup>169</sup> *VB*, 85, 87.

<sup>170</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 110-111; Skylitzes (Thurn), 108-111.

<sup>171</sup> This and other examples of satirical ceremonies are found in Henry Maguire, “Parodies of Imperial Ceremonial and their Reflections in Byzantine Art,” in *Court Ceremonies and Rituals of Power in Byzantium in the Medieval Mediterranean* ed. Alexander Beihammer, Stavroula Constantinou, and Maria G. Parani (Leiden, NL: Brill Academic Publishing, 2013), 417-427.

<sup>172</sup> Karagianni, “Purple Dreams of the Macedonian Dynasty,” 164-165.

<sup>173</sup> The document was either commissioned by or presented to Basileios between 879 and 883 CE: Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 193.

enemy.”<sup>174</sup> Furthermore, Basileios instituted an annual celebration to St. Elijah, commemorated on July 21<sup>st</sup>. Basileios experienced no pushback in shaping the city’s ceremonial calendar and the feast of St. Elijah, despite its novelty, is included in the *Book of Ceremonies*.<sup>175</sup> Konstantinos’ ceremonial format for this occasion also included a visit to the New Church (Nea Ekklesia), one of three shrines that Basileios built in honour of St. Elijah.<sup>176</sup> The anniversary of the consecration of the New Church also had its own annual celebration within the *Book of Ceremonies*.<sup>177</sup> Included in this anniversary is the veneration of Basileios’ image, a rare mention of a past monarch within the written templates.<sup>178</sup> In a church dedicated to St. Elijah, Konstantinos pays homage to his grandfather and broadcasts his imperial lineage.

Ultimately, Basileios was not as invested in the ceremonial performance as his scholarly grandson. Rather, Basileios consolidated power through force both within and outside the Roman polity. Yet, Basileios’ reign provides hints of the kinds of ceremonial precedents Konstantinos could play with in his own writing. Without historical precedent, Basileios imposed his own ceremonial time on senators, bureaucrats, and religious officials throughout Constantinople.<sup>179</sup> Basileios provided “ceremonial appetizers”; his son and grandson would develop these ideas, producing “ceremonial entrées.” One consequence of giving Constantinopolitans “ceremonial appetizers” was that the people acquired a “taste” for Macedonian-styled ceremonial. Through Basileios, the Constantinopolitan populace became accustomed to a ceremonial rhythm in the urban landscape. For example, July 21<sup>st</sup> would have meant the public commemoration of a previously uncelebrated saint. Under Leon’s rule, Basileios’ son, the people grew even more involved in ceremonial affairs.

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<sup>174</sup> Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 194. Dagron also notes how Basil’s promotion of the archangels, both Michael and Gabriel, may have been an ideological move to supplant any association with Michael III, whom he had killed: Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 198-199; Brubaker, “To legitimize an emperor,” 150-152; VB, 273.

<sup>175</sup> Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 207; Paul Magdalino, “Basil I, Leo VI, and the Feast of the Prophet Elijah,” JÖB 38 (1988), 193-196.

<sup>176</sup> Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 208; BOC, 114-118. The three shrines: VB, 237; VB, 275-277; VB, 299.

<sup>177</sup> BOC, 118-121.

<sup>178</sup> BOC, 118. Notably, he never treats his father with the same reverence.

<sup>179</sup> Evidenced by the new ceremonies of the feast of St. Elijah and the celebration of the New Church: BOC, 114-121.

## The Macedonian Dynasty – Leon VI “the Wise”

Leon VI experienced a tumultuous rise to the Byzantine throne thanks to his precarious relationship with his father, Basileios. When Basileios’ firstborn, Konstantinos, died unexpectedly, Basileios presented Leon, his second born, as heir apparent. Basileios had personal reservations about his second son, something scholarship attributes to Leon’s questionable bloodline.<sup>180</sup> Caught in a web of deception, Leon was confined by his father for three years in a palace apartment known as “the Pearl.”<sup>181</sup> Basileios, realizing his own mortality, reversed his ruling and released Leon. Basileios timed this release to occur on St. Elijah’s feast day in 866, creating a public spectacle with both imperial and religious overtones. Leon expanded the feast in the years that followed, making the festivities even grander than those which are recorded in the *Book of Ceremonies*.<sup>182</sup> Under Leon, the feast became a three-day occasion of religious and secular celebration. Visits to the New Church were paired with races in the Hippodrome. Daily banquets were held for secular and ecclesiastical officials alike.<sup>183</sup> By differentiating the ceremonial performance for St. Elijah, Leon followed on Basil’s footsteps but also gave the event his own “flavour.”

Leon enacted two other ceremonial amendments, which may have also served as a differentiation from his father’s legacy. The first concerns the patron archangels of the New Church. While Basileios placed greater emphasis on Gabriel as the patron archangel for the church, Leon, instead turned to the angel Michael.<sup>184</sup> This shift in focus

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<sup>180</sup> There are a number of hypotheses for this. The prevailing view often centres around Leon’s parentage: Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, 42-67.

<sup>181</sup> For more on the intrigues and religious strife that occurred in the court of Basileios, affecting his life and the safety of his son Leon: Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, 68-88. For more on the actors of these intrigues: *ODB*, s.v. “Santabarenos, Theodore,” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005).

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-4815?rskey=yqAhAK&result=1> (accessed April 20, 2021); *ODB*, s.v. “Photios,” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005).

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-4332?rskey=iKMkvX&result=1> (accessed April 20, 2021).

<sup>182</sup> Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 207-208. Konstantinos does not record the chariot racing in his ceremonial template, perhaps not wanting to tie himself to the obligation of hosting such a lavish occasion: *BOC*, 114-118.

<sup>183</sup> Magdalino, “Basil I, Leo VI, and the Feast of the Prophet Elijah,” 193-196.

<sup>184</sup> Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 198-199.

paired with Leon's first act as monarch — granting an imperial funeral for Michael III.<sup>185</sup> It has been theorized that Leon was the illegitimate son of Michael rather than Basileios, since his mother Eudokia had slept with both men.<sup>186</sup> While this angelic push-and-pull is omitted in the pages of the *Book of Ceremonies*, Konstantinos does provide a commentary to Leon's second ceremonial emendation.

Konstantinos records a ceremonial template for Leon's second foray into ceremonial manipulation. Recall that Leon's release from captivity within the Pearl apartments coincided with the feast of St. Elijah. Leon, not content to patronize merely one saint, also chose to honour St. Demetrios as responsible for his freedom.<sup>187</sup> For the second saint, he instituted the celebration of his own feast day in Constantinople. Konstantinos' chapter for the celebration of St. Demetrios sequentially follows the chapters for St. Elijah and the New Church.<sup>188</sup> While the three ceremonies, as presented in *Book of Ceremonies*, contain similar elements — religious processions, homages to the patrons, returns to the palace chambers — the feast of St. Demetrios is sparser in detail compared to St. Elijah and the New Church.<sup>189</sup> Furthermore, Konstantinos does not include any veneration for his father's image in this ceremonial template.<sup>190</sup> While Leon may have provided his own changes to his father's ceremonial performances, Konstantinos' writing reflects a slight bias towards Basileios.

The audience, the ever-present spectator to ceremonial events, played a far greater role in Leon's ceremonial celebrations than what we are told of Basileios' commemorations. Whereas Basileios could impose ceremonial time without apparent pushback, Leon had to contend with his audiences' ceremonial expectations. Officials and common people in the capital alike used the medium of ceremonies to directly communicate with the emperor. This was not always a welcome exchange. The ceremonial calendar of Constantinople dictated ceremonial time within the urban centre.

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<sup>185</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 166; Skylitzes (Thurn), 172.

<sup>186</sup> Magdalino, "Basil I, Leo VI, and the Feast of the Prophet Elijah," 193-196; Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, 42-67.

<sup>187</sup> Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 201-202.

<sup>188</sup> The feast of St. Elijah is Chapter 19, New Church is Chapter 20, and the feast of St. Demetrios is Chapter 21.

<sup>189</sup> Compare BOC, 121-124 (St. Demetrios) to BOC, 114-118 (St. Elijah) or BOC, 118-121 (New Church) to see how Konstantinos treats a Leon-instituted ceremony and Basileios-instituted ones.

<sup>190</sup> The only time Leon appears in the text is when one of his vespers is sung: BOC, 121-124.

Some ceremonial occasions were fixed, whereas others were more mutable.<sup>191</sup> Even if an emperor changed the details of a ceremony, as in the case of Leon's aggrandizement of the feast of St. Elijah, the time remained set. Those outside the imperial court could use such set occasions for their own purposes. One such example is the feast of Mid-Pentecost, which was celebrated annually on the Wednesday, forty days after Easter. Its "blueprint" involved the emperor processing to the Church of St. Mokios and worshipping there.<sup>192</sup> Situated beyond the Constantinopolitan Walls, the Church of St. Mokios was associated with one of the longer annual ceremonial routes.<sup>193</sup> Each year the Constantinopolitans would anticipate an emperor's procession along the Mese, the main thoroughfare, which linked the palace and St. Mokios. In 903, Leon experienced the more sinister consequences which came with a precise and well-publicized ceremonial calendar.

Leon's ceremonial enterprise was met with a dangerous surprise on Wednesday of Mid-Pentecost in 903. As Leon approached the church's holy doors, the barrier which separated the altar from the nave, an armed assailant rushed towards him. Club in hand, the man was prepared to murder Leon in cold blood. Leon was saved by a well-placed candlestick; the club catching part of the fixture, reducing the momentum of the swing. Leon sustained a blow to the head but would leave the church with his life.<sup>194</sup> According to the Logothete, this was a focused and deliberate coup attempt. Not only was Leon attacked, but several officials were as well, "[fleeing] and [perishing] in this [attack]."<sup>195</sup> Leon's brother Alexander was noticeably absent on this ceremonial occasion, becoming a target of suspicion for organizing what was interpreted as an unsuccessful power grab.<sup>196</sup> The real perpetrator was never uncovered, and the attacker himself never confessed. Despite the plot's failure, Leon took immediate action. He suspended the

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<sup>191</sup> Compare, for example, the modern celebration of Christmas and Easter.

<sup>192</sup> ODB, s.v. "Mokios," (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005).

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-3593?rskey=r9EJel&result=1> (accessed April 5, 2021). For the mythological origins of St. Mokios in Constantinople see: Anonymous, *The Patria*, 128-129.

<sup>193</sup> A longer processional route, such as, to the Golden Gate, would include the emperor taking the imperial vessel rather than horseback. BOC, 108-109.

<sup>194</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 175-176; Skylitzes (Thurn), 180-182; Logothete, *Chronicle of the Logothete*, 211-212.

<sup>195</sup> Logothete, *Chronicle of the Logothete*, 211.

<sup>196</sup> Logothete, *Chronicle of the Logothete*, 211; Karlin-Hayter, "The Emperor Alexander's Bad Name," 585-588; Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, 225-227.

procession from 903 onwards, much to the consternation of the city's religious authorities.<sup>197</sup>

At first glance, one would not find any evidence of an assassination attempt in Konstantinos' recording of the ceremonial template for the feast of Mid-Pentecost.<sup>198</sup> To the untrained eye this ceremony falls in step with the religious chapters that precede it, with similar motifs repeated.<sup>199</sup> The emperor processes to St. Mokios from the palace.<sup>200</sup> Within the church, he and the patriarch perform their religious duties. Then the two men part ways, the emperor attending receptions at specific stops along the Mese.<sup>201</sup> While this has all the appearance of a standard procession, we need to examine how Konstantinos would imagine this ceremonial occasion. It cannot be overstated that the last known instance of this lived celebration had been an attempted assassination. Details of the written ceremonial which may seem insignificant are the very factors which could have aided or prevented regime change. Konstantinos would have carefully moved his pen in describing this ceremony.

Revisiting the text with the attack in mind, the emperor's protective detail, as presented in *Book of Ceremonies*, bears careful scrutiny. Konstantinos describes a well-armed posse for the emperor's movement from the palace to St. Mokios. This is a common feature in ceremonial processions which take the emperor from the palace to the streets of Constantinople.<sup>202</sup> The ceremonial template deviates from other church visits, however, when the emperor sets foot in St. Mokios itself. Compared to visits to

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<sup>197</sup> Another example in Leon's own life where the people took advantage of the emperor's ceremonial schedule was when the emperor went to the Great Church in a public procession. On this occasion, a conspirator dropped a note to the *mitatorion* where Leon usually prayed: Skylitzes (Wortley), 184-185; Skylitzes (Thurn), 189-191.

<sup>198</sup> Notably, one would also not find any attempt by Konstantinos to revive the ceremony. There is no mention of it in Volume 2, his contemporaneous works and Skylitzes writing about the event a century or more later does not note whether Konstantinos revived it.

<sup>199</sup> Wednesday of Mid-Pentecost (Chapter 17) has a comparably long procession as Monday of Renewal Week (Chapter 10). Similar religious tone as the subsequent Renewal Week ceremonial (Chapters 11-16).

<sup>200</sup> For the location of St. Mokios, see Figure 4 found in Chapter 2.

<sup>201</sup> BOC, 98-108.

<sup>202</sup> While we are told the titles of the different officials, we are not given the number of each rank of the guard which would accompany the emperor. The Monday of Renewal Week, a procession of a comparable length, has a similarly guarded retinue: BOC, 71-86. A notable exception may be when the emperor uses an imperial vessel. On such occasions fewer guards joined him. The morning of the ceremony of Ascension Day is one example of this: BOC, 108-109.

urban (i.e., non-palatial) churches, this is the *sole* occasion when the eunuch *protospatharioi* explicitly escort the emperor *inside the church*, “carrying their sword-tipped batons and wearing their swords.”<sup>203</sup> There are no other instances in the archival first volume of the *Book of Ceremonies* where the emperor brings his guarded retinue into one of God’s houses.

While this detail may appear small, it opens a window for new avenues of inquiry.<sup>204</sup> In times of dogmatic or political tension, churches could become contested spaces between the emperor and patriarch.<sup>205</sup> However, it was routine that the emperor submitted himself to the authority of the patriarch within a church. This was bluntly demonstrated by the removal of his crown before his entry into a church, such as Hagia Sophia.<sup>206</sup> The inclusion of armed guards within St. Mokios, then, creates a distinctly different scene. This is where speculation begins.

Perhaps this addition in the *Book of Ceremonies* is an anachronistic editorial by Konstantinos himself. If so, why? One could indeed argue that this was a criticism of Leon: he did not trust God’s protection and needed his own earthly guard, even in God’s house? Or was this meant to perform retroactive damage control as Konstantinos was wont to do?<sup>207</sup> By including these guards was Konstantinos hoping to give his father some dignity? Perhaps Konstantinos wanted to suggest that it was the strength of arms, and not a candlestick, which saved Leon from certain demise. Or was Konstantinos ignoring his father entirely and rather inconspicuously addressing a security risk in his own imperial routine? Consider a tenth-century political upstart who had his eye on the Byzantine throne. The *Book of Ceremonies* would be a veritable goldmine for planning a sitting emperor’s downfall. The document would be akin to accessing the modern calendar app of your royal foe. You would know when, where, and with whom your enemy could be found during a calendar year. The inclusion of armed guards, then, could be serve as a deterrent to the reader: Konstantinos’ own way of saying, “don’t

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<sup>203</sup> BOC, 100.

<sup>204</sup> Consider the methodology of “plausible, informed speculation” outlined in the *Introduction*.

<sup>205</sup> Leon was famously denied entry into the narthex of Hagia Sophia by the patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos. This episode, and the controversy of the tetragamy which sparked this conflict, will be discussed below.

<sup>206</sup> Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 84-95; Maguire, “The Heavenly Court,” 247-258; BOC, 14.

<sup>207</sup> See the above discussion of the reputation of Basileios.

even think about it." This detail on the guards may appear insignificant; however, it has interesting implications for the modern reader, who must consider that the *Book of Ceremonies* was shaped by the man who wrote it. How did Konstantinos grapple with the tumult of the past while compiling the *Book of Ceremonies*?

The assassination attempt at St. Mokios was perhaps one of the most dramatic episodes of Leon's life; however, it was not the most controversial. The affair of the tetragamy, Leon's uncanonical fourth marriage, surely claims the title of most scandalous. Scholars remain divided as to why Leon, one who is still remembered as the "wise", insisted on having and then recognizing his biological heir to the point of inciting a religious schism.<sup>208</sup> Adoption was a socially acceptable way of imbuing imperial legitimacy. His father, Basileios, was after all "adopted" by Michael III.<sup>209</sup> Moreover, his decision to marry his mistress, Zoe Karbonopsina, violated his own legislation on the matter.<sup>210</sup> One reason, however, for Leon's insistence that he be married to his lover Zoe, against both law and canon, has to do with ceremonial expectations.

Ceremonial audiences were not limited to merely the official men of Constantinople: their wives were involved in the pageantry as well. However, during visits with the reigning monarchs, officials and their wives would occupy gender-specific spaces within the palace.<sup>211</sup> The Komnenoi, a ruling family of the twelfth century, for

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<sup>208</sup> As a result of his actions, Leon was barred entry from Hagia Sophia during the Christmas ceremonies of 906 and the Epiphany celebration of 907 by the patriarch, Nikolaos. For a description of this event see the letters of Arethas: Jenkins, *Studies on Byzantine History*, 20-372. For translations of Nikolaos' letters which justify his actions, and Jenkins' commentary, see: Romilly J. H. Jenkins, "Three Documents concerning the 'Tetragamy,'" *DOP* 16 (1962), 233-241. For a summary of the sides of the religious schism: Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, 133-163. See also a larger discussion of the usage of "Wise" in Shaun F. Tougher, "The wisdom of Leo VI," in *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> Centuries: Papers from the Twenty-sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St Andrews, March 1992*, ed. Paul Magdalino (Hampshire, UK and Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1994), 171-181. Leon was banned from entry to Hagia Sophia on several ceremonial occasions, as outlined in Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 42-44; Nicolas Oikonomides, "Leo VI and the Narthex Mosaic of Saint Sophia," *DOP* 30 (1976), 161-166. A summary of the ban from Hagia Sophia was found in Skylitzes (Wortley), 179; Skylitzes (Thurn), 184-185. For Leon's self-representation as a "New Solomon" see: Riedel, *Leo VI and the Transformation*, 95-121.

<sup>209</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 128; Skylitzes (Thurn), 128-129; VB, 71.

<sup>210</sup> Riedel, *Leo VI and the Transformation of Byzantine Christian Identity*, 2. Novel 90. Noailles and Dain, *Les nouvelles de Léon VI*, 279-299.

<sup>211</sup> The role of the *augousta* and an overview of some notable *augoustes* in Byzantine history until the Komnenian dynasty can be found in Barbara Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium 1025-1204: Power, Patronage and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1999), 102-105. See also the role of

example, kept a notoriously segregated court.<sup>212</sup> Leon's court highlights a similarly gendered phenomenon.<sup>213</sup> After the death of his second wife, Leon promoted his daughter Anna to the role of empress. His justification for this was that he "was unable to perform the ceremonies as they are laid down in the *formularies* without an *augousta*."<sup>214</sup> The discussion of "formularies" no doubt piques our ceremonial interest. What does Konstantinos say about this vital role of the *augousta* in his ceremonial templates?

The answer to this inquiry may be disappointing. Konstantinos, for all his meticulous recording of courtly participants, is deafeningly silent when it comes to the empress. Across the *Book of Ceremonies* there are only seven ceremonial events attended by the empress. Three occasions are concerned with her fecundity: her coronation, her nuptials, and the birth of a male offspring.<sup>215</sup> She only makes two appearances in Church feasts — that is, Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday.<sup>216</sup> Finally, of the remaining two occasions, one concerns the appointment of one of her attendants (*koubikoulaiai*).<sup>217</sup> The second concerns the secular feast the Broumalion, a feast which was also held in her honour.<sup>218</sup> In a handful of other ceremonies the empress is mentioned in passing where her name is included in standardized acclamations, but she

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imperial women in the court, the wives of male officials: Lynda Garland, "Imperial Women and Entertainment at the Middle Byzantine Court," in *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience 800-1200* ed. Lynda Garland (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2006), 177-178; Judith Herrin, *Unrivalled Influence: Women and Empire in Byzantium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 161-193; for the development of the role of the *augousta* throughout Byzantine history, 219-237.

<sup>212</sup> Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium*, 106-108.

<sup>213</sup> See Liudprand of Cremona's discussion of the purple chambers, where an imperial child was born in Liudprand, *Complete Works*, 48, 125.

<sup>214</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 175; Skylitzes (Thurn), 180-181; Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, 147. There was a precedent for this action as evidenced in the reign of Michael II, who persuaded the senate to allow him to remarry. His argument was that the spouses of officials needed "a mistress and an empress": Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur libri I-IV: Recensuerunt Anglice verterunt indicibus instruxerunt Michael Featherstone et Juan Signes-Codoñer, nuper repertis schedis Caroli de Boor adiuvantibus* eds. and trans. by Jeffery Michael Featherstone and Juan Signes-Codoñer (Boston and Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 115.

<sup>215</sup> BOC, 202-207 (coronations); BOC, 207-216, 380 (nuptial and nuptial crowning); BOC, 615-619 (birth of a son).

<sup>216</sup> BOC, 61-71 (Easter Sunday); BOC, 171-177 (Palm Sunday).

<sup>217</sup> BOC, 622-624. Note that she is not present during the appointment of a girdled patrician woman.

<sup>218</sup> BOC, 599-607. A larger discussion the Broumalion is found below.

is not present in the ceremony herself.<sup>219</sup> Judith Herrin outlines the roles of the empress as “accompanying the ruler on social engagements, at religious festivals and important court events, diplomatic receptions, anniversaries, and so on.”<sup>220</sup> Konstantinos, it seems, missed this memo. If the empress was as vital as Leon appears to have claimed, why does she not leave a deeper mark on the pages of the *Book of Ceremonies*?<sup>221</sup>

Here we once more enter uncharted historical territory and must allow “plausible speculation” to intrude. Konstantinos’ relationship with the controversial tetragamic *augousta*, his mother Zoe, may contextualize his understanding of the empress’ role. Konstantinos’ birth was not itself the sticking point for the offended church leaders, as evidenced by his baptism.<sup>222</sup> Rather, it was Leon’s decision to marry Zoe after the birth that caused the religious schism. Perhaps Konstantinos resented the fact that her marriage had marred his father’s legacy. Or perhaps it was Zoe’s actions after Leon’s death that had left a sour taste in his mouth. After Leon’s death and that of his brother Alexander, Zoe rallied her supporters and staged a coup, placing herself as Konstantinos’ regent. However, her management of the regency was less than optimal. She crumbled under the intense pressure of the role and was humiliated in a war against the Bulgarians.<sup>223</sup> With a father who had angered the church and a mother who injured the pride of the polity, Konstantinos had to carefully manage his parents’ memory. Perhaps by reducing the written imprint of the empress in court ceremonial, Konstantinos was also undoing the memory of his mother’s impropriety and blunders. By keeping the empress in her gendered place, Konstantinos could project a return to the “norm.” In that “norm”, men kept the reins of the polity, whereas women remained

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<sup>219</sup> Examples of this include the Monday of Renewal Week or the anniversary of the accession of an emperor: *BOC*, 47-52; 278-280.

<sup>220</sup> Herrin, *Unrivalled Influence*, 176.

<sup>221</sup> Leon may have stressed the importance of the *augousta* in order to marry a third time without impunity. He sent Anna to be married off to a westerner and ousted the wife of his brother Alexander, thus justifying the third marriage as *augousta*-making: Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, 225.

<sup>222</sup> Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, 153-157.

<sup>223</sup> Much more on the drama of the regents will be discussed below. A summary of Zoe’s regency: *ODB*, s.v. “Zoe Karbonopsina,” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005).

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-5906?rskey=aq7WQ1&result=1> (accessed May 27, 2021).

focused on rearing heirs.<sup>224</sup> This literary sidelining was not outside of the realm of Konstantinos' imagination. After all, he had experienced such marginalization and intended erasure for years at the hands of his father-in-law, Romanos Lekapenos. Konstantinos' own turbulent childhood and adulthood may have directly impacted how he presented imperial roles in the ceremonial formularies.

## A Lekapenoi Interlude

Romanos I Lekapenos' rise to the throne of Constantinople, and the Prophyrogenitos' subsequent sidelining, mirrors the upward trajectory of Basileios I which had occurred two generations prior. As Runciman points out, however, "[Romanos] had no pious and literary grandson to give him a romantic history."<sup>225</sup> Konstantinos, the "literary grandson" in question, would do Romanos no favours: Romanos tried to keep the imperial crown out of Konstantinos' grasp. Romanos, like Basileios, lacked an imperial pedigree. He was uneducated but had a Constantinopolitan upbringing. He was the son of an opportunistic peasant who found himself in the capital as a palace guard.<sup>226</sup> Despite his father's proximity to the palace, we have no knowledge of Romanos' exposure to Byzantine court culture. All we know of Romanos' youth is that he entered naval service under Leon. He eventually worked his way through the military hierarchy to achieve the title of officer (*droungarios*).<sup>227</sup>

The Roman state entered a period of flux when Leon and his brother Alexander perished while Konstantinos was still a child. The throne was left vulnerable for anyone willing to take it.<sup>228</sup> Committees of regents were formed, conspiracies were both rumored and actuated, and alliances were forged and broken in the tumultuous years following Alexander's death. Furthermore, an ever-encroaching Bulgarian threat remained

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<sup>224</sup> Notable exceptions exist to this, of course, such as Irene the Athenian, and even the last Macedonians Zoe and Theodora.

<sup>225</sup> Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 63. The chronicle of the Logothete certainly tried, however, to resurrect the Lekapenoi legacy.

<sup>226</sup> Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 6; Treadgold, *History of the Byzantine State*, 476-477.

<sup>227</sup> Logothete, *Chronicle of the Logothete*, 227.

<sup>228</sup> A prevailing, albeit skewed, account of Alexander's reign is found in Skylitzes (Wortley), 188-190; Skylitzes (Thurn), 193-196. For a kinder eye, see Karlin-Hayter, "Alexander's Bad Name," 585-596.

proximate and sometimes camped outside the walls of the capital.<sup>229</sup> When another usurper, Leon Phokas, threatened to grab power, Konstantinos' tutor, Theodore, implored Romanos, now admiral of the imperial fleet, to return to intervene. With the fleet behind him, Romanos returned to Constantinople from the Danube to protect the Porphyrogenetos.<sup>230</sup> Romanos timed his return for dramatic effect: the day of Annunciation.<sup>231</sup> Ceremonial time would have dictated that the people on the streets would be able to discuss and celebrate the arrival of the navy.<sup>232</sup> Romanos used sails instead of angelic wings to deliver a message of hope to the "Queen of Cities." He was bringing safety for the young prince and deliverance from the almost seven years of uncertainty.

Romanos swore fealty to Konstantinos and allied their respective families through marriage (he gave his daughter Helena to Konstantinos). He then assumed the role of *basileopator* (father of the emperor) and took control of the Roman state.<sup>233</sup> Writing letters to the rebel and contender for the throne Leo Phokas, he demanded that he stand down. Romanos then demonstrated his efficiency by exiling the remaining conspirators from the capital.<sup>234</sup> He then set his sights on consolidating power, crowning himself *Kaisar* and then co-emperor during the Christmas festivities of 920.<sup>235</sup> Invested

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<sup>229</sup> For the drama of the regents and the external Bulgarian threat see Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 47-60. Skylitzes (Wortley), 191-202; Skylitzes (Thurn), 197-209.

<sup>230</sup> Treadgold, *History of the Byzantine State*, 475; Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 59-60; Skylitzes (Wortley), 201-202; Skylitzes (Thurn), 207-209.

<sup>231</sup> March 25<sup>th</sup>. Logothete, *Chronicle of the Logothete*, 228-229; Skylitzes (Wortley), 202; Skylitzes (Thurn), 208-209.

<sup>232</sup> For the Feast of Annunciation: BOC, 168-169.

<sup>233</sup> ODB, s.v. "Basileopator," (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005). <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-0666?rskey=sBTK9L&result=1> (accessed May 27, 2021). For the origins of the office: Skylitzes (Wortley), 169; Skylitzes (Thurn), 175. Here, Leon promoted the Zaoutzes, the father of his lover, to this newly established position to gain his favor.

<sup>234</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 202; Skylitzes (Thurn), 208-209; Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 60-61; Treadgold, *History of the Byzantine State*, 475-476.

<sup>235</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 205; Skylitzes (Thurn), 212. Of note, Romanos' coronation to *Kaisar* on September 24, 920 was the only occasion where he did not have his or a member of his family's imperial goals align with a Constantinopolitan ceremony. Romanos' coronation to *Kaisar* happened in response to the threat of Konstantinos' mother, Zoe, attempting to take power from him. Given this day was not timed with the Exaltation of the Cross, which occurred annually on the 14<sup>th</sup>, I believe this is the single occasion where Romanos reacted to a volatile political situation rather than executing a plan. For the dignitary *Kaisar*: ODB, s.v. "Caesar," (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005). <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-0666?rskey=sBTK9L&result=1>

with imperial authority, Romanos could move onto the next phase: establishing his own dynasty. Since Romanos had gained power as a regent, he could not kill Konstantinos outright.<sup>236</sup> Rather, he carefully relegated the heir apparent to relative obscurity. He accomplished this through a gradual, cunning, and calculated utilization of ceremonial.

Over the four years following Romanos' crowning, he carefully maneuvered his family members into prominent positions in the Constantinopolitan court.<sup>237</sup> Following his own coronation, Romanos had his wife crowned empress less than a fortnight later during the feast of Epiphany, January 6<sup>th</sup> 921. In May of the same year, during Pentecost, Romanos crowned his son Christopher co-emperor.<sup>238</sup> Pentecost had a particular imperial connotation, as both Basileios and Konstantinos had been crowned on that occasion.<sup>239</sup> Skylitzes notes that it was this coronation that foreshadowed the Lekapenoi takeover: "[Konstantinos] managed to give the appearance of doing it [the coronation] willingly although he was being coerced."<sup>240</sup> Three years later, Romanos had his sons Stephanos and Konstantinos crowned co-rulers during Christmas.<sup>241</sup> These religious ceremonies were also important public occasions. Here, military and bureaucratic officials could interact with the emperor in a face-to-face setting.<sup>242</sup> Even the people at large could participate. They could witness each newly crowned monarch

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[9780195046526-e-0866?rskey=BQE&rs&result=1](#) (accessed, June 1, 2021). For the place of *Kaisar* in court hierarchy: Shea, *Politics and Government in Byzantium*, 11-15.

<sup>236</sup> Killing the child, Konstantinos, would not reflect well on Romanos: Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 64.

<sup>237</sup> The propaganda techniques applied by nascent regimes once a dramatic regime change occurs is often indicative of these changes. Hobsbawm describes this as "[introducing] an era of forced forgetting." Romanos performed the Byzantine equivalent of it: Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," 12.

<sup>238</sup> In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the Epiphany would become a rhetorical staging ground for imperial orations praising the reigning monarch. Two such orations from the twelfth century can be found in Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *Secular Orations*, 11-65, 67-130.

<sup>239</sup> For Basileios: Skylitzes (Wortley), 128; Skylitzes (Thurn), 128-129; For Konstantinos: Skylitzes (Wortley), 184; Skylitzes (Thurn), 189-190.

<sup>240</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 206; Skylitzes (Thurn), 213.

<sup>241</sup> Of note, it was his illegitimate son, Basil the Parakemenois, who created the final edition of the *Book of Ceremonies*. He included details of Konstantinos' funeral in the document. Jeffery Michael Featherstone, "Basileios Nothos as Compiler: The *De Cerimoniis* and *Theophanes Continuatus*," in *Textual Transmission in Byzantium: between Textual Criticism and Quellenforschung*, eds. Juan Signes Codoñer and Inmaculada Pérez Martín (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishing, 2014), 353-372.

<sup>242</sup> For example, the Epiphany ceremonial template included a special breakfast with military officials, holders of high office, and another meal with the patriarch and metropolitans at the end of the day. *BOC*, 145-147, 754-756.

process from Hagia Sophia to the palace.<sup>243</sup> Rather than position himself as an outright usurper, Romanos courted the Constantinopolitans' favor by way of careful ceremonial engagement. He gradually introduced each member of his family to the populace all the while pushing Konstantinos into obscurity.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> See for example the procession to the Great Church: *BOC*, 3-22. See the above discussion of Basileios pairing his own coronation with the Christmas ceremonial.

<sup>244</sup> As seen in the coinage issued under Romanos' reign: Goodacre, "The Story of Constantine VII, Porphyrogenitus," 114-119. Additionally, Romanos had foreign ambassadors recognize his sons as preeminent over Konstantinos. When Romanos married his granddaughter to a Bulgarian prince, the Bulgarians in attendance, acclaimed Christopher then Konstantinos: Skylitzes (Wortley), 216; Skylitzes (Thurn), 223-224.



**Figure 3:** Depictions of Konstantinos VII on solidi<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Each of these depictions is the obverse of the coin. From left to right: Leon VI and Konstantinos VII; Konstantinos VII and Zoe; Konstantinos VII and Romanos I; Romanos I between Konstantinos VII and Christopher; Konstantinos VII alone. From Goodacre, "The Story of Constantine VII, Porphyrogenitus," 115-120. Copyright in the photographs has expired per Canada's Copyright Act.

In conjunction with the public promotion of his own family, Romanos mounted at least two publicity campaigns with which to discredit the previous regime. As noted above, Romanos could not outright murder the teenaged Porphyrogennetos. Basileios had done so due to the unpopularity of his predecessor, a factor which Romanos could not assume to be true of Konstantinos.<sup>246</sup> What Romanos could do, however, was develop a campaign that would enshrine Macedonian shame in popular memory. He convened a synod to unite the feuding clergy, who had been divided since Leon's fourth marriage and were now ready for a peaceful resolution. The synod produced the "Tome of the Union," a peace treaty which officially condemned Leon's third and fourth marriages. The stipulations of the agreement were to be recited annually in Hagia Sophia during the feast of the Union — a liturgical ceremony which Konstantinos was required to attend.<sup>247</sup> If this was not insult enough, Leon was also immortalized in art in Hagia Sophia. Above the very doors where Leon had been denied entry by the patriarch, Nikolaos Mystikos, because of his sins, he was now depicted in a freshly commissioned mosaic. Prostrate on his knees Leon begs for forgiveness from an enthroned Christ.<sup>248</sup> It would be impossible for anyone to enter the narthex of Hagia Sophia without seeing this

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<sup>246</sup> Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 64. Note, too, that Basileios was initially chosen as co-emperor at the request of the senate: Skylitzes (Wortley), 128; Skylitzes (Thurn), 128-129.

<sup>247</sup> Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 65; Skylitzes (Wortley), 206; Skylitzes (Thurn), 213; Oikonomides, "Leo VI and the Narthex Mosaic," 169. For Nikolaos Mystikos' opinion of the tetragamy see his letter to Rome: Nicholas I Patriarch, *Nicholas I Patriarch of Constantinople: Letters*, text and trans. R. J. H. Jenkins and L. G. Westerink (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Centre for Byzantine Studies, 1973), 215-245. For the Tome of Union: Nicholas I Patriarch, *Nicholas I, Patriarch of Constantinople: Miscellaneous Writings*, text and trans. L. G. Westerink (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Centre for Byzantine Studies, 1981), 57-85.

<sup>248</sup> Oikonomides, "Leo VI and the Narthex Mosaic," 172-173.

image. For Konstantinos, each entry into the Great Church would include the visual reminder that his very existence was an irregularity.



Figure 4: Leon VI, penitent before Christ<sup>249</sup>

Konstantinos' written template for the Feast of the Union is the last religious ceremony found in Book I of the *Book of Ceremonies*. It is found just prior to an interlude chapter on ceremonial dress and two chapters prior to the start of the imperial ceremonies.<sup>250</sup> This chapter order was not an editorial addendum. Rather, it is consistent with the tenth-century *Lipsiensis Univ., Rep. I 17* manuscript, which is dated to one generation after Konstantinos' death.<sup>251</sup> I give this preamble for one reason: by every indication, Konstantinos did not want to engage with this ceremonial formulary. It is one of the shortest templates of religious ceremonies in the book and it provides the reader

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<sup>249</sup> Mosaic of Leon VI above the narthex of Hagia Sophia. Image captured by Dimitris Krallis; Used with permission of the photographer.

<sup>250</sup> Chapter 36: BOC, 186-187.

<sup>251</sup> BOC, xxiii.

as few details as possible. Three times Konstantinos cites a variation of the phrase “things occur as is customary.”<sup>252</sup> Moreover, Konstantinos conveniently ignores the reading of the “Tome of the Union,” merely stating that “the ecclesiastical ceremonial” occurs.<sup>253</sup> The celebration of this union was entirely too recent for Konstantinos to omit the template completely. Any contemporaneous reader of the *Book of Ceremonies* would have noticed its absence. Rather, Konstantinos does the next best thing: just as Romanos was content to ignore Konstantinos’ claim to the Byzantine throne, Konstantinos consigns this ceremonial template to effective obscurity through an act of omission by cross-reference.

The final ceremonial minefield which Romanos utilized to solidify his rule and bypass Konstantinos concerns the Roman festival, the Broumalion. Tracing its origins to the third century CE, this celebration was dedicated to Dionysus (Bacchus) and was decidedly pagan in nature. It signified the end of the harvest season and the onset of winter and was celebrated annually.<sup>254</sup> Not much is known about the ceremony, particularly after the Romans moved their capital to Constantinople. However, it reemerged briefly in the seventh century, when it was banned by the church because of its pagan overtones.<sup>255</sup> It appears to have made a comeback, however, at some point and becomes controversial once more when Romanos banned its celebration in Constantinople during his reign.<sup>256</sup> We learn of this from Konstantinos himself. After outlining how the ceremony is to be celebrated, Konstantinos states that “on the pretext of piety … he [Romanos] ordered that these ceremonies cease.”<sup>257</sup> Konstantinos does not accept piety as an appropriate excuse to discontinue the festivities. He lists the prominent emperors who traditionally celebrated the occasion: Byzantine greats like Constantine I, Theodosius, and Justinian.<sup>258</sup> It is rare for Konstantinos to trace a

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<sup>252</sup> BOC, 186, 186, 187.

<sup>253</sup> BOC, 186.

<sup>254</sup> Franz Graf, *Roman Festivals in the Greek East: From the Early Empire to the Middle Byzantine Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 205; BOC, 600.

<sup>255</sup> Graf, *Roman Festivals in the Greek East*, 214.

<sup>256</sup> Philotheos notes that Alexander participated in the Broumalion during the reign of Leo VI: Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, 222.

<sup>257</sup> BOC, 606-607. Part of the larger ceremonial template spanning 598 to 607.

<sup>258</sup> BOC, 606.

ceremonial performance all the way to the city's founding figure. It is rarer still for him to give an open criticism of a predecessor within the *Book of Ceremonies*.

The modern reader can also question Romanos' motivations for cancelling such a feast. Romanos was, as mentioned above, nothing short of an expert in generating popularity by way of ceremonies. Konstantinos' depiction of the ceremony casts himself as a lavish benefactor, bestowing gifts and delicacies to befriend the court.<sup>259</sup> It clearly would have been a popular occasion for a usurper to manipulate. Why would one as ceremonially adept as Romanos forego such a prime opportunity? Perhaps there were non-religious reasons for Romanos to avoid the event. The Broumalion had no fixed date for its celebration. The festivities could commence on one of twenty-four days between November 24<sup>th</sup> and December 17<sup>th</sup>. Each of these days sequentially corresponded to a letter of the Greek alphabet from "A" to "Ω." The Broumalion then, was celebrated on the day that corresponded to the first letter of the first name of the reigning monarch.<sup>260</sup> For example, an emperor with the first letter of "A" in his first name would celebrate the Broumalion on November 24<sup>th</sup>, whereas one with the first letter of "B" would celebrate the feast on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

For Romanos, a man whose every interaction with ceremonial was for the purposes of consolidating his rule, this could not happen. An annual festival which celebrated a single senior ruler would have highlighted the Constantinopolitan court hierarchy for the courtiers who participated. Since Romanos hoped to gain power through a soft, multi-year "coup," this ceremony threatened the courtly ambivalence towards his power-grab. The Broumalion would have imposed a hard choice between the Macedonian dynasty and the burgeoning Lekapenoi. Do the people celebrate the feast on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, corresponding to the "K" of Konstantinos, the rightful Porphyrogennetos? Or should it be moved to December 10<sup>th</sup> to reflect the Greek "P" of Romanos? Rather than having the people debate the topic, Romanos may have preferred to remove the dilemma altogether. Better deny a choice completely than have the people make the wrong choice.

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<sup>259</sup> BOC, 599-604; "Theophanes Continuatus Book 6, Years 944-961," in *The Rise and Fall of Nikephoros II Phokas*, text and trans. Dennis Sullivan (Leiden, NL: Brill Publishing, 2018), 39-41.

<sup>260</sup> Konstantinos explains this process in "Theophanes Continuatus," 39. Also: BOC, 600. See also Appendix A.

## Master of Ceremonies?

This chapter surveyed the reigns of several emperors, demonstrating the ways in which they curated their own public performances or handled pressure from their subjects. Basileios demonstrated how new ceremonies could usher in a new dynasty — laying a foundation for subsequent monarchs. Leon's rule showed that other stakeholders, such as the people of Constantinople, could change the course of a ceremonial performance. And Romanos? He showed the creative potential of ceremonial performance. Ceremonies were not just an emperor's opportunity for meaningless theatrics; for Romanos they were a way of pushing his political pawns across the Constantinopolitan board.

This takes us then, to the ceremonial compiler himself, Konstantinos. Would it be apt to call him the master of ceremonies? Ironically, we know of only a few ceremonies performed in his lifetime.<sup>261</sup> In his important work on the *Book of Ceremonies*, Michael Featherstone suggests that less was more with regards to ceremonial performances. He claimed that there was no practical way an emperor could have performed all the ceremonies written in the *Book of Ceremonies*. Rather, these templates were only called upon for imperial emphasis.<sup>262</sup> Would it be more apt to describe Konstantinos as the archivist of ceremonies and leave the moniker of "master" for someone else? I believe our historical examination supports this: Romanos Lekapenos has earned the right to the title. His ceremonial usage was nothing short of masterly, prompting Konstantinos' intervention in the historical and ceremonial record.

Consider Konstantinos' life from another perspective. Imagine this overview of Konstantinos's life: He grows up under the intense gaze of the imperial court, hearing whispers of assassins and usurpers waiting to steal his throne. Eventually a regent emerges who claims to protect him, a naval commander. His life beyond the palace walls is limited to carefully staged occasions, constrained by both guards and ceremonial garments. He watches the years pass and feels his throne slip from his grasp. He notices the "regent" growing bolder, moving to centre stage in ceremonial displays. The annual winter festival, the one dependent upon the name of the senior emperor, is

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<sup>261</sup> For example, the Broumalion and Konstantinos' funeral are both recorded in "Theophanes Continuatus," 39-41, 55-57.

<sup>262</sup> Featherstone, "Space and Ceremony," 605.

suddenly deemed “too pagan.” Convenient. He is powerless as the religious schism *du jour*, the one centered on his own birth, is healed by this regent. He listens to church leaders condemning his mother. He watches as mosaicists craft a large image of his father above the narthex of the largest church on earth. Each year he is forced to walk under his father’s penitent gaze, to celebrate his father-in-law’s church-approved triumph. Over time he fades to the background of court affairs. His moniker of “purple-born” feels less of a promise and more of a cruel joke of fate. His image moves further into the background of imperial coinage. He hears his brothers-in-law praised by foreigners and can only sit in quiet rage. He retreats to the imperial library. His time is coming, if only he waits. The Lekapenoi underestimated the Constantinopolitans, and they certainly underestimated Konstantinos.

Konstantinos’ handbook on court ceremonial tells us far more about the man and his life than meets the eye. Konstantinos almost lost the throne in a “game” of symbolism and ceremonial performance. By recording ceremonial prescriptions, he could ensure these formularies were never used against him. Assembling what he could find of his predecessors, both their ceremonies and their lives, Konstantinos put pen to page. “Perhaps,” Konstantinos writes, “this undertaking seemed superfluous to others who do not have as great a concern for what is necessary...”<sup>263</sup> But perhaps, Konstantinos was on to something.

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<sup>263</sup> BOC, 3.

## Chapter 2.

### Ceremonies in Action: The case-study of Michael V Kalaphates

#### Introduction – “When the cat’s away...”

After spending the day of Epiphany subjected to a series of panegyrics dedicated to the then-senior-emperor Michael VII Doukas (r.1071-1078), the people of Constantinople presented their own counterargument within the narthex of Hagia Sophia on the next day. By the eleventh-century, rhetorical displays praising the reigning emperor had become a key component of the feast of Epiphany, celebrated annually on January 6<sup>th</sup>.<sup>264</sup> On the 7<sup>th</sup>, the people brought forth their own curt oration, in a surprising moment of consensus. Within the echoing space of Hagia Sophia — while the Sunday service was still in session — the people declared their allegiance to a new emperor, Nikephoros III Botaneiates (r. 1078-1081).<sup>265</sup> The sources address this episode very carefully. Michael Attaleiates, an eleventh-century judge and historian, presents the people as an emboldened rabble, declaring that they “[imagined] themselves in a state of democracy.”<sup>266</sup> The modern reader of Byzantium, however, understands the underlying Roman context to these actions. This “democracy” was not an attempt at the impossible, as Attaleiates describes it.<sup>267</sup> Rather, this example of popular political action

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<sup>264</sup> For the history of panegyrics and the establishment of the Epiphany oration: Anthony Kaldellis, “The Discontinuous History of Imperial Panegyric in Byzantium and its Reinvention by Michael Psellos,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 59 (2019), 693-699, 702-703.

<sup>265</sup> The Feast of Epiphany was celebrated annually on January 6<sup>th</sup>. By the end of the eleventh century, in addition to the religiously inflected church liturgy, the ceremony also entailed a series of orations meant to extol the virtues of the reigning monarch. For more on Epiphany’s orations: Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *Secular Orations*, xiii-xiv, xvi-xvii. For examples of Epiphany orations: Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *Secular Orations*, 11-66, 67-130. For the ceremonial template of Epiphany: BOC, 5-22, 41-43, 128-136, 143-147, 754-757. For the historical account of this “democratic action”: Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 467.

<sup>266</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 467. In recounting this scene in his eleventh-century overview, Anthony Kaldellis avoids the difficult implications of the actions and instead glosses over the interaction as “the unusual commotion.” Kaldellis, *Streams of Gold, Rivers of Blood*, 265. Warren Treadgold merely describes the episode in the following words: “opinions in Constantinople then shifted towards Botaniates.” Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, 607.

<sup>267</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 467. For elite engagement with the people, see Dimitris Krallis, “Urbane Warriors: Smoothing out tensions between soldiers and civilians in Attaleiates’ encomium to Emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates,” in *Byzantium in the Eleventh Century: Being in Between:*

existed within the extralegal rights of the Medieval Roman people. Universal popular consensus, as demonstrated by proclaiming a new monarch, was understood to be a legitimate method for appointing or removing an emperor.<sup>268</sup>

This episode then, blends two forces which often are not considered in tandem: ceremonial time and political action. The opportunity for political action came, in part, because Michael was absent from Hagia Sophia that Sunday. “While the emperor was at the Blachernai palace … those who were attending services in the great temple of God’s Wisdom [Hagia Sophia] threw off all fear of the emperor…” and proceeded to declare a new ruler.<sup>269</sup> The very same sentence that describes the “democratic” action is followed with the addendum that it was the day after Epiphany.<sup>270</sup> The ceremonial templates of the tenth century do not dictate that the emperor leave the southeastern centre of the Constantinople during Epiphany or the subsequent days.<sup>271</sup> Perhaps Michael, much like the subsequent dynasty of the twelfth century, the Komnenoi, preferred the Blachernai palace?<sup>272</sup> Or perhaps the ceremonial expectations had changed, sending Michael away from the epicentre of imperial power? Konstantinos himself, writing a century or so earlier, understood the mutability of performance and accepted the possibility of

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*Papers from the 45<sup>th</sup> Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, Oxford, 24-6 March 2012*, eds. Marc D. Laufermann and Mark Whittow (London: Routledge Publishing, 2017), 154-165; Anthony Kaldellis, “How to Usurp the Throne in Byzantium,” 50. For an additional example of “democratic” action in Constantinople see Dimitris Krallis, “Sacred Emperor, Holy Patriarch: A New Reading of the Clash between Emperor Isaakios I Komnenos and Patriarch Michael Keroularios in Attaleiates’ History,” *Byzantinoslavica* 67 (2009), 169-190.

<sup>268</sup> For a full examination of this principle: Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic*, 62-88; Krallis, “Democratic’ Action in Eleventh-Century Byzantium,” 35-38.

<sup>269</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 467.

<sup>270</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 467, 469.

<sup>271</sup> For the celebration of Epiphany in the tenth century: BOC, 5-22, 41-43, 128-136, 143-147, 187-191, 369, 754-757.

<sup>272</sup> For the evolution and use of the Blachernai palace see Ruth Macrides, “The ‘other’ palace in Constantinople: the Blachernai,” in *The Emperor’s House: Palaces from Augustus to the Age of Absolutism*, ed. Jeffery Michael Featherstone, Jean-Michel Spieser, Gulru Tanman, et. al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 159-166; Paul Magdalino, “Manuel Komnenos and the Great Palace,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 4:1 (1978), 110-112. After the reconquest of Constantinople in 1261, the Blachernai Palace was decidedly chosen to be the primary residence of the Constantinopolitan emperor. Alice-Mary Talbot, “The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII,” *DOP* 47 (1993), 250-251; *ODB*, s.v. “Blachernai, Church and Palace of,” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005).

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-0747?rskey=FcFBhM&result=2> (accessed May 30, 2021).

change.<sup>273</sup> While we cannot pinpoint the mechanisms that influenced Michael's mistimed absence from the Great Palace, the ever-present backdrop of ceremonial time remains a constant. The imperial "cat" was away, the people — the "mice" who played — were left unsupervised, and Hagia Sophia became a staging ground for the end of Michael's reign.

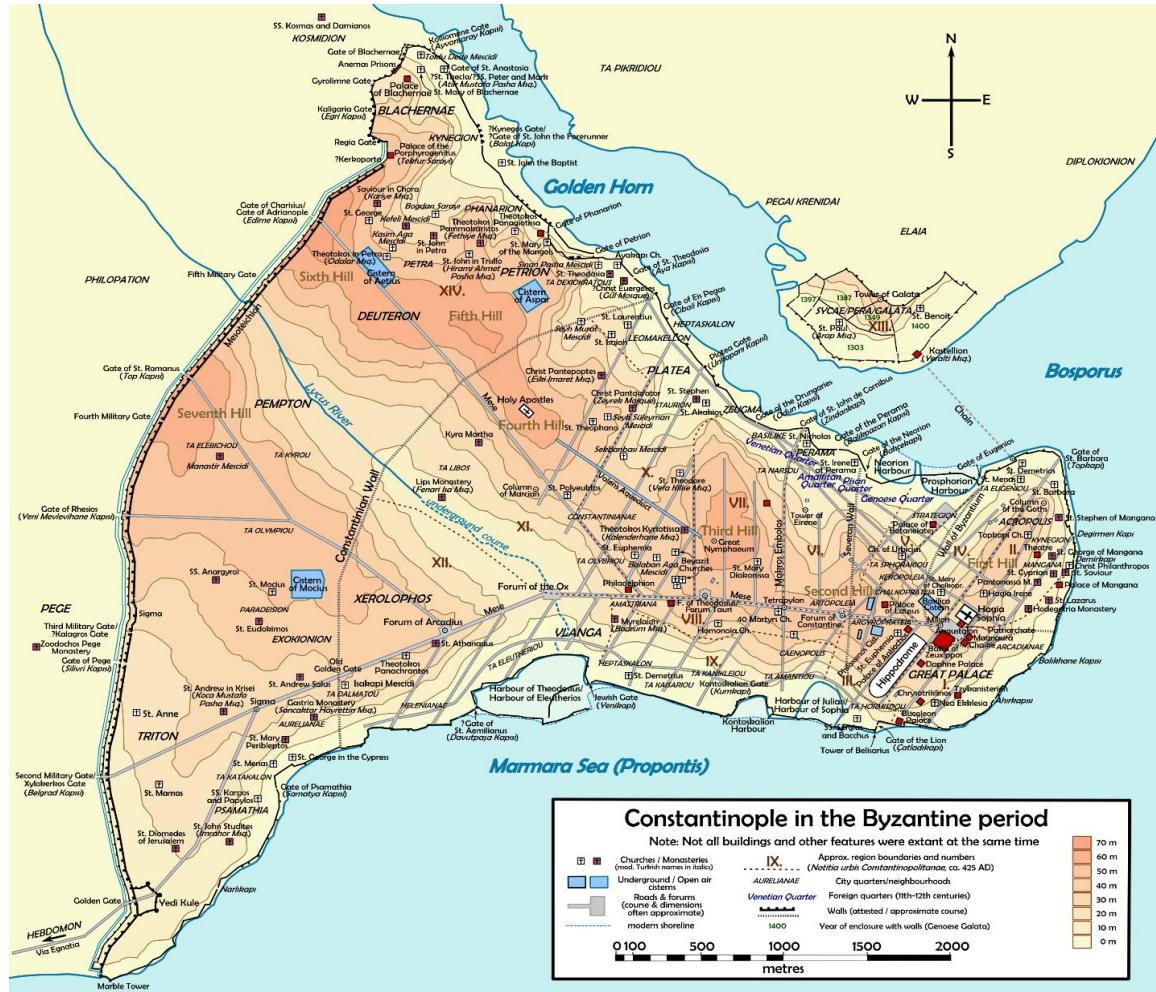


Figure 5: Map of Constantinople<sup>274</sup>

<sup>273</sup> BOC, 516. For a broad strokes examination of changes in ceremonial spaces over time see, Averil Cameron, "The construction of court ritual: the Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies*," in *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* ed. David Cannadine and Simon Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 106–136.

<sup>274</sup> "Byzantine Constantinople-en.png," *Wikicommons*, accessed 8 June, 2021:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Byzantine\\_Constantinople-en.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Byzantine_Constantinople-en.png) Image by user Cplakidas, reproduced under a CC BY-SA 3.0 license: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>

Michael had risen to the position of sole emperor during a particularly turbulent time in Byzantine history. The disastrous Battle of Mantzikert had left then-emperor Romanos IV Diogenes (r. 1068-1071) captive in the hands of the Seljuk Sultan Alp Arslan.<sup>275</sup> This marked the first time a Roman emperor had been captured on the battlefield by foreign foes in centuries. While the captive Romanos dealt with the realities of his new standing as imperial hostage, the influential Doukas family successfully barred his return to imperial power. Michael was declared senior emperor in Romanos' place and when Romanos was released from captivity, civil war ensued.<sup>276</sup> Michael prevailed but proved to be a less than capable ruler. Michael's fiscal policies had a mixed reception at best,<sup>277</sup> the army was in shambles,<sup>278</sup> and suitable usurpers were rising from the provinces to present themselves as viable alternatives to a variety of urban polities across the state.<sup>279</sup> A poignant example of the number of potential

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<sup>275</sup> For the Battle of Mantzikert: Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 261-305; *ODB*, s.v. "Mantzikert, Battle Of," (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005) <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-3314?rskey=xDQhZv&result=2> (accessed June 2, 2021); Krallis, *Serving Byzantium's Emperors*, 179-185; Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline*, 132-134. For the fallout of the battle see Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 305-325. For wider issues raised by the rise of the Seljuk Turks and particularly the aftermath of Mantzikert: Alexander Beihammer, *Byzantium and the Emergence of Muslim-Turkish Anatolia, ca. 1040-1130* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

<sup>276</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 327.

<sup>277</sup> For Michael's devaluation of the Byzantine currency, see Gilbert Dagron, "The Urban Economy, Seventh-Twelfth Centuries," in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 401-402; Cécile Morrisson, "Byzantine Money: Its Production and Circulation," in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 932, 942-944; Nicolas Oikonomides, "The Role of the Byzantine State in the Economy," in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 1020-1021. For the unpopularity of Michael's fiscal advisor, the eunuch Nikephoritzes (Nikephoros), see Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 367-375. For a profile of Nikephoritzes: *ODB*, s.v. "Nikephoritzes," (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005).

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-3800?rskey=XuSzWx&result=1> (accessed June 1, 2021). For his impact on the grain shortage: Shaun Tougher, *The Eunuch in Byzantine History and Society* (London: Routledge, 2008), 54, 158-159.

<sup>278</sup> Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, 607.

<sup>279</sup> There have been modern attempts to "salvage" Michael's reign. Treadgold admits Nikephoritzes capably ran the economy in spite of Michael's ignorance: Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, 605. Michael Angold is also favourable towards Nikephoritzes. For Angold, Nikephoritzes' policies were harsh but necessary to replenish the imperial coffers: Michael Angold, *The Byzantine Empire, 1025-1204: A Political History* (London & New York: Longman, 1997), 98-102. For Michael Hendy, the loss at Mantzikert was an economic catalyst from which the Byzantine economy could not recover: Michael Hendy, "Byzantium, 1081-1204":

usurpers Michael faced is immortalized in the pithy prophecy, “one day N would prevail over M.”<sup>280</sup> Four potential “N” successors could have realistically prevailed between 1077 and 1080 — Nikephoros Bryennios, Nikephoros Botaneiates, Nikephoros Basilakes, and Nikephoros Melissenos. One of these usurpers, the general Nikephoros Botaneiates, proved to be the favoured choice among the Constantinopolitans. It was his name which reverberated across the interior of Hagia Sophia on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1078.<sup>281</sup>

This “democratic” action has been tied to broader conversations concerning the application of Roman political ideologies across Byzantine history. It has not, however, been used to demonstrate an equally interesting phenomenon: the significance and use of ceremonial time. In this episode, we must be content with historical silence when it comes to Epiphany’s impact on the timing of the unfolding events. This example, nevertheless, raises broader questions about the intersection of ceremonial time and political action in Constantinople. How were the ceremonial templates of the tenth century remembered and utilized in Constantinople a century after Konstantinos put them together?<sup>282</sup> Did ritualized performances impact political life in Constantinople in the eleventh century? And finally, who utilized ceremonial time? In this example, the people took advantage of an emperor’s absence on a major feast that legitimated their assembly in Hagia Sophia. Could the opposite also prove true? Did emperors in the eleventh century still craft their actions around the city’s ritual time? While this episode only leaves ceremonial breadcrumbs, the trail it creates is worth following.

This chapter explores questions of ceremonial performance and political time by considering a different example of popular agency in Constantinople: the putsch of Michael V Kalaphates in Easter 1042. This attempted power grab, like the downfall of Michael VII above, is an episode of political action which unfolds within the Constantinopolitan ceremonial calendar. While Michael VII’s fall from grace occurred after Epiphany, Michael V’s attempt to claim sole power, is centred around the Easter

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the economy revisited twenty years on,” in *The Economy Fiscal Administration and Coinage of Byzantium*, III ed. Michael Hendy (Northampton, Variorum: 1989), 3-9.

<sup>280</sup> “Skylitzes Continuatus.” in *Byzantium in the Time of Troubles: The Continuation of the Chronicle of John Skylitzes (1057-1079)* introduction, trans., and notes by Eric McGeer (Leiden, NL: Brill Publishing, 2020), 165.

<sup>281</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 467.

<sup>282</sup> This date for the final compilation of the *Book of Ceremonies: BOC*, xxiii.

ceremonial calendar.<sup>283</sup> Both cases are recorded in sources which avoid specific reference to the ceremonial templates found in the *Book of Ceremonies*, but we cannot divorce these events from their ceremonial contexts. Ceremonial time, whether explicitly acknowledged or not, would have shaped the dialogue between people and emperor. Our sources provide much more insight into Michael V's power grab than Michael VII's fall from grace. The former is narrated by three separate historians, who each outline the courtly realities he faced.<sup>284</sup> We are given his motivations, his plans, the execution of said planning, and the fallout of what was ultimately a misreading of his own popularity. In the case of Michael VII, we are given dramatically less.<sup>285</sup>

Framed by this thesis' investigation into the political utility of the *Book of Ceremonies*, I present this chapter as an imperial case study of ceremonial action. Here I explore the ways in which ritualized ceremonies found in the *Book of Ceremonies*, may have been utilized in the eleventh century as opportunities for political dialogue between the emperor and people in Constantinople. Ceremonies were the backdrop for Michael V's ousting of the empress Zoe Porphyrogenete on the Monday following Easter. This particular day is a focal point in the ceremonial calendar of the capital, serving as the pivot from the religiously inflected Easter ceremonies, which, in that year occupied much of the month of April, to the more explicitly imperial ceremonies celebrated thereafter. In 1042 these imperial occasions would have taken place at the end of April and continued well into the month of May. The urban rebellion that followed Zoe's ousting directly overlapped with both the religious and imperial ceremonial calendars.

This chapter uses the templates of the *Book of Ceremonies* as a lens for examining what occurred during this rebellion, as recorded by three authors whose work is essential for our understanding of eleventh-century events — Michael Psellos, Michael Attaleiates, and Ioannes Skylitzes. Specifically, I will be using the timelines and social dynamics of spring ceremonies found in the *Book of Ceremonies* to examine the possible expectations and motivations that may have led Michael to believe that the Sunday following Easter was an opportune moment for staging a coup. By crafting this

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<sup>283</sup> I am not the first to draw such parallels between the two events. See Krallis, "Democratic Action in Eleventh-Century Byzantium," 46-53.

<sup>284</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 15-29; Psellos, *Chr.* (Sewter), IV.22-55, V.1-51; Psellos, *Chr.* (Renaud), IV.XXII-LV, V.I-LI; Skylitzes (Wortley), 391-396; Skylitzes (Thurn), 416-421.

<sup>285</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 465-469.

chapter as a case study in applying ceremonial behaviours and expectations, I aim to present a plausible interpretation of the ceremonial steps Michael may have manipulated for his political advantage. Through the Easter ceremonies prior to the Monday following Easter, Michael could have wooed the court and broader populace. The prescribed secular ceremonies which immediately followed the church-counterparts, could have served as an excellent means of consolidating his newly established sole rule.

## Historical Background

If one agrees that the people were active stakeholders in Constantinopolitan politics and could legitimize the actions of an emperor, then one cannot underestimate the importance of firmly set spaces and times where an emperor was expected to interact with his subjects. While some emperors such as Justinian<sup>286</sup> or Theophilos<sup>287</sup> were known to be accessible to the people, an audience with the reigning monarch was typically limited to administrative and ceremonial business alone.<sup>288</sup> Thus, the ceremonies recorded in the *Book of Ceremonies*, should be reconsidered. While these ceremonial templates were heavily laden with apparently standardized acclamations<sup>289</sup> and were imbued with religious overtones,<sup>290</sup> one cannot assume that these were moments when an emperor was imposing his will upon his subjects with a clear outcome.<sup>291</sup> Rather, as evidenced in the ceremonial episodes outlined in Chapter 1, these templates were merely that, templates. An assassination attempt, such as the one Leon VI survived during the feast of Mid-Pentecost, was certainly not enshrined in written procedure, nor was it presented as precedent-setting.<sup>292</sup> Unexpected outcomes

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<sup>286</sup> Prokopios, *The Secret History with Related Texts*, 61.

<sup>287</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 53; Skylitzes (Thurn), 50-51.

<sup>288</sup> Jeffery Michael Featherstone, "The Everyday Palace in the Tenth Century," 152-153.

<sup>289</sup> Examples of such acclamations are present throughout the *Book of Ceremonies*. Chapters 2 to 9a for religious ceremonies: BOC, 35-61. For secular ceremonies such as celebrations in the Hippodrome: BOC, 320-327.

<sup>290</sup> Such religiously inflected ceremonies were primarily recorded in the first half of volume one of the *Book of Ceremonies* from chapters 1 to 36: BOC, 5-187. Here, overtly Christian ceremonies are performed; however, Christian elements are prevalent even in what would be considered "secular" celebrations. For example, the invocations of "Whatever God has determined" are used in the celebration of the anniversary of Constantinople upon the completion of the fourth race in the Hippodrome: BOC, 355.

<sup>291</sup> Consider the discussion found in the *Introduction* of this thesis.

<sup>292</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 176; Skylitzes (Thurn), 181-182; BOC, 98-108.

could occur as Constantinopolitans expected and were entitled to moments of political dialogue with their monarch. By means of the city's ceremonial calendar — a ritualized timescale, which would shape the life of the city during the reign of any given emperor — the reigning monarch was advertising opportunities for the people to interact with him, in addition to opportunities for him to push his own agenda. With such dynamics in mind, the discussion below considers the logical steps that Michael may have taken within the prescribed spring ceremonial to gain power, eliminate any lingering loyalty to Zoe, and stabilize his sole rule in April and May of 1042. Before we proceed, however, it is necessary to touch, very briefly, upon Michael's experiences with the Constantinopolitan court, as such experiences may have been instrumental in structuring this putsch.

Michael's short rule was shaped by court dialogues, ceremonies, and the delicate exchanges interwoven therein. Approximately two years prior to his accession to the position of sole emperor, Michael was named *Kaisar* after his adoption by Empress Zoe.<sup>293</sup> This event was brought about by careful manipulation of the sickly Michael IV by the effective "prime minister," his brother, the eunuch Ioannes the Orphanotrophos.<sup>294</sup> In December 1041 CE then, Michael "swore fearsome oaths" of loyalty to Zoe promising to never turn against her.<sup>295</sup> When he finally became emperor, with the death of his predecessor, he sought, for a variety of reasons, to retract his oaths. Psellos thought that Michael's pride was injured by his subordination to Zoe, when, like the Old Testament Saul, who had killed his thousands to David's ten thousand,<sup>296</sup> he heard her name before his in the public processions.<sup>297</sup> Skylitzes argued that Michael's relatives, the *domestikos* Konstantinos and Ioannes the Orphanotrophos, encouraged him to "get rid of [Zoe]."<sup>298</sup> One way or another, Psellos remarks that "all [Michael's] energy, all his

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<sup>293</sup> See a similar discussion of this rank in Chapter 1.

<sup>294</sup> Psellos, *Chr.* (Sewter), IV.23-24; Psellos, *Chr.* (Renaud), IV.XXIII-XXIV. For more on the life of the Orphanotrophos see Tougher, *The Eunuch*, 65, 82, 151; Kathryn M. Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant: Eunuchs and the Social Construction of Gender in Byzantium* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 191-193.

<sup>295</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 17.

<sup>296</sup> 1 Sam. 18: 7-8, NIV

<sup>297</sup> Psellos, *Chr.* (Sewter), V.17; Psellos, *Chr.* (Renaud), V.XVII.

<sup>298</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 392; Skylitzes (Thurn), 417. For the various roles of the *domestikos*: ODB, s.v. "Domestikos," (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005).

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-1523?rskey=8Xixh1&result=1> (accessed June 1, 2021).

ingenuity was devoted to the accomplishment of his daring project,<sup>299</sup> even bringing in co-conspirators to aid him.<sup>300</sup> After assessing the opinions of the Constantinopolitan onlookers and believing them favourable, Michael cast Zoe from the palace. Once the people caught wind of this, they stormed the palace, blinding Michael, and reinstating both Zoe and her sister Theodora as rulers.<sup>301</sup>

All this is to say that once the decision was taken to act against Zoe, the Easter season was a reasonable choice for the staging of a coup. The Easter ritual calendar would have provided ample opportunity for Michael to use the communicative aspect of ceremonies to successfully usurp the imperial throne. The two public Hippodrome festivals, a procession of Ascension Day, and the commemorations of Constantinople and Constantine the Great would have allowed Michael to reinforce his own newly established position as sole ruler. Through the Easter ceremonies he could project an image of sole rule and gauge his own approval in the minds of the Constantinopolitans. In the ensuing City ceremonials, he could solidify his rule by fulfilling the image of an emperor working for the good of the *res publica*.<sup>302</sup>

The first half of this case-study will be focused on the moments of exchange and dialogue which Michael could have utilized from the prescribed Easter ceremonial cycle. This set of templates would have afforded Michael ample opportunities to sway the Constantinopolitan populace to his side. The second half of this case study considers what Michael would have hoped would occur following the ousting of Zoe. It should be noted that this portion of our investigation is speculative, if firmly grounded on what our sources allow us to reconstruct. I cannot say for certain if this was Michael's intent. Rather, I will use the ceremonial templates found in the *Book of Ceremonies* to demonstrate the ways Michael could have used the ritualized public occasions to solidify his sole rule. These ceremonies — the Gold Hippodrome Festival, the Anniversary of the City, the feast of Ascension Day, and the commemorations of Constantine the Great — would have provided opportunities for him to stabilize his imperial power among both the

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<sup>299</sup> Psellos, *Chr.* (Sewter), V.17; Psellos, *Chr.* (Renaud), V.XVII.

<sup>300</sup> Psellos, *Chr.* (Sewter), V.18-19; Psellos, *Chr.* (Renaud), V.XVIII-XIX.

<sup>301</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 27-29.

<sup>302</sup> Recall the expectations of good rule that the people had for their ruler: Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic*, 62-70. One can also see these expectations outlined in the ritualized acclamations performed for an emperor's coronation: BOC, 193-196.

court hierarchy and the wider Constantinopolitan audience. These occasions would also have afforded Michael the opportunity to situate his own nascent rule within a wider memory of Constantinopolitan politics.

## Easter ceremonial calendar

This brings us to the Easter ceremonial calendar itself, one of the high points in Byzantine religious life.<sup>303</sup> The *Book of Ceremonies* outlines thirteen different public rituals Michael may have used as opportunities to interact with fellow aristocrats and the people at large (Appendix B). Furthermore, given that Michael knew that Zoe had “won over everyone’s heart through her generous gifts,”<sup>304</sup> he could have used the ceremonial prescriptions to outshine his adoptive aunt. Especially in the ten days prior to his ousting of Zoe, he would have had ample opportunity to distribute large sums of money, favours, and recognition to various social groupings across the city.

The lead-up to the Easter Sunday celebration would have consisted of Palm Sunday, Great Thursday of Easter, Good Friday, and Good Saturday. Each of these festivities would have brought the emperor and his subjects into a space of dialogue. On the eve of Palm Sunday, the members of the senate would receive branches and flowers from the hands of the emperor, with the other holders of high office receiving a silver cross each.<sup>305</sup> On Palm Sunday itself, Michael could have followed up with these small interactions as the common people, senatorial and military ranks, and religious stakeholders would have had an audience with him in the throne room. Several officials involved in Constantinopolitan orphanages and hospices, the heads of the factions, and administrative officers would enter the emperor’s audience chamber.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> The Easter ceremonial cycle is the most extensive ceremonial recording within the *Book of Ceremonies*, greater even than the ceremonies which would have occurred around Christmas.

<sup>304</sup> Kaldellis, “How to Usurp the Throne in Byzantium,” 50.

<sup>305</sup> *BOC*, 170.

<sup>306</sup> *BOC*, 172. For more on the demarchs and *demokratai*, the leaders of the circus factions see Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 93-95; 114-120. Paul Magdalino, “The People and the Palace,” in *The Emperor’s House: Palaces from Augustus to the Age of Absolutism*, ed. Jeffery Michael Featherstone, Jean-Michel Spieser, Gulru Tanman, et. al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 174-178. For the bureaucratic offices which are mentioned generally here and specifically in later portions of this chapter, see the excellent sigillographic overview done by Shea, *Politics and Government in Byzantium*, 39-123.

Next the military officials, the “patricians, and if they happen to be present also *strategoi*, … archons of the *kouboukleion*, *domestikoi*, and those holding the highest office and *topoteretai*… in one group, in a line”<sup>307</sup> would also enter. Each of these officials would have performed obeisance before the emperor, kissing his hand, and handing him a silver cross.<sup>308</sup> Michael could have strengthened the relationship initiated through these small interactions during the next ceremonial action, the banquet. Here, he would feast with a chosen number of individuals from his “banquet list.”<sup>309</sup> Once the banquet was finished, the ceremonies for Palm Sunday were concluded.

Michael could have projected himself as a philanthropic ruler on Great Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Saturday, and Easter Sunday, when the *Book of Ceremonies* has the emperor distributing wealth across the city. On Great Thursday, he would mount his horse and attend the homes of the aged (*γηροκομεία*), distributing wealth there.<sup>310</sup> The *Book of Ceremonies* does not specify which homes for the aged the emperor would have visited. Thus, he had flexibility to set his imperial procession as far or near to the palace as would have suited his needs.<sup>311</sup> This was the first of many processions across Constantinople during the Easter ceremonial calendar and it would have cast him as the servant of the people, generous and given to acts of philanthropy. On the same day, he

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<sup>307</sup> BOC, 173. For *topoteretes*: ODB, s.v. “Topoteretes,” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005). <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-5529?rskey=rpKqtu&result=1> (accessed April 14, 2021). For the *strategoi*: ODB, s.v. “Strategos,” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005). <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-5162?rskey=os9VJL&result=1> (accessed April 14, 2021). For a general overview of the courtly dynamics see Alexander Kazhdan and Michael McCormick, “The Social World of the Byzantine Court,” in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry McGuire (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997), 167-188; Featherstone, Jeffery Michael, “Emperor and Court,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, eds. Elizabeth Jeffreys, John Haldon, and Robin Cormack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 505-517. For the place of eunuchs in the court and ceremonial: Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant*, 163-183.

<sup>308</sup> BOC, 172.

<sup>309</sup> BOC, 175.

<sup>310</sup> BOC, 177.

<sup>311</sup> Homes of the aged and hospices were scattered throughout the city; thus, it was up to the emperor’s discretion how far he would want to process on this occasion. Consider the example of the home of the aged that Konstantinos VII had converted from the stables established by Theophylaktos Lekapenos. These were established near Hagia Sophia. Romanos himself established one old age home further from the Great Palace near the Myrelaion monastery. For an overview of such establishments in Constantinople: John Lascaratos, Georgios Kalantzis and Effie Poulakou-Rebelakou, “Nursing Homes for the Old (‘Gerocrineia’) in Byzantium (324-1453 AD)” *Gerontology* 50:2 (2004), 113-117.

would have given the military and civilian notables and “the rest,” who attended divine liturgy with him, “two apples each and one cinnamon stick.”<sup>312</sup> This occasion would have provided Michael the opportunity to follow up with members of the elite he had already met only four days prior for Palm Sunday. A similar ceremony would have unfolded the next day, Good Friday, as he visited the homes of the aged and distributed money to the elderly and lepers.<sup>313</sup> The most ostentatious display of gold-giving would have occurred on Easter Saturday when a one-hundred-pound gift of gold would have been moved from the palace to Hagia Sophia, past the regularly held receptions of the chariot-racing factions.<sup>314</sup> The final display of wealth would have been the distribution of purses of gold to the members of the church inside Hagia Sophia.<sup>315</sup>

The next day, Easter Sunday, would have included both the celebration of the resurrection of Christ and a number of ceremonies intended to appease members of the church. The first of these occurred in the Chapel of the Holy Well, a portico connecting the gate of the palace, the Chalke, with Hagia Sophia, where Michael would have distributed purses of gold to the archdeacon, church-singers, and church wardens.<sup>316</sup> A small but not insignificant detail worth mentioning concerns the return route that would take the emperor to the palace. Instead of taking the fastest route, the relatively private iron gate that directly linked the palace and Hagia Sophia, Easter Sunday was one of four exceptional cases in the *Book of Ceremonies* where the emperor would instead travel along the Mese to the Chalke.<sup>317</sup> If Michael was still following the template of the *Book of Ceremonies*, he could have taken full advantage of this deviation from standard ceremonial by presenting himself on the Mese, a public thoroughfare, and giving the people ample opportunity to observe his imperial figure.

The following week, Renewal Week, would have been one of feasts and pageantry for Michael. On the Monday immediately following Easter, the *Book of Ceremonies* outlines a particularly vivid display of pageantry where the emperor would

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<sup>312</sup> This was in the Church of St. Stephen the Protomartyr: *BOC*, 178.

<sup>313</sup> *BOC*, 180.

<sup>314</sup> *BOC*, 33-34.

<sup>315</sup> *BOC*, 68.

<sup>316</sup> *BOC*, 68.

<sup>317</sup> Cyril Mango, *The Brazen House: A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* (Istanbul and København: I kommission hos Munksgaard, 1959), 76; *BOC*, 69.

wear “a *kolobion* of silk of three hues, embroidered with gold thread and decorated with precious stones and pearls which is called, ‘the bunch of grapes,’”<sup>318</sup> an outfit reserved for only three ceremonial occasions.<sup>319</sup> The emperor’s entourage consisted of several important groupings of guards and military officials each with their own prescribed outfits and regalia, working together to create an aesthetic where the emperor’s lavish tri-coloured outfit would differentiate him from those on foot in front of him, and those on horseback all around him.<sup>320</sup> Overall, this procession would be a strong display of an emperor’s power to the factions participating in eleven different factional receptions unfolding between the Church of the Holy Apostles, located in the more suburban areas of the city near the Constantinian Walls, and the Grand Palace.<sup>321</sup>

The remaining days of Renewal Week were less focused on overt displays of power outside of the palace, and more on banquets held each day of the week. Such banquets, although involving strict ceremonial formats, would have afforded the emperor the opportunity to either show favour to his already loyal supporters, or perhaps win over hostile nobles by bringing them to his presence.<sup>322</sup> Tuesday offered two such opportunities. The first such occasion was when the emperor breakfasted with “whichever guests he orders to be invited.”<sup>323</sup> A second, presumably grander banquet was held at the end of the day in the throne room.<sup>324</sup> The following day included one banquet in which “the emperor sits at the precious gold table along with whichever archons he has invited on the said day.”<sup>325</sup> Moreover, on Thursday of Renewal Week the metropolitans were present with both the emperor and the patriarch in the

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<sup>318</sup> *BOC*, 80.

<sup>319</sup> The Feast of Mid-Pentecost and the Feast of Ascension: *BOC*, 99; *BOC*, 188.

<sup>320</sup> *BOC*, 81-82.

<sup>321</sup> *BOC*, 83-84. Some examples of the public spaces along the Mese, the main thoroughfare include the Philadelphion, the Forum of the Bull and Forum of Constantine. For more on the public spaces in Constantinople see Mango, “The Commercial Map of Constantinople,” 189-207; Paul Magdalino, “The Maritime Neighborhoods of Constantinople: Commercial and Residential Functions, Sixth to Twelfth Centuries” *DOP* 54 (2000), 209-226.

<sup>322</sup> A full list of notables who attended the feasts of Renewal Week is found in the Kletorologion portion of the *Book of Ceremonies*: *BOC*, 768-773.

<sup>323</sup> *BOC*, 88.

<sup>324</sup> This feast was held at the emperor’s precious gold table: *BOC*, 90. For more on spaces within the Great Palace: Featherstone, “Space and Ceremony in the Great Palace of Constantinople under the Macedonian Emperors,” 587-610; Westbrook, *The Great Palace in Constantinople*, 91-109.

<sup>325</sup> *BOC*, 90.

Chrysotriklinos, with some seated “at the emperor’s precious gold table, and likewise at the side tables.”<sup>326</sup> For the Friday and the Saturday of Renewal Week, the *Book of Ceremonies* does not elaborate on banquets, merely stating that “the emperor goes out and sits at the gold table in the Chrysotriklinos with the guests whom he has ordered to be invited.”<sup>327</sup> All these banquets afforded Michael ample opportunity to surround himself with co-conspirators, to win over reluctant political allies, or perhaps, to give the cold shoulder to those he considered enemies. Consequently, the city’s ceremonial calendar offered Michael ample occasion to consult with political allies within the context of ceremony, allowing him to scheme without drawing suspicion.

The historically attested lavish procession Michael held the Sunday following Easter is consistent with the ceremonial template provided in the *Book of Ceremonies*. First, Michael would have processed from the palace to Hagia Sophia escorted by the consuls, senators, and patricians.<sup>328</sup> After attending liturgy and dining with the patriarch, he would return to the palace in his ceremonial dress. The ceremonial template then states that the emperor would follow the procedure of Monday of Renewal Week by holding yet another procession. Now the emperor would leave the palace and process along the Mese to the Church of the Holy Apostles. His return to the palace would be marked by the same eleven factional receptions mentioned above.<sup>329</sup> Attaleiates describes both of these processions in his history. The first, from the palace to Hagia Sophia, is the lavish procession that the people had prepared by “covering the road with luxury woven silk cloths... so the emperor, surrounded by his stately retinue, could walk across in this way.”<sup>330</sup> When Attaleiates records Michael’s return to the palace from the Church of the Holy Apostles, we read that Michael was “proud of the approbation and attendance that he had received.”<sup>331</sup> Michael decided that his ceremonial manipulation

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<sup>326</sup> BOC, 95. On Wednesday of Renewal Week, the emperor and the patriarch would dine together. As this is an examination focused on the political opportunities rather than religiously inflected ones, I have omitted an in-depth discussion of the religious ceremonies which occurred on Wednesday: BOC, 89-91.

<sup>327</sup> BOC, 97.

<sup>328</sup> BOC, 98.

<sup>329</sup> BOC, 53; BOC, 82.

<sup>330</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 19.

<sup>331</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 21.

had paid off. In the very same sentence, Attaleiates records how Zoe was sent away from the palace.<sup>332</sup>

## Interlude

To recap, the first half of this chapter has provided an overview of the ceremonial opportunities that Michael was afforded by the *Book of Ceremonies* to project his own imperial image and gauge his own popularity among his subjects during the Easter season. The second half will look at the ceremonies prescribed in the *Book of Ceremonies* that immediately followed Michael's extravagant procession — a procession which occurred on the Sunday of the week after Easter (Appendix B, C). While these ceremonies were more temporally spaced out, they would have afforded Michael opportunities to stabilize his new regime by situating himself within the history of Constantinople, all while integrating a new dynasty in the Roman imperial continuum. Constantinopolitan popular opinion and outright rebellion throughout the week after Easter prevented Michael from participating in these ceremonies. However, hints found in the sources indicate that Michael may have been following such templates, even as his popularity was fading before his eyes. Thus, it is worth considering what political opportunities these instances would have afforded him for stabilizing his nascent sole rule had the people not acted against him.

## Post-Easter & May ceremonial calendar

As Michael would have returned from the Holy Apostles on the Sunday after Easter, he would have been balancing two concurrent priorities. The first, as recorded in the historical record, was sending Zoe away to a convent located on the island of Prinkipos.<sup>333</sup> He would have also had to fulfill his ceremonial obligations for that very Sunday evening. The ceremonial template requires the emperor to begin preparations for the “Gold Hippodrome Festival” the day prior to its celebration. This ceremony, celebrated on the Monday of the week after Easter, was the annual celebration which marked the beginning of the new chariot-racing season after its hiatus for Lent. These

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<sup>332</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 21.

<sup>333</sup> As recorded in Attaleiates, *Hist.*, 21; Psellos, *Chr.* (Sewter), V.20-22; Psellos, *Chr.* (Renaud), V.XX-XXII.

preparations would have commenced by issuing a permit to the *praipositos*, one of the grand chamberlains of the palace.<sup>334</sup> This same evening the factions would be celebrating the Torch Ceremony, a sub-ceremony which was included in a number of urban Constantinopolitan celebrations.<sup>335</sup> Here the factions would dance with their respective demesmen, while holding torches and directing praises at the emperor.<sup>336</sup> The *Book of Ceremonies* does not specify whether the emperor was present during the Torch Ceremony, or if this was merely a factional celebration.<sup>337</sup> If the emperor were present, he would have had a chance to interact with the people's representatives. If Michael eschewed the occasion, he would have had more time to personally supervise his dismissal of Zoe.

The Monday of the Week after Easter, also called the Monday of Antipascha, included the reception of the Gold Hippodrome Festival. This day served as the bridge between the religious procession of Antipascha which came before it (Sunday) and the actual chariot-races which would have occurred on the following day (Tuesday). This ceremonial lynchpin involved the imperial supervision of both the Hippodrome games and official appointments. On behalf of the factions, the patricians and city demarchs<sup>338</sup> would meet with the *praipositoi*, who had been given the permit from the emperor the day prior. Collectively, they would discuss the administrative matters of the chariot-races, with documents exchanged and the official public permit issued.<sup>339</sup>

Following this, the emperor would process through the palace to begin his administrative duties. Guarded by two types of guardsmen, eunuch *protospatharioi* carrying sword-tipped batons and *spatharokandidatoi* holding swords, shields, and/or

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<sup>334</sup> BOC, 284. For more on the *praipositos*: ODB, s.v. "Praepositus Sacri Cubiculi," (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005).

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-4443?rskey=y08183&result=1> (accessed April 14, 2021).

<sup>335</sup> Including the anniversary of the accession of the emperor to the Byzantine throne, and the anniversary of the founding of Constantinople. The accession of an emperor: BOC, 283. The anniversary of the city: BOC, 349-352.

<sup>336</sup> BOC, 279.

<sup>337</sup> BOC, 279.

<sup>338</sup> See the note on the factional leadership above.

<sup>339</sup> BOC, 285.

battle axes, he would meet the court.<sup>340</sup> While the emperor moving in a guarded procession from place to place was not unusual,<sup>341</sup> it was rare to have an armed procession inside the palace complex itself, a place relatively cut off from the general Constantinopolitan public. This procession was not, therefore, to instill awe or fear among Constantinopolitans. Rather it would have been witnessed by the patricians, *strategoi*, and the entire senate.<sup>342</sup> As this would have unfolded on the morning following Michael's ousting of Zoe, it would have provided Michael a moment, albeit brief, to face the senate following his actions. Perhaps he used this opportunity to justify his actions to the military and senatorial class. We may see hints of this interaction in Psellos, where he notes that Michael addressed the senate. Here he [Michael V Kalaphates]

...gave a dramatic account of the whole affair to the Senate. It was like a scene from a play. Her so-called plots against himself were revealed, while he told them how for a long time past he had suspected her; worse than that he had more than once caught her red-handed, but had concealed her misdoings out of respect for the Senators. After inventing such lies — sheer nonsense that it was — and after winning their approval (they passed remarks suited to the occasion), he considered his defence before them was adequate, and next put his case to the people.<sup>343</sup>

Regardless of whether he utilized the ceremonial time afforded in the template to address the senators, as Psellos' account demonstrates, Michael had summoned his court to the palace that Monday. It is convenient, to say the least, that the ceremonial template presented such an opportunity for the reigning monarch to meet the senate, with his coterie of guards surrounding him.

Michael could have exploited one additional ceremonial entry on the Monday of Antipascha to push his political agenda. The *Book of Ceremonies* states that "the emperor, if he wishes, makes appointments to ranks, making promotions from ex-

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<sup>340</sup> BOC, 285-286. For *protospatharios*: ODB, s.v. "Protospatharios," (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005).

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-4555?rskey=lySn4N&result=1> (accessed April 14, 2021). For the hierarchy of the *spatarokandidatoi*: ODB, s.v. "Parathalassites," (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005). <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-4108?rskey=zTsOvX&result=1> (accessed April 14, 2021).

<sup>341</sup> For the Feast of Mid-Pentecost: BOC, 99-100. For the Monday of Renewal Week: BOC, 81.

<sup>342</sup> BOC, 285-286.

<sup>343</sup> Psellos, *Chr.* (Sewter), V.23; Psellos, *Chr.* (Renaud), V.XXIII.

eparchs up to patricians.”<sup>344</sup> Consider the implications of this ceremonial footnote in the context of Michael’s power grab. After expelling Zoe, he would have had the ceremonial precedent to call the senatorial and military leaders to his audience chamber. Once he had justified his actions, he could assess their individual reactions to his power grab. Should a member of the court be found lacking, he could merely replace them with a more enthusiastic supporter within the same day. This precedent would have afforded Michael a rapid consolation of supporters within hours of obtaining sole rule.

Following the martial procession and moment with the senate, the emperor would have had the opportunity to present himself to the factions. Psellos mentions in his retelling of Michael’s demise that, upon meeting with the senate, he “[put] his case to the people.”<sup>345</sup> Psellos may have been describing the same factional receptions outlined in the *Book of Ceremonies*. Here, the emperor would have been seated on a throne overlooking the fountain-courts of the palace where the people and the factions were present.<sup>346</sup> The factions, gathered below, would acclaim the enthroned emperor and then “make the customary requests” to their monarch.<sup>347</sup> The reception would have occurred twice, first for the faction of the Greens and then for the Blues. For Michael then, this would have been a unique opportunity to further endear himself to the people, the very thing Psellos explains he had intended to do. Had Michael planned his ousting of Zoe with ceremonies in mind, the ceremonial occasions of Monday would have been opportune in supporting his ambitions. He could have consolidated power by engaging with the senate and then by presenting himself to the factions as a receptive sole ruler. Finally, he would have had the opportunity to create his own appointments to a variety of bureaucratic, military, and administrative positions. The entire day ended with a banquet

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<sup>344</sup> BOC, 293. For more on the eparch: ODB, s.v. “Eparch,” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 2005).

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-1686?rskey=EFNm9D&result=1> (accessed May 15, 2021); Leon VI, “Ordinances of Leo VI c. 895 From the Book of the Eparch” in *Roman Law in the Later Roman Empire: Byzantine Guilds, Professional and Commercial* trans. E H. Freshfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), 207-281.

<sup>345</sup> Psellos, *Chr.* (Sewter), V.23; Psellos, *Chr.* (Renaud), V.XXIII.

<sup>346</sup> BOC, 287; BOC, 296. It should be noted that this ceremony would have had to be modified for Michael, as these fountain-courts were destroyed by Basileios I in the ninth century: VB, 297-299.

<sup>347</sup> BOC, 288.

— a moment of levity to celebrate what he had hoped was a smooth transition of power.<sup>348</sup>

The next day, Tuesday, was the actual Gold Hippodrome Festival, the beginning of the year's chariot-racing season.<sup>349</sup> This would have been the first opportunity for Michael to greet a large portion of the City's population after ousting Zoe. The tiers of the Hippodrome would have been filled with Constantinopolitans, with a specific mention of the army standing in their orders as well.<sup>350</sup> Additionally, as was customary, the patricians and *strategoi* would perform public obeisance before the emperor in his Kathisma.<sup>351</sup> Dagron also notes in the footnotes of the *Book of Ceremonies* that the *demokratai* and the demarchs, the leaders of the factions, may have also gone up to the emperor in his box and would sit behind the rulers.<sup>352</sup> This movement may have signified the people's affirmation of the reigning monarch. Their leaders were physically and, by extension, ideologically behind the emperor.

Once everyone was in position, the ritualized actions encompassing the races themselves would begin. First, the circus factions would perform their acclamations to the emperor. Set in a call-and-response format, these chants are typically viewed as imperial lip service.<sup>353</sup> In the case of the acclamations preceding chariot racing, this is an apt description. After the more religiously inflected acclamations focusing on the emperor's relationship with the divine, the cheerleaders ask the people: "how much joy does the state have in looking upon its rulers?" The people respond, "the polity has much joy."<sup>354</sup> The cheerleaders conclude this exchange by declaring that the rulers are the joy and love of the Romans.<sup>355</sup> After this, the four morning races would commence. In the interim between the morning and afternoon races, the emperor would have been

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<sup>348</sup> BOC, 293.

<sup>349</sup> BOC, 305.

<sup>350</sup> BOC, 305. For more on the Hippodrome: Dagron, *L'hippodrome de Constantinople*.

<sup>351</sup> BOC, 307. For the physical connection between the palace and the urban centre, see Westbrook, *The Great Palace*, 149-152.

<sup>352</sup> BOC, 305.

<sup>353</sup> For a negative take on ceremonial, particularly acclamations: Kazhdan and Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium*, 125; Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 311.

<sup>354</sup> BOC, 317.

<sup>355</sup> BOC, 317-318.

able to invite whomever he wished to have lunch with him in the Kathisma complex.<sup>356</sup> This was another opportunity for Michael to use a banquet setting to quell any remaining resistance to his sole rule. After the four afternoon races, the people would exit the Hippodrome, concluding the chariot races for that day. A final Torch Ceremony would be held in the evening, bringing the day's ceremonial events to a close.<sup>357</sup>

All these ceremonial fragments of the Tuesday of the Gold Hippodrome Festival demonstrate micro-episodes of possible political dialogue which Michael could have staged within well-known and recognizable formats. The notables' public obeisance to the emperor and visible physical alignment in support of the emperor projected imperial authority to the audience of the Hippodrome. The acclamations of the Hippodrome would have affirmed the people's allegiance, performative or otherwise, to the new sole ruler. Finally, more intimate ceremonial settings such as the luncheon banquet and the Torch Ceremony would have provided a face-to-face interface between Michael and his subjects. Notably, this entire Hippodrome festival would have also been the first occasion where Michael would hear his own name in the public proclamations without the inclusion of Zoe's — one theorized motive for this action in the first place.<sup>358</sup>

If Michael continued to follow the ceremonial calendar, there would be a gap of about ten days between the Gold Hippodrome Festival and the next imperial celebration, the anniversary of the New Church (Nea Ekklesia). Mentioned extensively in Chapter 1, this was the celebration which Basileios I "the Macedonian" instituted to commemorate his newly built palace chapel.<sup>359</sup> While this ceremony was not nearly as expansive as the Easter ceremonial processions or the Gold Hippodrome festival, it is worth mentioning that there is an obvious imperial bias — one particularly entrenched in the Macedonian dynasty.<sup>360</sup> Zoe was a direct descendant of Basileios I, the church's founder. Michael, on the other hand, was an imperial interloper. It is worth pausing for just a moment to consider some ways in which Michael may have exploited the New Church's ceremonially evoked memory for his own purposes.

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<sup>356</sup> BOC, 308.

<sup>357</sup> BOC, 349-352.

<sup>358</sup> Psellos, *Chr.* (Sewter), V.17; Psellos, *Chr.* (Renaud), V.XVII.

<sup>359</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>360</sup> BOC, 121.

Like Basileios, Michael was an imperial outsider. While Basileios' was born a peasant, Michael issued from a line of successful caulkers.<sup>361</sup> Like Basileios, Michael was also adopted into the imperial position, owing his initial rank of *Kaisar* to Zoe's patronage. Finally, whereas Michael only attempted to oust and exile his imperial benefactor, Basileios successfully had his own patron, Michael III, killed. It is safe to assume that Michael would have had knowledge of Basileios' life. He was, after all, the founder of the dynasty within which Michael had been adopted. Zoe and her sister Theodora, who lived the angelic life in a monastery, were the last living members of Basileios' Macedonian dynasty. By both placing himself as the legitimate heir of the Macedonian dynasty through his adoption and ousting the last Macedonian, Michael was holding up an imperial mirror to the founding Macedonian. He could have only hoped that the people would recognize the comparison. This connection with the imperial past of Constantinople was, after all, at the core of the May ceremonial calendar. As we will see, this would have only helped Michael situate his rule in the broader Constantinopolitan tradition.

The next ceremonial highlight would have taken place on May 11<sup>th</sup>, the anniversary of the founding of Constantinople. This was the second occasion where the people would gather in the Hippodrome to witness chariot-racing in a ceremonial context. These festivities would have started the day before, on the 10<sup>th</sup>, with each faction promenading their lavishly decorated horses from the palace to the Hippodrome.<sup>362</sup> At the same time, the people would begin placing vegetables and cakes at the centre of the Hippodrome.<sup>363</sup> The following day consisted of a variety of athletic feats. On top of the regular morning and afternoon races there were also races of the two-horse chariots, the *bigas*.<sup>364</sup> After the four races concluded, the emperor would send crowns to the winners, followed by the factions requesting a public dance in the streets. Once the emperor acquiesced, the people would descend from the tiers of the Hippodrome and take the piled vegetables and cakes — with fresh fish added that day.<sup>365</sup> Everyone would have returned to the Hippodrome for the second set of races in

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<sup>361</sup> Skylitzes (Wortley), 116; Skylitzes (Thurn), 115.

<sup>362</sup> BOC, 341.

<sup>363</sup> BOC, 344.

<sup>364</sup> BOC, 353.

<sup>365</sup> BOC, 345.

the afternoon. In a similar manner, the winning charioteers would be crowned by the emperor's intercessor, who would give permission for the factions to return to the streets "[dancing] in proper order." The Blues would depart to one of the twelve neighbourhoods of the city, the Greens to another.<sup>366</sup>

For Michael, this celebration would have provided an excellent opportunity to prove himself to the factions. Recall that on the Monday of Antipascha, a little over three weeks prior to this occasion, the factions were allowed to petition the reigning monarch. Now, Michael would have had the opportunity to fulfill their request by proving that, as sole ruler, he was capable of hosting the most lavish secular festival in Constantinopolitan urban life. Moreover, while the provision of cakes, vegetables, and fish may appear as ceremonial accoutrement, providing for the daily bread of the Constantinopolitans was one of the most important tasks of an emperor seeking to keep the urban population happy.<sup>367</sup> If Michael wanted to present himself as a capable ruler able to steer the ship of the Medieval Roman state, he could not fail in something so seemingly inconsequential, yet so vital. Moreover, if it was Michael's aim to win people over by the distribution of gifts, this would have been an opportune moment to present himself as a generous provider.<sup>368</sup>

Two remaining ceremonies in the third week of May could have served as Michael's victory lap. The first of which, Ascension Day, was an unfixed feast day, whose date depended on the changing Easter ceremonial. In 1042, it would have been celebrated on Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. Here the emperor would have boarded his imperial vessel, a *dromon*, and sailed the length of the city to the Theodosian land walls.<sup>369</sup> Arriving at a nearby church, the Church of the All-holy Theotokos of the Spring, the

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<sup>366</sup> BOC, 353-357. For more on the neighbourhoods of the urban centre, see the above discussion of public spaces and Figure 3.

<sup>367</sup> One of the eparch's main tasks in overseeing Constantinople would concern matters of food supply. See the mechanics of this discussed in Dagron, "The Urban Economy, Seventh-Twelfth Centuries," 445-459; Gilbert Dagron, "The grain supply of Constantinople, ninth-twelfth centuries," in *Studies on the History and Topography of Byzantine Constantinople* ed. Paul Magdalino (Aldershot, GB: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), 35-47. For an example of the negative consequences of disruptions in this food supply: Krallis, *Serving Byzantium's Emperors*, 194.

<sup>368</sup> Both Psellos and Skylitzes attribute this to Michael's imperial ambition: Psellos, *Chr.* (Sewter), V.16; Psellos, *Chr.* (Renaud), V.XVI; Skylitzes (Wortley), 392; Skylitzes (Thurn), 417.

<sup>369</sup> BOC, 108-109.

emperor would take part in liturgy and dine with the demesmen of the factions.<sup>370</sup> During the climax of the meal, dessert, the emperor would distribute purses to his valued guests.<sup>371</sup> The return to the palace, would not have mirrored his departure; rather, his ceremonial route mirrored the grand procession carried out during the Monday of Renewal Week. He would wear his *skaramangia* of silk of three hues, the exact same regalia he donned for the Monday procession, carry his gold sword set with precious stones, and mount his caparisoned horse. The return to the palace would include sixteen separate receptions across the length of the city, hosted by the four factions.<sup>372</sup> In many ways, this replication of his triumphant procession would evoke his ascent to power reinforcing his imperial image to a populace who, while having limited interaction with the ruling monarch, would clearly have the recent memory of his lavish procession the month prior. Simply put, Michael could reintroduce himself to the people by simple ceremonial repetition.

Finally, Michael would have had the opportunity to cement his sole rule and echo the day of his power grab by celebrating the most famous imperial holiday in Constantinople — the commemoration of Constantine the Great, held annually on May 21<sup>st</sup>. This ceremonial template afforded Michael the opportunity to repeat the steps of his initial power grab on the Sunday after Easter, by returning to the Church of the Holy Apostles.<sup>373</sup> Early in the morning, the emperor would have mounted his horse and processed to the church where he would pay his respects to the imperial “greats.” He would pay homage to the tombs of Leon VI, St. Theophano, Basileios the Orthodox, and Constantine the Great.<sup>374</sup> Then he would return to the palace in another public procession.<sup>375</sup> By retracing his steps of the Sunday following Easter to honour the prominent orthodox figures in Constantinopolitan history, Constantine paramount among them, Michael would have completed his rags to riches tale. He would have transformed,

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<sup>370</sup> BOC, 110-113.

<sup>371</sup> BOC, 113-114.

<sup>372</sup> BOC, 54-58, 188-189.

<sup>373</sup> BOC, 532.

<sup>374</sup> BOC, 533.

<sup>375</sup> BOC, 534.

over a month of ceremonial interactions and displays, from adopted strawman to fresh shoot grafted on the Macedonian royal tree.<sup>376</sup>

## Conclusion

It is easy to dismiss Michael's failed coup attempt against Zoe as a misreading of popular opinion on his part. This, however, may be too quick a judgement. If Michael did indeed consider the ceremonial blueprint outlined in the *Book of Ceremonies* while planning this power grab, it would have been logical, indeed imperative, to subvert imperial authority during the Easter season. The festivities could have given cover to both interested spectators and potentially suspicious co-conspirators to visit the capital. The ceremonies leading to the Sunday after Easter would have allowed the emperor to engage with such participants.<sup>377</sup> Through magnificent processions, the distribution of gifts, and personalized invitations to specific feasts, he could have won over any reluctant notables or ostracized any who appeared too loyal to Zoe. The subsequent ceremonies of the Gold Hippodrome Festival, the Anniversary of the City, Ascension Day, and the commemoration of Constantine would have given Michael the opportunity to consolidate his hold over both the senate and the people. These imperial celebrations would have also allowed him to cement his own imperial legacy next to figures such as Constantine the Great and Basileios I.

By staging his coup attempt on the cusp of the city's religious and secular ceremonial, Michael could have taken advantage of ceremonial time to engage with politically motivated Constantinopolitans. Ultimately, this chapter is not an exploration of Michael's failure; rather it is a consideration of the *Book of Ceremonies'* strength. Just as we contextualized the ritualized templates in the first chapter by considering the political realities of the tenth century, here we examine how the ceremonies outlived their author. Ceremonial time shaped Constantinopolitan urban life. The introductory episode of Michael VII's demise alludes to this ceremonial reality, and the imperial failure of Michael V proves it. Michael's failed power grab demonstrates avenues of inquiry which curious scholars can utilize to reconcile the seemingly contradictory concepts of imperial

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<sup>376</sup> Psellos, *Chr.* (Sewter), IV.25-26; Psellos, *Chr.* (Renaud), IV.XXV-XXVI.

<sup>377</sup> Consider, for example, that Bulgarian guests would depart the city on the Tuesday following the Gold Hippodrome Festival: *BOC*, 773.

pageantry and bloody politics. This chapter also provides a plausible understanding of how the emperor, or other invested stakeholders, could manipulate ceremonial time for their political advantages.

Ultimately, Michael underestimated the popularity of both Zoe and the Macedonian dynasty and was toppled by a violently political populace. Yet his downfall is our benefit: he demonstrated the yet unexplored intersection of political dialogue, ceremonies, collective memory, and popular political agency. The *Book of Ceremonies* provides the backdrop for all this. Its ceremonial templates are key for unlocking Michael's unwritten plans.

# Conclusion

Approximately six months after Donald Trump's infamous photo op at St. John's Church, on Epiphany 2021, a group of his supporters sought to occupy the Capitol. Trump had personally incited this action. Having advertised January 6<sup>th</sup> as a day for mobilization, Trump supporters converged in Washington DC for a "Save America Rally." Under their awe-struck gaze, Trump declared that he would not concede to the results of the 2020 election. He urged the crowd to march to the Capitol to stop the ratification of the electoral college votes — a largely ceremonial process which was being administered by both sessions of congress. Moving as one, Trump's supporters unleashed the full force of their fury against the Capitol. Once inside, the insurrectionists pillaged through congressional offices and scoured for lawmakers of both parties, those deemed a threat to the Trump presidency. Throughout the occupation, Trump continued to encourage his supporters through video messages, telling them he "loved [them]" and they were "very special."<sup>378</sup> Despite these affirmations, the coup proved unsuccessful: the building was secured by federal agents and the national guard in time for a 6PM curfew.<sup>379</sup> The January 6<sup>th</sup> riots were a ceremony-turned-coup, a not unfamiliar concept to a Middle Byzantine audience.

This thesis has argued that the *Book of Ceremonies*, despite its ritualized format, describes political dialogue in the Medieval Roman polity. Its templates may be based on the ceremonies of the Macedonian emperors in the tenth century, but it is evident that these principles of ceremonial performance persisted until the mid-eleventh century. The ceremonial displays of Basileios I, Leon VI, and Romanos I Lekapenos inspired and influenced Konstantinos VII Porphyrogenetos' decision to codify such ceremonial displays. Romanos' utilization of ceremony to sideline Konstantinos may have specifically impacted Konstantinos' own engagement with ceremonies — leading him to produce a document which both attacked his father-in-law's legacy and served as a

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<sup>378</sup> For Trump's inciting of the attack: David Z. Morris, "'We will never concede': How Donald Trump incited an attack on America," *Fortune*, January 7, 2021, <https://fortune.com/2021/01/07/trump-speech-capitol-attack-riots-pence-we-will-never-concede-maga-rally/>

<sup>379</sup> For a full summary of the day's events: George Petras, Janet Loehrke, Ramon Padilla, Javier Zarracina, and Jennifer Borresen, "Timeline: How the storming of the U.S. Capitol unfolded on Jan. 6," *USA Today*, January 6, 2021, <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/2021/01/06/dc-protests-capitol-riot-trump-supporters-electoral-college-stolen-election/6568305002/>

warning for his son. The *Book of Ceremonies* also outlines a blueprint for an emperor's engagement with the Constantinopolitan populace which, to date, has not been examined in tandem with known accounts of displays of popular political agency. Once that is done, Michael V Kalaphates' power grab, centered on the Easter ceremonial calendar, is reminiscent of Romanos' twenty-five-year imperial project, which had aimed and failed to oust a Macedonian heir from the Great Palace. In both cases, we see the logic of ceremonial performance on display. Romanos used proscribed spaces and times to introduce members of his family to the Constantinopolitan populace as prospective rulers. Michael, on his part, used the Easter ceremonial to generate consensus, test his popularity, and claim sole rule. While Konstantinos downplayed the purpose of the *Book of Ceremonies* under the modest "for some it may seem superfluous"<sup>380</sup> expression, the reality of the tenth and eleventh centuries demonstrates the political significance of ceremonies.

In exploring this significance, this thesis joins an ongoing discussion on how "Roman-ness" impacted every aspect of Byzantine life. The critical importance of "Roman political concepts,"<sup>381</sup> the nebulous term which had been vaguely associated with the Byzantine state and society in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has been elucidated through the scholarly work of Anthony Kaldellis, Leonora Neville, and Dimitris Krallis among others.<sup>382</sup> This thesis applied the ideas animating contemporary scholarship and, specifically, the "republican" reading of the Roman polity, to a component of Medieval Roman statecraft: court ceremonies. While scholarship is content to view ceremonies as moments of dialogue, this thesis pushes the envelope further. By re-examining moments of regime change through the lens of ceremonies, my approach offers a plausible and nuanced understanding of how an emperor could use ceremonies to position himself in relation to or in opposition against previous regimes. Here we see how coup attempts could be executed within the context of ceremonial calendars and how public opinion could change on a dime.

This exploration into Byzantine ceremonial as a Roman phenomenon is but an introductory glance into a much wider topic. A mere third of the available ceremonies

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<sup>380</sup> *BOC*, 3.

<sup>381</sup> Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 27.

<sup>382</sup> See also: Leonora Neville, *Heroes and Romans in Twelfth Century Byzantium: The Material for History of Nikephoros Bryennios* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

found in the *Book of Ceremonies* are addressed in this study. Furthermore, this thesis only focused on one dynasty, looking at it from the emperor's perspective. As noted throughout this thesis, however, many other ceremonial actors existed and impacted ceremonial time in Constantinople. So too did the ceremonial calendars of the patriarch, who had his own tenth-century equivalent to the *Book of Ceremonies*.<sup>383</sup> This project is but a foretaste of a much wider discussion, a discussion where different Constantinopolitan social classes, architectural spaces, and collective memories are working in tandem to construct a ceremony's meaning and constitute a surprisingly polyphonic Medieval Roman politics.

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<sup>383</sup> Juan Mateos ed., *Le Typicon de la Grande Eglise* (Rome, Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorium, 1962-1963).

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## Appendix A – The Broumalion

These two calendars (below) demonstrate the mutability of the feast of Broumalion. One of twenty-four days between November 14 and December 17 would hold the festival, based on the first letter of the senior emperor's first name. The celebration would occur on November 14<sup>th</sup>, the first day of the Broumalion, if the senior emperor's first name started with "A" – the first letter of the Greek alphabet. If the senior emperor's first name started with "B", the celebration would occur on the 15<sup>th</sup>. This would continue sequentially for each letter of the Greek alphabet, with the last day for "Ω"-born emperors occurring on December 17. This put the usurper, Romanos (*Ρωμανός*), in an awkward position. Should the Broumalion be celebrated on December 3<sup>rd</sup> in honour of his ward, Konstantinos (*Κωνσταντίνος*)? Or, as Romanos intended to take sole rule, should it be celebrated on December 10<sup>th</sup>? Rather than forcing his subjects to take a stance on the issue, I believe Romanos abolished the ceremony entirely.

**November**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
22	23	24 <b>First day of Broumalion:</b> Emperor with first letter “A” celebrated	25 Emperor with first letter “B” celebrated	26 Emperor with first letter “Γ” celebrated	27 Emperor with first letter “Δ” celebrated	28 Emperor with first letter “Ε” celebrated
29 Emperor with first letter “Ζ” celebrated	30 Emperor with first letter “Η” celebrated					

**December**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Emperor with first letter “Θ” celebrated	2 Emperor with first letter “Ι” celebrated	3 <b>Emperor with first letter “Κ” celebrated</b>	4 Emperor with first letter “Λ” celebrated	5 Emperor with first letter “Μ” celebrated
6 Emperor with first letter “Ν” celebrated	7 Emperor with first letter “Ξ” celebrated	8 Emperor with first letter “Ο” celebrated	9 Emperor with first letter “Π” celebrated	10 <b>Emperor with first letter “Ρ” celebrated</b>	11 Emperor with first letter “Σ” celebrated	12 Emperor with first letter “Τ” celebrated
13 Emperor with first letter “Υ” celebrated	14 Emperor with first letter “Φ” celebrated	15 Emperor with first letter “Χ” celebrated	16 Emperor with first letter “Ψ” celebrated	17 <b>Last day of Broumalion:</b> Emperor with first letter “Ω” celebrated	18	19

## Appendix B – April 1042

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Eve of Palm Sunday
3 Palm Sunday	4	5	6	7 Great Thursday of Easter	8 Good Friday	9 Good Saturday
10 Easter Sunday	11 Monday of Renewal Week	12 Tuesday of Renewal Week	13 Wednesday of Renewal Week	14 Thursday of Renewal Week	15 Friday of Renewal Week	16 Saturday of Renewal Week
17 Sunday of the Week after Easter	18 Gold Hippodrome Festival / Monday of Antipascha	19 Chariot Races of the Gold Hippodrome Festival	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

## Appendix C – May 1042

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 New Church	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Anniversary of the City	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19 Ascension Day	20	21 Commemoration of Constantine the Great
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 Pentecost	30	31				

## Appendix D – Byzantine Rulers from the Rise of the Macedonian Dynasty to the Komnenian Revolution<sup>384</sup>

- 867-886 Basileios I
- 886-912 Leon VI, the Wise
- 912-913 Alexander
- 913-920 Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos under regency
- 920-944 Romanos I Lekapenos
- 944-959 Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos
- 959-963 Romanos II, son of Konstantinos VII
- 963-969 Nikephoros II Phokas
- 969-976 Ioannes I Tzimiskes
- 976-1025 Basileios II, son of Romanos II
- 1025-1028 Konstantinos VIII, son of Romanos II
- 1028-1050 Zoe, daughter of Konstantinos VIII
- 1028-1034 Romanos III Argyros, married to Zoe
- 1034-1041 Michael IV the Paphlagonian, married to Zoe
- 1041-1042 Michael V Kalaphates, Zoe's adopted son
- 1042-1055 Konstantinos IX Monomachos, married to Zoe
- 1055-1056 Theodora (Zoe's sister)
- 1056-1057 Michael VI Bringas or Stratiotikos
- 1057-1059 Isaakios I Komnenos
- 1059-1067 Konstantinos X Doukas
- 1067-1068 Eudokia Makremvolitissa, widow of Konstantinos X Doukas
- 1068-1071 Romanos IV Diogenes, married to Eudokia Makremvolitissa
- 1071-1078 Michael VII Doukas, son of Konstantinos X Doukas
- 1078-1081 Nikephoros III Botaneiates
- 1081-1118 Alexios I Komnenos

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<sup>384</sup> Krallis, *Serving Byzantium's Emperors*, xvii. Indentation indicates rulers associated with Zoe, the last heiress of the Macedonian dynasty.