Monumentality and the Byzantine City

POST-PRINT
For references and citations, please refer to:
Maria Cristina CARILE, *Monumentality and the Byzantine City*, in L. ZAVAGNO – N. BAKIRTZIS (Edd.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Byzantine City*, London - New York, Routldge, 2024, 290–310: https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780429203923-17/monumentality-byzantine-city-maria-cristina-carile?context=ubx&refId=1caa91e3-405e-44f9-b15c-48a66a0cdfe8

Monumentality and the Byzantine city

MARIA CRISTINA CARILE (https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8873-138X)

Abstract
In western languages the term monumentality is commonly used in relation to a grand and imposing object of architecture. However, can it be applied to the Byzantine city? Was the Byzantine city "monumental"? This paper explores the monumentality of the Byzantine city focusing on Late Antiquity. Discussing the notion of monumentality from the point of view of the most recent scholarly theory, it will show that, even if the Byzantine city was – so to say – unintentionally monumental, in fact within its boundaries natural and built space was organized in order to convey messages and to leave a long-lasting impact on viewers. Even if the concept of monumental did not exist as such in Byzantium, in fact from extant evidence it is clear that the Byzantine city was a consistent unit with natural and built features that perfectly met the modern concept of monumentality.

As Melchior Lorichs's panorama of Constantinople shows, in 1559 the former capital of the Byzantine empire appeared as an enormous expanse of roofs. The only elements that stand out over the roofs were the walls surrounding the whole city, the mosques (among which Hagia Sophia dominated for its dimensions), the tall silhouettes of freestanding columns, the remains of Valens' aqueduct. Except for the mosques, all these were Byzantine buildings, still easily recognizable in the urban setting.

Figure 1. Melchior Lorichs (Lorck), *Panorama of Constantinople*, 1559: detail. Photograph by Leiden University Libraries, Licence CC BY 4.0).

POST-PRINT
For references and citations, please refer to:
Maria Cristina CARILE, *Monumentality and the Byzantine City*, in L. ZAVAGNO – N. BAKIRTZIS (Edd.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Byzantine City*, London - New York, Routldge, 2024, 290–310: https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780429203923-17/monumentality-byzantine-city-maria-cristina-carile?context=ubx&refId=1caa91e3-405e-44f9-b15c-48a66a0cdfe8

Yet by the mid-sixteenth century they had become the outstanding landmarks of the Ottoman capital, their prominence in the city retained until the twentieth century's urban growth. The monuments in the view captured by Lorichs are identified with captions that, at a time when their original names had been forgotten, just read *antiqua* in order to denote their antiquity. It can be assumed that these ancient monuments dating from the Byzantine past were important to Lorichs, as well as to the artwork's patron, who may have been Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent.[1] Since the panorama aims not to visualize a fantastical imagining of the city, but to produce an accurate reproduction,[2] it can be argued that the Byzantine buildings portrayed here maintained their function as the city's major urban landmarks.

Lorichs' panorama introduces questions that this paper will aim to answer: how do we define the monumentality of Byzantine cities? Were Byzantine cities perceived as possessing monumentality? Was monumentality intended for Byzantine cities – and particularly for the capital of the empire, Constantinople – or was it an unintentional, organic characteristic that developed through time as a result of the visible architectural features of the buildings or the appearances of the built spaces? These questions first require reflection on the meaning of the term 'monumentality' and on the ways it can be applied to the Byzantine city.

Assessing the problem

In order to investigate the monumentality of the Byzantine city, the city must be considered as the subject – just as it has been portrayed in Lorichs's panorama. A city is a spatial unity formed within boundaries by an ensemble of built and natural elements, with components that grow and change through time, both adapting to and shaping the surrounding environment. Its major features are landmarks of the urban setting and their function may have certain weight in the construction – and perception – of a city's monumentality. Fundamentally, to investigate the monumentality of the Byzantine city, one should consider the natural setting – more specifically, how the built environment copes with or relates to the natural setting. Natural features may shape the built environment, determining the choices of the builders; they can be adapted to the builders' choices, or exploited to augment a building's impact on the viewer. Accordingly, this paper will reflect over the Byzantine city focusing on Late Antiquity, when most of Byzantine centers took form. In the long span of the over one thousand years of the Byzantine Empire's history, it will take into consideration not only the capital but also major and provincial cities.

POST-PRINT
For references and citations, please refer to:
Maria Cristina CARILE, *Monumentality and the Byzantine City*, in L. ZAVAGNO – N. BAKIRTZIS (Edd.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Byzantine City*, London - New York, Routldge, 2024, 290–310: https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780429203923-17/monumentality-byzantine-city-maria-cristina-carile?context=ubx&refId=1caa91e3-405e-44f9-b15c-48a66a0cdfe8

As several Byzantine cities have been built up over their ancient foundations to become modern metropolises of the twenty-first century, this paper will make use of all the available sources, but necessarily rely upon textual and visual evidence, which convey viewers' perceptions and the cities' reception through the time. Archaeological, architectural, and art historical evidence will be considered as testimonies for the monumentality of Byzantine cities that, since they now survive as fragmentary remnants of the past, can be understood in their monumental value only by association with texts. In order to understand a city's monumentality, one cannot look solely at the material evidence, but should also take into consideration its value for the people who perceived it and received it through the time. Lorichs' is a reproduction of the city, an interpretation – though based on observation – through the eyes of the artist, expressing his view and most likely responding to the expectations of the patron. This aspect is of foremost importance as monumentality is something to be perceived/received, a quality recognized and felt by the beholder.

From antiquity to the present, innate in the concept of monumentality is the temporal dimension.[3] A monument was envisioned as having a lasting impact on the environment where it was built and on the people who saw it, who recognized in it the embodiment of the patron who founded it, its function, or the institution that it hosted. Therefore, a monument is a building or a structure meant to contain a memory. However, due to the way it is used at times by the inhabitants of the city or viewed by people, it has a present dimension that entails its perception. Furthermore, its permanence in a changing environment through time lends itself to its repurposing or its reinterpretation by people, the loss of its original significance, and a transformation of its identity. It also entails an interiorization of the monument itself by every individual, who can connect to it personal memories and develop feelings towards it that bring about personal views and a resemantization of the monument. In brief, the future dimension of a monument involves its reception through the time. Therefore, the temporal dimension of the monument, its past, present, and future are related to the social system that promotes its construction, perceives it, and receives it in history.[4]

However, when approaching the theme of the city monumentality, one does not deal with any single monument, but with the monumental value of a city, the city itself being a construct of single monuments and natural spaces with certain impacts on viewers. Consequently, investigating its temporal dimension cannot prescind from considering it as a whole, in its monuments' major phases of construction, which shaped its urban setting at major historical periods. Moreover, it should consider the way the city was perceived by its

inhabitants or visitors, being the latter Roman citizens or foreigners, as well as its reception by outsiders, even after its end in 1453. Such temporal dimension, which entails the social value of the city as a monument in itself, will be considered in the following.

Terminology and scholarly approach

The term 'monumentality' derives from the Latin *monumentum*, itself a derivative from the verb *moneo*, which means 'to remind, put in mind, bring to one's recollection', but also 'to admonish, advise, warn, instruct, teach'.[5] As such, *monumentum* is 'that which preserves the remembrance of anything, a memorial, a monument'.[6] First used to identify a tomb or a memorial linked to an event,[7] the term and its derivative, *monumentality,* came to be used frequently from the 18th century onwards and not necessarily in relation to architectural structures. Rather, it was applied in archeological and art historical research to indicate ancient buildings or objects which possessed strong historical value.

Yet, did Romans and Byzantines have a concept of monumentality? As Alessandra Bravi points out, the statues that adorned squares and streets of Constantinople were considered as *monumenta*, elements recalling the past and carrying social and political value.[8] The Latin word *monumentum* was not necessarily used in relation to a building or an object and could well identify an event or an exemplary act that had to be remembered in the future:[9] thus, the presence of inscriptions to evoke meaningful memories, which, by extension, were associated with the structures themselves. Still, the term monumentality does not exist in Greek or in Latin sources and the idea of monumentality was rendered through passages emphasizing the grandeur of a building or a work of art, its meaning, social significance, and its power – often reflecting the patron's. This is exemplified in the introduction to Procopius' *De Aedificiis*: the author's poem celebrates Justinian's buildings as material manifestations of the patron's power and wealth, which will evoke his memory for centuries to come.[10] Indeed, buildings had a primary role in sixth century imperial propaganda. Within the text, addressing the various structures erected by Justinian, from churches to bridges and city walls, Procopius outlines their enormous size, the exploitation of manpower, the variety of materials and means used in their construction, their value to the people, and their location within their geographical context.

Perhaps it is because of the absence of the term, 'monumentality,' in Greek and Latin sources that scholars of Byzantium have never directly approached the theme, and

particularly the monumentality of the Byzantine city. In the last twenty years, substantial reflection has arisen on the subject, though rarely in relation to the city. Rather monumentality has been considered in relation to specific structures or a building typology in prehistory,[11] Etruscan and Roman architecture,[12] and in comparative studies of Late Antiquity.[13] The early Middle Ages are largely overlooked.[14]

Recent research on monumental constructions has defined several criteria for understanding/detecting monumentality in antiquity and avoiding the risk of superimposing the modern concept of "monumental" to the ancient understanding of the term and old possible concepts regarding monumentality. The major characters of monumentality, used to ascertain the monumentality of any particular building or structure according to recent studies, are: its enormous size, which makes a building or structure stand out from the surroundings; its position, as the location of the object could significantly impact the surroundings, becoming a center, even if it was actually located in a peripheric area; its permanence, that is the time the object has survived, as time is inherent to the function of memory and the "monumental"; the financial investment in its construction, which entails large sums of money, thus intention and expense; and the complexity of the project, involving the technology, artisanal skills, and organizational and logistic efforts to build the structure.[15] Indeed, all these elements arise in the *ekphraseis* of buildings in Procopius's *De aedificiis*. Still, as Levenson underlines, it is particularly difficult to find an objective way to define monumentality and none of the above principles alone «makes a monument monumental», as the concept of monumentality is closely dependent on subjectivity, that is intention, reception, and perception.[16] As we will see, the Byzantine city included all these characteristics, even though the model developed by Brunke *et al.* did not consider monumental «an object that is *large* in terms of its dimensions but that was formed through the agglomeration of many smaller objects»,[17] a definition that would apply to a city.

Constantinople – New Rome and its intended monumentality

From the fifth century onwards, accounts on the foundation of Constantinople mention that Constantine built his capital on the model of Rome.[18] Accordingly, the city had several major structures that duplicated the ones in Rome.[19] Among those were the city walls, the hippodrome, the palace, imperial squares, fountains and porticoes, the Senate House, and churches.[20] Later sources, such as the sixth-century *Chronographia* of John

Malalas, also mention the *Regia,* the *Augusteon* square with its statues, and the baths of Zeuxippos.[21] Clearly these buildings were considered as the important features of Constantine's capital and were celebrated as such. All together they made the city and, if focused upon separately, each of them was able to convey the grandeur of the emperor and the capital. The buildings mentioned by the sources had each a specific function related to military, administrative, or social needs. An imperial city founded in 330 obviously should have had great walls to prevent invasions and attacks; a palace to accommodate the emperor and his court, also responding to the administrative needs of the empire; and a hippodrome, which by the fourth century was considered as an hendiadys with the palace, the natural extension of the latter, the meeting place between the emperor and the populace in a cosmic celebration of the *basileia*, pleasing the citizens with games and chariot races.[22] The Senate House offered a gathering space to the political governance of the empire.[23] Constantine's Forum would celebrate the emperor for the centuries to come, until the fall of Constantinople in 1453; so, too, the *Augusteon* square. Both places served to display to the public statues and works of arts gathered from all around the empire, exhibiting the historical legacy of Byzantium, its classical tradition, and its refinement of governance.[24] In addition to these major structures, the sources mention porticoes, fountains, and the public Baths of Zeuxippos: all these were typical features of the major cities of the empire and were meant to accommodate citizens, providing them with monumental urban ways for walking, water (which was so precious in a city devoid of natural water sources),[25] and a beautiful public bath that retained the strong social and cultural value of the public baths of Rome.[26] Although the actual construction of churches by Constantine is a subject of extensive debate,[27] fifth century authors attribute to him Hagia Eirene and the church of the Holy Apostles, if not the Great Church of Hagia Sophia,[28] which was completed under Constantius (337-361), as well as several other structures, among which were the city walls. In fact, ascribing to Constantine the various buildings of the capital became a constant theme in later sources as a way to magnify their construction and their legacy.[29]

All the urban structures mentioned above certainly had a great significance, each had its own function, and together were the most representative elements of the founder's new capital. As such, they were distinguished in the literary texts, but as three-dimensional architecture with imposing dimensions, they possessed enormous visual value for anyone walking in the streets. The walls of Constantinople were marked by doors, foremost among them, Constantine's Golden Gate, which crowned the route of imperial triumphs along the

Via Egnatia into the city.[30] Later, Theodosius I probably built a triumphal arch located on the Egnatia, before Constantine's walls, which then was incorporated into Theodosius II's major enceinte, becoming the Golden Gate for the centuries to come.[31] The triumphal way of Constantinople, the *Mese*, lined by two-story porticoes,[32] linked the Golden Gate to one of most representative squares of the capital, the *Augusteon*, a kind of atrium for the major political centers of the city: the complex formed by the imperial palace and the hippodrome and, from the middle of the fourth century, the religious core with the patriarchate and the cathedrals of Hagia Eirene and Hagia Sophia.[33]

Starting with the Forum of Constantine in the age of Constantine, the *Mese* was dotted with major squares and honorific arches or columns, monuments intended to celebrate the ruling emperor and his dynasty too the eyes of posterity. During the reign of Constantine, another square opened on the *Mese*, close to a building with a courtyard called the *Philadelphion* in the eighth-century *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*, but originally intended to be the Capitolium.[34] The square, the so-called *Ta Amastrianou* ("the property of the man from Amastris"),[35] was located to the south of the *Mese*, just in front of the Capitolium to the north of the street, where the main road leading to the Golden Gate forked, adding a north-west branch. A semicircular courtyard connected it to a centrally planned building to the south, a fifth-century palace which, around 920, Romanus I Lekapenos (919-944) converted into the Myrelaion Monastery.[36] Originally, it was decorated with statues and, according to Albrecht Berger, associated with the imperial cult of Helena, just as the Capitolium was associated with Constantine.[37]

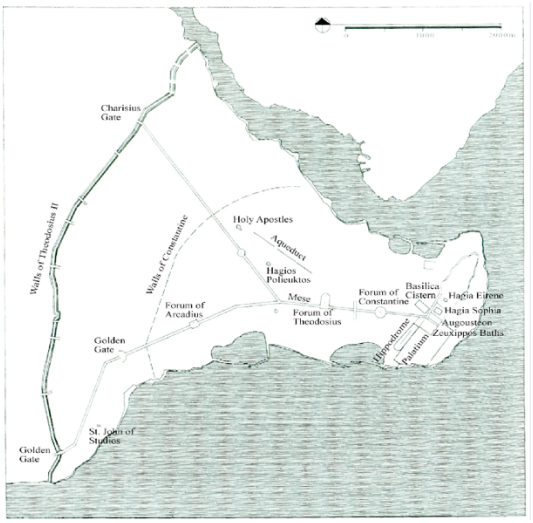

Figure 2. Map of Constantinople in Late Antiquity (authors M.C. Carile – S. Circassia).

POST-PRINT
For references and citations, please refer to:
Maria Cristina CARILE, *Monumentality and the Byzantine City*, in L. ZAVAGNO – N. BAKIRTZIS (Edd.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Byzantine City*, London - New York, Routldge, 2024, 290–310: https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780429203923-17/monumentality-byzantine-city-maria-cristina-carile?context=ubx&refId=1caa91e3-405e-44f9-b15c-48a66a0cdfe8

Between 380 and 393, Theodosius I transformed an area located between the Forum of Constantine and the *Philadelphion* into another major forum – the so-called *Tauros* or *Forum Tauri* – which he dedicated to himself and his sons.[38] There, a monumental arch and a column celebrated the grandeur of Theodosius and his dynasty.[39] Soon after, in 401-402, his son, Arcadius, built another imperial square further west, on the last stretch of the *Mese* towards the Golden Gate. Just as his father did at the *Tauros*, at its center Arcadius erected a column with a helical frieze.[40] In the following centuries of Late Antiquity, the process of building imperial squares with honorific monuments continued on the northern branch of the *Mese*, with the Forum of Marcian located not far from the complex of the Holy Apostles, and the Forum of Leo I in the area of the ancient acropolis near Hagia Eirene.[41] Later, after the turmoil of the Nika riot in 532, during Justinian's reconstruction of the *Augusteon*, this latter square was turned into another area modeled after the other imperial *fora*, celebrating the ruling emperor with a colossal column supporting a statue.[42] Thus, by the sixth century, Constantinople's urban landscape was dotted with open-air squares monumentalized by lavish architecture expressing the grandeur of the emperors.

Under Constantine, the northern branch of the *Mese* was designed to connect the main street with the *martyrion* of the Holy Apostles, the imperial mausoleum built on one of the highest hills of the city. The martyrion-mausoleum, which was enlarged by Constantius with the construction of a cross-plan church in 356,[43] expanded in grand scale the architectural and conceptual tetrarchic precedent of placing imperial palace, hippodrome, and mausoleum in relation to one another. Starting with the building projects of Maxentius in Rome, these three buildings, each designed to celebrate the imperial power in its private and public sphere in life (palace and hippodrome) and in death (mausoleum), were structurally linked, forming a unity for the major exaltation of the *basileia*.[44] In the new capital of Constantine, they embraced the whole city, dispersed over a vast expanse but nonetheless connected by monumental porticoed streets. Moreover, their location up on the highest hills of the peninsula united them: to anyone looking at the city arriving by boat from the Marmara Sea, they appeared as the tallest structures of all – and this effect increased once Justinian's rebuilt the new churches of the Holy Apostles and Hagia Sophia as enormous buildings topped with lead domes.[45] It is also worth noting that the *fora* of Constantine, Theodosius, and Arcadius were all located upon hills rising above the cityscape. These open-air monuments, which, like windows opening up in the urban landscape, also exhibited ancient and new statuary, formed the settings for monumental columns supporting colossal imperial statues that rose

high over the cityscape.[46] As demonstrated by Pelin Yoncaci-Arslan with a fabulous new three-dimensional model of the city and its monumental streets, the columns with their tall statues were a late antique "urban signature", having a long-lasting effect on visitors.[47] In fact, a number of sources celebrate the columns as among the most extraordinary aspects of the city, from the popular traditions recorded in the *Patria* to the tenth-century poetry of Constantine Rhodius, and well after until Melchior Lorichs.[48]

Beside these major urban elements, Constantinople saw the rise of a number of other monumental structures. Starting with the reign of Constantius, the city was Christianized with churches that formed a sacred geography visibly manifesting the Christian character of the empire and sanctifying the urban space with their relics. Socrates's claim that, under Theodosius II, Constantinople was turned into a sanctuary, is perhaps an exaggeration,[49] but indeed according to the written sources the number of churches built in the first two centuries after the city foundation was very significant. By the time of Justinian, many of these sacred buildings were embellished with domes, further monumentalizing their appearances. Apart from being places of worship, several churches with their relics established processional paths inserted into the crowded liturgical calendars of cities like Constantinople.[50]

Furthermore, in keeping with the typically Roman attitude, the infrastructures of Constantinople were also designed to leave a long-lasting imprint on the city. Overcoming the irregular geography of the capital, Valens (364-378) promoted the construction of a massive aqueduct that brought water from over 250 km away and, between the third and the fourth hill, jutted above the city with its massive, superimposed rows of arches.[51] Later, Theodosius II, in response to the increasing population, completed an innovative and impressive walled enceinte formed by a complex system of fortifications, which made the city impregnable until its fall to the Ottomans in 1453. Its most exposed surfaces hosted monumental towers and gates and showed inscriptions recording the name of emperors responsible for embellishments or repairs through the centuries.[52] The creation of infrastructures, such as the aqueduct and the walls, which entailed enormous expenses in materials and manpower, not only served the practical and basic needs of a city and its populace, but monumentally displayed the philanthropy and grandeur of emperors to inhabitants and visitors. Authors from throughout history never fail to mention the walls of Constantinople. Although a victim of a twentieth-century reconstruction done in a way one might describe as a Disneyworld style, they are considered among the most prominent features of the city. The great import of such infrastructures in terms of a kind of embodied,

so to say, physical, and three-dimensional propaganda was well known to Procopius, who celebrates bridges and fortifications that Justinian had built in the provinces.

Moreover, between the fourth and sixth centuries, the emperor and the richest of the élites oversaw the construction of lavish palaces. For instance, these include the Palace of Lausus and Antiochus, later turned into the Church of St. Euphemia;[53] the above-mentioned palace built by "the man from Amastris"; and the palace of Anicia Juliana, who was also responsible for the building of a church – Hagios Polyeuktos – beautiful enough to compete with Justinian's churches.[54] These large and lavish buildings stood out in a cityscape crowded with other smaller houses.

From imperial cities to provincial towns

In the second half of the fourth century, writing a poem in praise of the major urban centers of the empire, Ausonius celebrates the splendour of Milan by naming its most representative constructions: the palace, the city walls, the hippodrome, the theatre, the temples, the mint, the baths, the colonnades.[55] He was a Gallic intellectual and teacher at the court of Valentinian I (364-375), so he places particular emphasis on the description of Milan as the seat of the western court. The major buildings of Milan praised by Ausonius are the same kinds of buildings found in Constantinople that were lauded by fifth-century authors. In his orations on Antioch and Nicomedia, Libanius similarly celebrates the porticoes, the temples, the baths, the harbor, the streets, and the imperial palace.[56] Indeed, all of these cities were imperial seats. The buildings that writers are wont to include in their encomia are undoubtedly the most characteristically beautiful, the elements that appeal to the eye and make these urban centers superior to all the other cities.

Moreover, the images evoked by written sources are corroborated historical evidence. The centres that between the third and the fourth century became tetrarchic capitals or those that were used as such by the western and eastern courts until the middle of the fifth century – though all only temporary seats of the empire – share common structures of particular grandeur. This is the case, for instance, of the tetrarchic capitals of Augusta Treverorum (Trier), Mediolanum, Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovica), Thessalonica (Thessaloniki), Nicomedia (İzmit), Nicaea (İznik), and Antiochia (Antakya). Also Aquileia, Arelatum (Arles), and Eboracum (York), where emperors occasionally stayed, were equipped with largescale and expensive buildings that were becoming associated with the ruler. More than monuments,

POST-PRINT
For references and citations, please refer to:
Maria Cristina CARILE, *Monumentality and the Byzantine City*, in L. ZAVAGNO – N. BAKIRTZIS (Edd.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Byzantine City*, London - New York, Routldge, 2024, 290–310: https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780429203923-17/monumentality-byzantine-city-maria-cristina-carile?context=ubx&refId=1caa91e3-405e-44f9-b15c-48a66a0cdfe8

they were indexes of imperial presence. In the fourth century the imperial authority impacted the cities of Serdica (Sofia) and Naissus (Niš) as centers linked to Constantine and his family,[57] and Ravenna when it became the seat of the western court of Honorius (395-423) at the beginning of the fifth century.[58] While for major urban centers such as Thessaloniki, Trier, and Antioch the imposing dimensions of the urban expanse surely added monumental value to it, smaller centers such as Naissus, Sirmium, Nicomedia, Nicaea, and even Ravenna owed their monumental character to the presence of these important buildings. Around 358, Libanius clearly states this about the city of Nicomedia, which was much smaller than other major cities of the time, writing that because of its geographical location and buildings, Nicomedia surpassed Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria in splendor.[59]

These urban centers – just as other centers of the empire that never came to be imperial cities but were large provincial capitals, such as Ephesus or Sardis – offered enjoyment to the public by means of constructing large public baths, theatres, major porticoed streets and squares, temples and, in the course of Late Antiquity, churches. The architecture and decoration of main urban structures is often praised in written sources: for instance, the presence of statues or columns in squares and the exterior of public buildings are particularly appreciated. Columns and statues concurred in transforming major urban roads in pleasant public spaces, indeed they were perceived as adding on the *decus* of the city:[60] they were not only suited to decorate the urban setting but with their imagery and, in some cases, antiquity, they augmented the value of the space itself, thereby becoming identifying features of Roman civilization. A long tradition of epigrams on statues is testimony to the value of these elements as bearers of meaning and magnificence for common people.[61] After the riot of 378, the destruction of statues in the public spaces of Antioch made the city to appear unadorned and empty.[62] The legends of the *Patria* often attach magical powers to ancient statuary of Constantinople and, in the tenth century, Constantine of Rhodes still praises the «statues by which, like stars, the city is adorned and turns its bright gaze everywhere».[63] Libanius recalls the temples of Antioch clad in marble, Procopius of Gaza the imperial statues adorning the cities newly restored by Anastasius' munificence.[64]

The geographical location is also often praised, adding to the concept of the city's monumentality: in particular the presence of water – such as rivers, water sources, or the sea – or of hills and a mountainous setting seem to augment the value of the city, an urban spectacle described as a vision seen from afar.[65] This is evidenced in Ausonius, Libanius, Procopius of Gaza, even in the epic of Nonnus of Panopolis, and in saintly lives.[66] Far from

being a literary trope derived from the classic *locus amoenus*, a pleasant natural location appears as a greatly admired setting for its respective marvelous urban center, something that enhanced the city's monumentality.

Also smaller provincial cities had a certain monumental character expressed by their major buildings. The paucity of written sources describing smaller cities between the fourth and seventh/eighth centuries is counterbalanced by the extant visual and archeological evidence. Between the third and the sixth centuries, the cities were provided by massive fortifications, the most defining feature of monumentality even among the smaller cities. Ausonius' attentive praise of towns highlights the importance of the urban walls not only in imperial cities such as Milan, but also in smaller cities, among which are Tolosa (Toulouse) and Burdigala (Bordeaux), his home town.[67] City walls were perhaps the major urban feature from late antiquity to the end of Byzantium, the element that stand out in every visual representation from the imaginary cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem of church apses to miniature painting.[68] As stated above, fortifications were a central need of cities, and not only on the frontiers in a period of constant threat of invasions such as Late Antiquity. This is well evidenced everywhere in the empire, from the building of a walled enceinte in Galerius's palace-city at Romuliana (Gamzigrad) at the beginning of the fourth century,[69] to the extant massive fifth century walls of Thessaloniki,[70] to the walled enceintes of the cities on the Euphrates promoted by Anastasius (491-518) and Justinian.[71] Procopius clarifies the importance of urban walls. After naming all the fortifications restored or built anew by the emperor in the Danube area, he states that the urban renovation and the strong fortification made Singidunum (Belgrade) "a famous and important city",[72] as if the walls magnified the city itself. Later he adds that large defenses and a number of houses give settlements the rank of cities.[73] Procopius's view equates the visual evidence of the Peutinger Map, where the major cities of the empire which had imperial palaces and/or were of particular strategic importance – namely Ravenna, Aquileia, Thessalonica, Nicomedia, Nicaea, and Ancyra – are all marked by the stylized image of an urban wall with towers, a symbol communicating the great value the city itself to the viewer.[74] Therefore, in the common mentality of the time – and in the following centuries of Byzantium – urban walls were understood as monumental features and considered iconic elements of the cities themselves: in the reality as well as in the imagery, such imposing and massive structures impacted viewers, epitomizing representations of the cities. Their iconic, representative value went beyond their practical

function of providing defense into declaration of strength and power for the inhabitants of the city and for the authority who erected the urban walls.

One of the major characters of the Roman city was its typical orthogonal grid with two major axes (*cardo* and *decumanus*) that, in large and medium size cities, were monumentalized by columns, statues, nymphaea, or fountains and, often, a celebrative structure at their crossing, which in late antiquity often was a *tetrapylon*.[75] Between the third and the sixth centuries, colonnaded porticoes were a constant feature lining the main avenues, which responded to both practical and aesthetical needs. While they could provide cover for pedestrians during hot Mediterranean summers or rainy days, and adjunct spaces for shops, they could also become shelters for poor people at night. The porticoes were paved and, in some cases, even decorated with mosaics.[76] As it has been suggested on the bases of very narrow porticoed ways on the main streets of fourth-century Ephesus and sixth-century Salona, sometimes these architectural structures were purely ornamental rather than practical. It was the colonnaded road and not necessarily the usability of the porticoes, therefore, that added monumentality to the city.[77] The importance of column-lined roads, and, in general, of columnar architecture, is perhaps best evidenced by the mosaic floor of the Syro-Palestinian churches from the six through eighth centuries, like the Church of Madaba. There, the representation of the cities of the Holy Land suggests the iconographer's conception of different urban centers.[78] Jerusalem, the heart of the region and of Christianity, features as the largest city. Its renowned monuments, although rendered in a quite schematic way, are all recognizable and, above all, well visible are the *cardo* with its porticoes and a parallel columned road to the west. Indeed, the major characteristic of the city seem to be the porticoed *cardo*.[79]

POST-PRINT
For references and citations, please refer to:
Maria Cristina CARILE, *Monumentality and the Byzantine City*, in L. ZAVAGNO – N. BAKIRTZIS (Edd.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Byzantine City*, London - New York, Routldge, 2024, 290–310: https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780429203923-17/monumentality-byzantine-city-maria-cristina-carile?context=ubx&refId=1caa91e3-405e-44f9-b15c-48a66a0cdfe8

Figure 3. Jerusalem, Madaba Map, sixth-century. Image in the public domain retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Madaba_map.jpg

Similarly, apart from the frequent towered walls, porticoes, which may be one of the most important visual elements testifying to the importance of late antique city, feature in the vignettes of Gaza, Neapolis, Diospolis, Kyriakopolis, and Ascalon. Indeed, in the sixth century, the major buildings showed in the Madaba map were the same ones encountered in written sources.

Apart from columned roads and walls in the Madaba Map's image of Jerusalem, special attention if given to the representation of sacred places. This is not surprising in a church such as that of Madaba, the floor of which was possibly designed as a cartographic map to orient Christians through the sacred geography of the area.[80] Apart for the Anastasis, well visible thanks to the golden dome of the Rotunda and the basilica, other churches with a longitudinal plan and gabled roofs have been identified. Among those near the southern gate was the large structure of the Nea, the New Church of Mary built by Justinian in 542-43, one of the biggest ecclesiastical buildings in antiquity.[81] Indeed, from late antiquity onwards, churches are among the main features of the city, and the great expense and building effort spent for their architecture and decoration insure those to acquire a certain monumentality. Even in the case of provincial churches, such as the fourth-century cathedral of Tyre described by Eusebius, although the buildings materials were largely in wood and did not include the great variety of colorful marbles that adorned other major Constantinian churches, it is clear that the building reached a certain monumentality.[82] However, if, as it has recently been suggested, the Madaba map mosaic was in fact set into a civic hall,[83] the inclusion of such a high number of churches in the representation of Jerusalem would reflect the

contemporary perception of the city and of its monumentality, which was conveyed by the presence of ecclesiastical buildings and sanctuaries. Although architectural representations in late antiquity and Byzantium were never exact reproductions of reality – and in fact the complex of the Anastasis here is represented at the center of the *cardo* when it could not actually be located there – clearly, when depicting a specific city, the mosaicist took care to portray its major monuments, those which best characterized the urban center and retained certain importance for people. This was not only to make that city recognizable – the captions would have served this task – but to express the character of the city by means of its impressive and distinguishing monuments.

The Byzantine city as a Christian city: ecclesiastical monumentality

That the church is a fundamental element – a real bearer of monumentality – of the late-antique and Byzantine city is well attested both in written and visual sources. In chronicles of the empire as well as church chronicles, authors do not neglect to mention the building of churches. In the seventh-century *Chronicon Paschale*, which largely draws on the sixth-century *Chronografia* by John Malalas, the building of churches appears as one of the emperor's greatest accomplishment. In the tenth century, in addition to the new constructions in the palace, the *Vita Basilii* lists a number of churches built by Constantine and repaired or renewed by Basil I (867-886) and carefully describes the *Nea*, the new church which arose within the premises of the Great Palace.[84] The latter demonstrated «the emperor's piety towards the Godhead and the wondrous magnificence of his undertakings»[85] and was designed to celebrate the "everlasting memory" of Christ, Archangel Michael, Elijah the Tishbite, the Virgin, and Nicholas. Churches, with their dedications and the relics enshrined within their walls, were conceived as holy shrines and memorials, as is well attested by the accounts of Russian travelers between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, who visited Constantinople in pilgrimage.[86] The words of Constantine of Rhodes are perhaps the most revealing to understand the impact of churches on the monumentality of the city in the tenth century. In his poem he introduces the description of the Holy Apostles mentioning the church along with Hagia Sophia, as the two buildings that made the city overcome all nature and sweep away everyone into utter astonishment.[87] These buildings, the church dedicated to the Apostles for its beauty and the Great Church for its tall and imposing dimensions, had an extraordinary effect on the appearance of the Constantinople: by their presence «it inhibits the speech of everyone, this city, the envy of the whole world».[88]

POST-PRINT
For references and citations, please refer to:
Maria Cristina CARILE, *Monumentality and the Byzantine City*, in L. ZAVAGNO – N. BAKIRTZIS (Edd.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Byzantine City*, London - New York, Routldge, 2024, 290–310: https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780429203923-17/monumentality-byzantine-city-maria-cristina-carile?context=ubx&refId=1caa91e3-405e-44f9-b15c-48a66a0cdfe8

Certainly, in line with the architecture patronized by Justinian, these churches were enormous and their appearance impressive for the volumes of domes and semidomes clad in bright metals of their exteriors.[89]

Outside Constantinople, the church appears to be one of the most characteristic elements of the towns during late antiquity and well after the age of Justinian. As attested by church mosaic floors in the areas of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, images of walled cities often centered around basilicas, as if the church was the most representative element of the city itself.[90] The surviving mosaic depicting Alexandria from the Church of St. John at Gerasa (531) shows several churches inside a towered wall with the Pharos: their roofs are decorated with crosses, following a convention for depicting ecclesiastical buildings. The eighth-century mosaics of the Church of St. Stephen at Kastron Mefaa (Umm Ar-Rasas, Jordan) demonstrate that in the former Byzantine territories the urban imagery did not change after the Muslim conquest: apart from the walls, almost all the representations of cities lining the nave floor have churches at their center, while a simple basilica just serves as a vignette for several cities on the Nilotic frieze of the nave.[91] In a similar fashion appeared the representations of cities on the mosaic floor of the Church of Belemous (Ma'in, near Madaba), dating to the years 719/720. Such imagery was quite spread in the East[92] and demonstrates the important role of churches in expressing the monumentality of a city.

Figure 4. Mosaic floor of the Church of St. Stephen at Kastron Mefaa (Umm Ar-Rasas, Jordan), eighth century. Photograph Bjorn Anderson.

POST-PRINT
For references and citations, please refer to:
Maria Cristina CARILE, *Monumentality and the Byzantine City*, in L. ZAVAGNO – N. BAKIRTZIS (Edd.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Byzantine City*, London - New York, Routldge, 2024, 290–310: https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780429203923-17/monumentality-byzantine-city-maria-cristina-carile?context=ubx&refId=1caa91e3-405e-44f9-b15c-48a66a0cdfe8

Conclusion

Late antique Constantinople met all the criteria of monumentality as it has been defined in recent scholarship. Authors provide further evidence about how it was perceived at the time as a mighty and grand city filled with buildings and structures that beautified the city and created spaces for inhabitants and visitors to experience grandeur of scale. For instance, in 361, Himerius celebrated the huge size and beauty of the city, as big as a continent.[93] Authors, such as Zosimus and Sozomenus often expand on the great extension covered by single structures, or the city itself, and on the great effort to build such a marvelous enterprise.[94] The location of the city is always praised, from Himerius to Ibn Battuta in the fourteenth-century, and so is its ancient history.[95] The large investments and the manpower employed in the construction of Constantine city as well as on the single and most iconic monuments of Constantinople are exalted: this sometimes leads to exaggerations and hyperboles like those we read in the seventh-century legendary account of the construction of Justinian's Hagia Sophia.[96] Even from a distance, its great walls rose in the landscape and, once inside, there were colonnaded streets, fountains, *fora*, great free standing columns, golden-domed palaces and marbled churches built to impress people with the power and wealth of the capital and the emperor. Indeed, Constantinople – and not only its buildings – appear to embody the very concept of monumentality, even according to the most recent theories.

Between the sixth and the nineth century, Byzantine architecture changed, progressively decreasing in size. Apart from few cases of reconstruction of old churches, such as that of Hagia Eirene at Constantinople after the earthquake of 740, in the capital the expression of monumentality stopped relying so heavily on building dimensions. The scale of Hagia Sophia was never repeated as churches became much smaller in scale adopting centralized plans and reduced volumes that developed around a central dome.[97] This phenomenon is typical of the Empire at large and scholars have often connected it to a period of crisis and decay of the city, of ruralization that only recently have been scaled down and understood as a typical feature of a changing society.[98] In fact, the medieval Byzantine city changed in its basic structures, reflecting its social transformations. For instance, it abandoned great public baths for a number smaller local baths[99] and acquired numerous churches and monasteries that – apart for rare instances – would have been characterized by

smaller dimensions, a multiplication of domes and exterior volumes. However, as I tried to show above, the megastructures of antiquity and the décor of the ancient city still had considerable impact on inhabitants and travelers, who left traces of their impressions in their accounts. Even if some ancient buildings did not survive and were replaced by new ones, they were still considered the most prominent features of Constantinople well into the Middle Ages. Furthermore, the idea of city monumentality does not seem to have changed much if, after the nineth century, urban representations continued to show towered walls surrounding churches.

In short, if columns, churches, and walls continued to be mentioned by authors and represented in urban depictions, the monumentality of the capital still largely relied on its ancient structures. The particular attention to *spolia*, often used in an evocative and meaningful way in middle and late Byzantine structures,[100] betrays an attention for the past and its conscious exhibition by Byzantines. The very fact that these structures have survived until now, continuously reused and transformed in function, and that the twentieth century has seen destruction more than fifteen centuries of previous history, in late antique capitals such as Thessaloniki, show that those antique buildings have been perceived as bearers of meaning – monuments of the city – creating a sense of monumentality for generations of people through the time. Indeed if, as I have tried to show, the monumentality of the Byzantine city can be understood in the framework of the modern discourse on monumentality, not only did the Byzantines have a sense of monumentality and felt it, but built cities were indeed monumental and continue to be still today.

---

[1] Nigel Westbrook, Kenneth Rainsbury Dark, and Rene van Meeuwen, "Constructing Melchior Lorichs's Panorama of Constantinople," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 69, no. 1 (2010): 62–87, https://doi.org/10.1525/jsah.2010.69.1.62.

[2] Karl Wulzinger, "Melchior Lorichs Ansicht von Konstantinopel Als Topographische Quelle," in *Festschrift Georg Jacob*, ed. Theodor Menzel (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1932), 355–68; Cyril Mango and Stéphane Yerasimov, *Melchior Lorichs' Panorama of Constantinople* (Istanbul: Ertug and Kokabiyik, 1999); Westbrook, Dark, and Meeuwen, "Constructing Melchior Lorichs's Panorama of Constantinople."

[3] Gretchen E. Meyers, "The Experience of Monumentality in Etruscan and Early Roman Architecture," in *Monumentality in Etruscan and Early Roman Architecture: Ideology and Innovation*, ed. Michael L. Thomas, Gretchen E. Meyers, and Ingrid E.M. Edlund-Berry (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), 1–20; Martin Furholt, Martin Hinz, and Doris Mischka, "'As Time Goes by'. Meanings, Memories and Monuments," in *"As Time Goes by?" Monumentality, Landscapes and the Temporal Perspective. Proceedings of the International*

Workshop "Socio-Environmental Dynamics over the Last 12,000 Years: The Creation of Landscapes II (14th–18th March 2011)" in Kiel, ed. Martin Furholt, Martin Hinz, and Doris Mischka (Bonn: Habelt, 2012), 13–20.
[4] Felix Levenson, "Monuments and Monumentality – Different Perspectives," in *Size Matters - Understanding Monumentality Across Ancient Civilizations (Historie 146)*, ed. Federico Buccellati et al. (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2019), 17–39.
[5] See for example: Charlton T. Lewis, Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1879), 1161.
[6] Lewis, Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, 1163.
[7] Hagan Brunke et al., "Thinking Big. Research in Monumental Constructions in Antiquity," *ETopoi. Journal for Ancient Studies* 6 (2016): 250–305.
[8] Alessandra Bravi, "Ornamenta, Monumenta, Exempla. Greek Images of Gods in the Public Spaces of Constantinople," in *Divine Images and Human Imaginations in Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. Joannis Mylonopoulos (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 289–301.
[9] This is Cicero's use of this term (Live Van Hoof and Peter Van Nuffelen, eds., *The Fragmentary Latin Histories of Late Antiquity (AD 300–620): Edition, Translation and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 74 n. 2.
[10] Procopius, *De aedificiis* I.1.1-20, trans. H.B. Dewing (New York: Loeb Classical Library, 1940), 1-9. Similarly, in the fourth century Gregory of Nazianzus mentions images of major cities bringing gifts to the emperor, as if cities were an expression of the imperial power while, at the same time, represented the populace honoring the emperor: Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Or.* IV.80, ed. J. Bernardi, Sources Chrétiennes 309 (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1983), 204.
[11] Federico Buccellati, "Monumentality: Research Approaches and Methodology," in *Size Matters - Understanding Monumentality Across Ancient Civilizations (Historie 146)*, ed. Federico Buccellati et al. (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2019), 41–64; Martin Furholt, Martin Hinz, and Doris Mischka, eds., *"As Time Goes by?" Monumentality, Landscapes and the Temporal Perspective. Proceedings of the International Workshop "Socio-Environmental Dynamics over the Last 12,000 Years: The Creation of Landscapes II (14th–18th March 2011)" in Kiel* (Bonn: Habelt, 2012).
[12] Meyers, "The Experience of Monumentality in Etruscan and Early Roman Architecture."
[13] James F. Osborne, ed., *Approaching Monumentality in Archaeology* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2014).
[14] Approaching the subject of early medieval monumentality: Martin Oswald Hugh Carver, "Why That? Why There? Why Then? The Politics of Early Medieval Monumentality," in *Image and Power in the Archaeology of Early Medieval Britain: Essays in Honour of Rosemary Cramp*, ed. Helena F. Hamerow and Arthur MacGregor (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2001), 1–22.
[15] Brunke et al., "Thinking Big. Research in Monumental Constructions in Antiquity," 254-255.
[16] Levenson, "Monuments and Monumentality – Different Perspectives," 23-25. On the connection between the concept of monumentality and a social system: Furholt, Hinz, and Mischka, "'As Time Goes by'. Meanings, Memories and Monuments."
[17] Brunke et al., "Thinking Big. Research in Monumental Constructions in Antiquity," 255.
[18] Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* I.16.1, ed. H.C. Hansen, trans. P. Maraval and P. Périchon, Sources Chrétiennes 477 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2004), 172-173; Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* II.3.1, ed. J. Bidez, trans. A.-J. Festugière, Sources Chrétiennes 306 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1983), 236-237.
[19] The trope that Constantinople was even shaped on and around seven hills, like Rome, appeared only later: *Patria Constantinoupoleos*, III.19, trans. A. Berger (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 2013), 146-147. For discussion: Albrecht Berger, "Das Apokalyptische Konstantinopel. Topographisches in Apokalyptischen Schriften Der Mittelbyzantinischen Zeit," in *Endzeiten: Eschatologie in Den Monotheistischen Weltreligionen (Millennium- Studien / Millennium Studies 16)*, ed. Wolfram Brandes and Felicitas Schmieder (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 139–46.
[20] Sozomenus, *Hist. Eccl.* II.3, ed. Bidez, trans. Festugière, 236-245; Zosimus, *Historia Nova* II.30-31, ed. F. Paschoud (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2000), I.101-103.
[21] Malalas, *Chronographia* XIII.7-8, ed. I. Thurn, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae. Series Berolinensis* 35 (Berlin - New York: De Gruyter, 2000), 245-247; followed by the seventh-century *Chronicon Paschale*, s.a. 328, ed. L. Dindorf, *Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn: Weber, 1832), 527-529; trans. M. Whitby and M. Whitby (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007, 2nd ed.), 15-16.
[22] Giorgio Vespignani, *Il circo di Costantinopoli Nuova Roma* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2001); Giorgio Vespignani, *ΙΠΠΟΔΡΟΜΟΣ: Il circo di Costantinopoli Nuova Roma dalla realtà alla storiografia* (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo, 2010).
[23] Muriel Moser, *Emperor and Senators in the Reign of Constantius II: Maintaining Imperial Rule Between Rome and Constantinople in the Fourth Century AD* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 258-263.

[24] Cyril Mango, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (June 5, 1963): 53–75; Sarah Basset, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[25] Jim Crow, Jonathan Bardill, and Richard Bayliss, *The Water Supply of Byzantine Constantinople* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2008).
[26] For the social value of Roman baths: Inge Nielsen, *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture and Cultural History of Roman Public Baths, 2 Vols.* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1990); for baths in Byzantium and the development of their architecture: Fikret Yegül, "Baths of Constantinople: An Urban Symbol in a Changing World," in *Archaeology and History in Roman, Medieval and Post-Medieval Greece Studies on Method and Meaning in Honor of Timothy E. Gregory*, ed. William R. Caraher, Linda Jones Hall, and Scott R. Moore (Farnham-Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), 169–96; for the baths of Zeuxippos and the fountains of Constantinople: Paul Stephenson and Ragnar Hedlund, "Monumental Waterworks in Late Antique Constantinople," in *Fountains and Water Culture in Byzantium*, ed. Brooke Shilling and Paul Stephenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 36–54 with references.
[27] Gilbert Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974), 388-409; Cyril Mango, *Le Développement Urbain de Constantinople (IVe-VIIe Siècles)* (Paris: De Boccard, 1990, 2nd ed.), 34-36.
[28] Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* I.16.2 and II.16.16, ed. Hansen, trans. Maraval and Périchon, I.172-175 and II. 64-65.
[29] Alexander Kazhdan, "'Constantin Imaginaire'. Byzantine Legends of the Ninth Century about Constantine the Great," *Byzantion* 57 (1987): 196–250; Paul Magdalino, "Introduction," in *New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries, Papers from the Twenty-Sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies (St. Andrews, March 1992)*, ed. Paul Magdalino (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1994), 1–9 and various contributions in the same volume.
[30] Cyril Mango, "The Triumphal Way of Constantinople and the Golden Gate," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 54 (2000): 173–88.
[31] Jonathan Bardill, "The Golden Gate in Constantinople. A Triumphal Arch of Theodosius I," *American Journal of Archaeology* 103, no. 4 (1999): 671–96.
[32] Pelin Yoncaci-Arslan, "Registrars of Urban Movement in Constantinople: Monumental Columns and the Mese," *Annual of Istanbul Studies* 7 (2018): 6–29, especially 16.
[33] Hagia Eirene served as the cathedral until the consecration of Hagia Sophia in 360. For the patriarchate: Claudia Rapp, "The Early Patriarchate (325-726)," in *A Companion to the Patriarchate of Constantinople*, ed. Christian Gastgeber et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 1–23. For imperial urban liturgies: Franz Alto Bauer, "Urban Space and Ritual: Constantinople in Late Antiquity," *Acta Ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia, n.s. 1* 15 (2001): 27–62.
[34] *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* 70, trans. Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin, eds., *Constantinople in the Early Eight Century: The "Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai"* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 150-153. Discussing the passage: Albrecht Berger, "Constantine's City: The Early Days of a Christian Capital," *Studia Ceranea. Journal of the Waldemar Ceran Research Centre for the History and Culture of the Mediterranean Area and South-East Europe* 10 (2020): 11–29.
[35] Albrecht Berger, "Das Haus des Manns aus Amastris: Zu einem Gebäudekomplex im byzantinischen Konstantinopel," *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 51, no. 2 (June 25, 2011): 87–97.
[36] Cecil L. Striker, *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); Rudolf Naumann, "Der antike Rundbau beim Myrelaion und der Palast Romanos I. Lekapenos," *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 16 (1966): 199–216; Philipp Niewöhner, "The Rotunda at the Myrelaion in Constantinople. Pilaster Capitals, Mosaics, and Brick Stamps," in *The Byzantine Court: Source of Power and Culture. Papers from the Second International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium (Istanbul, 21 - 23 June 2010)*, ed. Ayla Ödekan, Nevra Necipoğlu, and Engin Akyürek (Istanbul: Vehbi Koç Vakfı Yayınları, 2013), 41–52.
[37] Berger, "Constantine's City: The Early Days of a Christian Capital," 21-22.
[38] Albrecht Berger, "Tauros e Sigma. Due Piazze Di Costantinopoli," in *Bisanzio e l'Occidente. Arte, Archeologia, Storia. Studi in Onore Di Fernanda de' Maffei*, ed. Claudia Barsanti (Roma: Viella, 1996), 17–31.
[39] Rudolf Naumann, "Neue Beobachtungen Am Theodosiusbogen Und Forum Tauri in Istanbul," *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 26 (1976): 117–47.
[40] Franz Alto Bauer, *Stadt, Platz und Denkmal in der Spätantike: Untersuchungen zur Ausstattung des öffentlichen Raums in den spätantiken Städten Rom, Kostantinopel und Ephesos* (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1996), 203-121. On the column: C.B. Konrad, "Beobachtungen zur Architektur und Stellung des Säulenmonumentes in Istanbul-Cerrahpasa - 'Arkadiossäule," *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 51 (1975): 319–401; Alessandro Taddei, "La Colonna di Arcadio a Costantinopoli: profilo storico di un monumento attraverso le fonti documentarie dalle origini all'età moderna," *Νέα Ῥώμη* 6 (2009): 37–102 with references.

[41] Urs Peschlow, "Eine wiedergewonnene byzantinische Ehrensäule in Istanbul," in *Studien zur spätantiken und byzantinischen Kunst, Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann Gewidmet, Teil 1. Monographien*, ed. Otto Feld and Urs Peschlow (Bonn: Habelt, 1986), 21–34; Bauer, *Stadt, Platz und Denkmal in der Spätantike: Untersuchungen zur Ausstattung des öffentlichen Raums in den spätantiken Städten Rom, Kostantinopel und Ephesos*, 215-217.
[42] For Justinian's column and statue, most recently: Elena Boeck, *The Bronze Horseman of Justinian in Constantinople: The Cross-Cultural Biography of a Mediterranean Monument* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 2021), with references.
[43] Discussing the appearance of the original complex: Cyril Mango, "Constantine's Mausoleum and the Translation of Relics," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 83, no. 1 (1990): 51–62; Cyril Mango, "Constantine's Mausoleum: Addendum," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 83, no. 2 (1990): 434. Most recently: Margaret Mullet and Robert Ousterhout, eds., *The Holy Apostles. A Lost Monument, a Forgotten Project, and the Presentness of the Past* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2020).
[44] Alfred Frazer, "The Iconography of the Emperor Maxentius' Buildings in Via Appia," *The Art Bulletin* 48, no. 3–4 (1966): 385–92.
[45] See for instance: Krijnie N. Ciggaar, "Une description de Constantinople dans le Tarragonensis 55," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 53, no. 1 (1995): 117–40 in particular 119-120 (anonymous description of the eleventh century). See also Torsun Beg, *The History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, ed. H. Inalcik and R. Murphy (Minneapolis - Chicago, 1978).
[46] Even if the statue on the column of Constantine represented a pagan deity, in fact it was regarded as the emperor. For Constantine's column: Jonathan Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 28-42; Robert Ousterhout, "The Life and Afterlife of Constantine's Column," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 27 (2014): 304–26; Pelin Yoncaci-Arslan, "Towards A New Honorific Column: The Column Of Constantine In Early Byzantine Urban Landscape," *METU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture* 33, no. 1 (2016): 121–45.
[47] *Ibidem*, 137.
[48] Although Albrecht Berger notices that most of the *fora* were not so large (Albrecht Berger, "Streets and Public Spaces in Constantinople," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 54 (2000): 161–72), their location and imposing architecture seems to have had a considerable impact on the viewers.
[49] Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* VII.22.17, ed. H.C. Hansen, trans. P. Maraval and P. Périchon, *Sources Chrétiennes 506* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2004), 86-87.
[50] John F. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development and Meaning of Stational Liturgy* (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1987), 167-225.
[51] Jim Crow, "Water and Late Antique Constantinople," in *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 116–35; Jim Crow, "Ruling the Waters: Managing the Water Supply of Constantinople, AD 330–1204," *Water History* 4, no. 1 (2012): 35–55.
[52] For the walls of Constantinople and their inscriptions: Neslihan Asutay-Effenberger, *Die Landmauer von Konstantinopel-Istanbul: Historisch-topographische und baugeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 2008); Cyril Mango, "The Byzantine Inscriptions of Canstantinople: A Bibliographical Survey," *American Journal of Archaeology* 55 (1951): 52–66; Clive Foss, "Anomalous Imperial Inscriptions of the Walls of Constantinople," in *Studies Presented to Sterling Dow on His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. Sterling Dow and Alan L. Boegehold (Durham: Duke University, 1984), 77–87.
[53] Cyril Mango, Michael Vickers, and E.D. Francis, "The Palace of Lausus at Constantinople and Its Collection of Ancient Statues," *Journal of the History of Collections* 4, no. 1 (January 1, 1992): 89–92; Jonathan Bardill, "The Palace of Lausus and Nearby Monuments in Constantinople: A Topographical Study," *American Journal of Archaeology* 101, no. 1 (1997): 67–95.
[54] For Anicia Juliana's palace and church: Martin Harrison, *A Temple for Byzantium: The Discovery and Excavation of Anicia Juliana's Palace-Church in Istanbul* (London: Harvey Miller, 1989); Jonathan Bardill, "A New Temple for Byzantium: Anicia Juliana, King Solomon, and the Gilded Ceiling of the Church of St. Polyeuktos in Constantinople," in *Social and Political Life in Late Antiquity (Late Antique Archaeology 3.1)*, ed. William Bowden, Adam Gutteridge, and Carlos Machado (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2006), 339–70; Jonathan Bardill, "Église de Saint-Polyeucte à Constantinople: nouvelle solution pour l'énigme de sa reconstitution," in *Architecture paléochrétienne*, ed. Jean-Michel Spieser (Gollion: Infolio, 2011), 77–103.
[55] Ausonius, *Ordo urbium nobilium* 7, ed. S. Prete (Leipzig: Teubner, 1978), 195.
[56] Libanius, *Oratio* XI.196-229 and LXI.7-10, ed. R. Foerster (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903 and 1908), I.504-517 and IV.332-335.
[57] Petar Petrović, "Naissus. Foundation of Emperor Constantine," in *Roman Imperial Towns and Palaces in Serbia: Sirmium, Romuliana, Naissus*, ed. Dragoslav Srejović (Beograd: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts,

1993), 55–81; Slobodan Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans. From Diocletian to Suleyman the Magnificent, c. 300-1550* (New Haven - London: Yale University Press, 2010), 50, 147-148.

[58] For the late antique and medieval city: Enrico Cirelli, *Ravenna: archeologia di una città* (Firenze: All'Insegna del Giglio, 2008); Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, *Ravenna in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Judith Herrin, *Ravenna: Capital of Empire, Crucible of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).

[59] Libanius, *Oratio* LXI.7, ed. Foerster, IV.332-333. For Libanius's special attachment to Nicomedia: Raffaella Cribiore, *Between City and School: Selected Orations of Libanius* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 29-30. In the life of St. Thecla Seleucia is said to be so splendid and charming to surpass most of the cities: *Vita S. Theclae* 27, ed. G. Dagron, *Subsidia Hagiographica 62* (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1978), 276-279. Similarly, writing at the turn of the sixth century, Choricios of Gaza praised Caesarea, for it was beautiful, large, and flourishing: Choricius Gazaeus, XXXII (= *Or.* 8).95, ed. R. Foerster and E. Richtsteig, *Choricii Gazaei opera* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1929), 365-366.

[60] On this concept: Bravi, "Ornamenta, Monumenta, Exempla. Greek Images of Gods in the Public Spaces of Constantinople"; see also: Alessandra Bravi, *Ornamenta Urbis. Opere d'arte greche negli spazi romani* (Bari: Edipuglia, 2012).

[61] See for instance: *Anthologia Graeca* II, trans. W.R. Paton, revised by M.A. Tueller, *Loeb Classical Library* 67 (Cambridge - London: Harvard University Press, 2014), 86-145 on the statues of the gymnasium of Zeuxippos.

[62] Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. ad pop. Ant.* 17.2, ed. J.-P. Migne, *PG* 49, (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1862), 173-180. See, with discussion: Luke Lavan, "The Agorai of Antioch and Constantinople as Seen by John Chrysostom," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 50 (2007): 157–67.

[63] οἷς ὥσπερ ἄστροις ἀγλαΐζεται πόλις / καὶ τὄμμα φαιδρὸν πανταχοῦ περιστρέφει. Constantinus Rhodius, *Ekphrasis* 261-262, trans. V. Dimitropoulou, L. James and R. Jordan in: Constantine of Rhodes, *On Constantinople and the Church of the Holy Apostles, with a New Edition of the Greek Text by Ioannis Vassis*, ed. L. James (Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), 37.

[64] Procopius Gazaeus, *Op.* XI (= *Or.* II, *Panegyricus Anastasii*), 29, ed. E. Amato, trans. P. Maréchaux (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2014), 305.

[65] Helen Saradi, "Beholding the City and the Church: The Early Byzantine Ekphraseis and Correspoding Archaeological Evidence," *Δελτίον Τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας* 24 (2003): 31–36 especially 31-33.

[66] For Procopius of Gaza's *ekphraseis*: Procopius Gazaeus, *Ep.* 119.9-12 (on Alexandria), ed. A. Garzya and R.-J. Loenertz, *Studia patristica et Byzantina* 9 (Ettal: Buch-Kunstverlag, 1963), 61; Procopius Gazaeus, *Op.* XI (= *Or.* II, *Panegyricus Anastasii*), 2 (passage on Epidamnon/Dyrrachium, modern Durres), ed. Amato, trans. Maréchaux, 284. For Choricius of Gaza's: Choricius Gazaeus, I (= *Or.* I).83-85 (on Gaza), XXXII (= *Or.* 8).95 (on Caesarea), ed. Foerster and Richtsteig, 23-24, 365-366. For Nonnus's praise to Tyre's and Berytus's geographical location: Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 40.338-355 and 41.14-49, ed. B. Simon, F. Vian (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1999), XIV; P. Chuvin, M.-Ch. Fayant (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2006), XV.31-34. In the *Life of St. Thecla*, Seleucia competes with Tarsus for its location, the abundance of fruits, and the good supply of water (*Vita S. Theclae* 27, ed. Dagron, 276-279).

[67] Ausonius, *Ordo urbium nobilium* 6, 18, 20, ed. Prete, 194, 198, 200.

[68] This is evidenced across the time, see for instance the manuscript illumination of the the sixth-century *Codex Purpureus Rossanensis* or the fourteenth-century Slavonic version of Constantine Manasses's *Chronicon* now at the Vatican (Cod. Vat. Slav. 2). For the walls as a major urban character of all times: Ingrid Ehrensperger-Katz, "Les représentations de villes fortifiées dans l'art paléochrétien et leurs dérivées byzantines," *Cahiers Archéologiques* 19 (1969): 1–27; Carlo Bertelli, "Visual Images of the Town in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," in *The Idea and Ideal of Town between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Gian Pietro Brogiolo and Bryan Ward-Perkins (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 99–126; Alba Maria Orselli, "Imagines urbium alla fine del tardoantico," in *Imago urbis: l'immagine della città nella storia d'Italia. Atti del Convegno internazionale (Bologna, 5-7 settembre 2001)*, ed. Francesca Bocchi and Rosa Smurra (Roma: Viella, 2003), 233–50.

[69] Dragoslav Srejović, "Imperial Palace," in *Felix Romuliana - Gamzigrad*, ed. Ivana Popović (Belgrade: Institute of Archaeology, 2011), 43–48.

[70] Jim Crow, "Fortifications and Urbanism in Late Antiquity: Thessaloniki and Other Eastern Cities," in *Recent Research in Late-Antique Urbanism (Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 42)* (Portsmouth, 2001), 89–105.

[71] Jim Crow, "Fortification and the Late Roman East: From Urban Walls to Long Walls," in *War and Warfare in Late Antiquity (Late Antique Archaeology 8)*, ed. Alexander Sarantis and Neil Christie (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 397–432; Jim Crow, "Fortifications," in *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia: From the End of Late*

Antiquity Until the Coming of the Turks, ed. Philipp Niewöhner (Oxford - New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 90–108.

[72] Πόλιν περιφανῆ τε καὶ λόγου πολλοῦ ἀξίαν πεποίηκεν αὖθις. Procopius, *De aed.* IV.5.15-16, trans. Dewing, 268-269.

[73] Procopius, *De aed.* IV.6.2, trans. Dewing, 268-269.

[74] For the Peutinger Map, see with references: Richard J. A. Talbert, *Rome's World. The Peutinger Map Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Michael Rathmann, *Die Tabula Peutingeriana.* (Darmstadt: Philipp von Zabern, 2018, 3rd ed.), 30-31 (for the vignettes).

[75] Luke Lavan, "The Monumental Streets of Sagalassos in Late Antiquity: An Interpretative Study," in *La Rue Dans l'Antiquité Définition, Aménagement et Devenir de l'Orient Méditerranéen à La Gaule*, ed. Pascale Ballet, Nadine Dieudonné-Glad, and Catherine Saliou (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2008), 201–14.

[76] Between the fourth and the seventh centuries, porticoes with mosaic floors are found at Sardis, Ephesus, Laodicea ad Lykum, Stratonicea in Caria, Side, Perge, Antioch, Apamea, Beritus, Sepphoris, Scythopolis, Caesarea Palestianae, Gerasa (Luke Lavan, *Public Space in the Late Antique City, 2 Vols,* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

[77] *Ivi*, 35.

[78] For architectural representations in the Madaba map: Noël Duval, "Essai sur la signification des vignettes topographiques," in *The Madaba Map Centenary 1897-1997. Travelling through the Byzantine Umayyad Period. Proceedings of the International Conference Held in Amman (7-9 April 1997) (Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. Collectio Maior 40)*, ed. Michele Piccirillo and Eugenio Alliata (Jerusalem: Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, 1999), 134–46.

[79] Wendy Pullan, "Representation of the Late Antique City in TheMadaba Map," in *The Madaba Map Centenary 1897-1997. Travelling through the Byzantine Umayyad Period. Proceedings of the International Conference Held in Amman (7-9 April 1997) (Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. Collectio Maior 40)*, ed. Michele Piccirillo and Eugenio Alliatta (Jerusalem: Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, 1999), 165–71.

[80] Discussing the purpose of the Madaba map: Beatrice Leal, "A Reconsideration of the Madaba Map," *Gesta* 57, no. 2 (2018): 123–43.

[81] Yoram Tzafrir, "The Holy City of Jerusalem in the Madaba Map," in *The Madaba Map Centenary 1897-1997. Travelling through the Byzantine Umayyad Period. Proceedings of the International Conference Held in Amman (7-9 April 1997) (Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. Collectio Maior 40)*, ed. Michele Piccirillo and Eugenio Alliata (Jerusalem: Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, 1999), 155–63.

[82] Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* X.4.37-45, ed. G. Bardy, *Sources Chrétiennes* 55 (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1958), 93-96.

[83] Leal, "A Reconsideration of the Madaba Map."

[84] The text mentions at least twenty-five churches at Constantinople and six in the suburbs. For the *Nea*: *Vita Basilii*, 83-86, ed. I. Ševčenko, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* 42 (Berlin – Boston: De Gruyter, 2011), 273-279.

[85] ὅπερ ἀρκεῖ καὶ μόνον τήν τε περὶ τὸ θεῖον αὐτοῦ δηλοῦν ὁσιότητα καὶ τὸ πρὸς τὰ ἐπιβαλλόμενα μεγαλουργόν τε καὶ θαύματος ἄξιον. *Ibidem.*

[86] George P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1984).

[87] Constantinus Rhodius, *Ekphrasis* 264-271, trans. Dimitropoulou, James and Jordan, 36-38.

[88] γλώττας τε πάντων τοῦ λαλεῖν ἀποτρέπει / ἡ κοσμοπαμπόθητος αὕτη πως πόλις. Constantinus Rhodius, *Ekphrasis* 264-271, trans. Dimitropoulou, James and Jordan, 36.

[89] For the aesthetics of metal roofs: Maria Cristina Carile, "The Imperial Palace Glittering with Light: The Material and Immaterial in the Sacrum Palatium," in *Hierotopy of Light and Fire in the Culture of the Byzantine World*, ed. Alexei Lidov (Moscow: Theoria, 2013), 105–35.

[90] For recent discussion on the urban imagery of the mosaic floors of Syria, Palestina, and Egypt: Helen G. Saradi, *The Byzantine City in the 6th Century: Literary Images and Historical Reality* (Athens: Society of Messenian Archaeological Studies, 2006), 119-135.

[91] Noël Duval, "Le rappresentazioni architettoniche," in *Umm Al-Rasas Mayfa'ah,* I *Gli scavi del complesso di Santo Stefano (Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. Collectio Maior 28)*, ed. Michele Piccirillo and Eugenio Alliata (Jerusalem: Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, 1994), 165–204.

[92] Bertelli, "Visual Images of the Town in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages."

[93] Himerius, *Or.* XLI.4-6, ed. A. Colonna (Rome: Polygraphica, 1951); trans. R.J. Penella, *Man and the Word. The Orations of Himerius* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 60-61.

[94] For the dimensions of Constantine city: Zosimus, *Hist. Nova* II.30, ed. Paschoud, I.101-102); Sozomenus, *H.E.* II.3.6, ed. Bidez, trans. Festugière, 240-241.

[95] Himerius, *Or.* 41.5-6, ed. Colonna, and trans. Penella, 61; Ibn-Battuta, *Travels* VIII, trans. H.A.R. Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta, A.D. 1325–1354* (Cambridge: The Hakluyt Society, 1962), 506-507.

[96] *Patria Constantinoupoleos*, IV.1-31, trans. Berger, 231-275.
[97] Richard Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, ed. Slobodan Ćurčić (New Haven - London: Yale University Press, 1986, 6th ed.), ; Robert Ousterhout, *Master Builders of Byzantium* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1999), 86-128.
[98] On this point see other contributions in this volume and Luca Zavagno's forthcoming book.
[99] Robert Ousterhout, "Houses, Markets, and Baths: Secular Architecture in Byzantium," in *Heaven & Earth: Cities and Countryside in Byzantine Greece*, ed. Anastasia Drandaki, Demetra Papanikola-Bakirtzi, and Anastasia Tourta (Athens: Benaki Museum, 2013), II.211–13; Yegül, "Baths of Constantinople: An Urban Symbol in a Changing World."
[100] For instance in the walls of so-called Little Metropolis at Athens. Most recently:Bente Kiilerich, "Making Sense of the Spolia in the Little Metropolis in Athens," *Arte Medievale, n. S.* 4, no. 2 (2015): 95–114 with references.