

WAS CONSTANTINOPLE FOUNDED AS A CHRISTIAN CAPITAL?

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the theory of Krautheimer that Constantinople was founded as a Christian Capital. This theory is compared to the work of Dagron who believed the city was founded with a much more dynastic motive in mind. Under discussion are the buildings, such as the Mausoleum and Hippodrome as well as the images used by Constantine in Constantinople. The conclusions are that it was not a Christian city and that although there are elements that suggest it was in competition to Rome this was not the primary motive in the foundation. Although there are elements of the city that would become important in the future as important to the creation of Byzantium as a successor to Rome it is argued this was not the situation when the city was founded. It is suggested that there was a large element of vanity involved in Constantine's decision to found the city. That it was founded as a site of personal importance to the Emperor due to its association with his victory and for other reasons.

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## INTRODUCTION

In this paper devoted to the founding of Constantinople I shall examine two themes. The first theme is a consideration of the idea, put forward by Krautheimer that Constantinople was a Christian city. The second theme also comes from Krautheimer who believed that Constantine intended Constantinople to be founded as a capital city. As Krautheimer wrote of Constantine "In the East he would set up the Christian capital of his Christian empire: in Serdica-Sofia, in Thessalonike, or, better still, in a city newly founded, unburdened by traditions and free of conservative opposition – in his own city, Constantinople" (1983:40). The process through which this examination will take place is as follows; the introduction shall focus on describing the works of two important authors who wrote about Constantinople. The first of these is Krautheimer who described Constantinople as the Christian capital. The second author is Dagron<sup>1</sup> who provided another description of Constantinople that is of fundamental importance to the study of this city, and he described it as a dynastic city.

The main body of this thesis shall be divided into three sections. The first will be a detailed examination of the sources from this period, textual evidence is critical to our understanding of the period and to attempt to resolve the issue of the foundation we must have an understanding of the literal background. Then we shall examine the problem of Constantinople as a Christian city in detail and to do this it shall be necessary to look at each issue in isolation, churches, religious symbols and other elements. Finally it shall be necessary

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that I do not speak French and thus had to struggle through Dagron with the aid of a dictionary, as such I limited myself to using only Dagron from the wide and extensive French literature on this topic.

to examine in detail the relationship between Rome and Constantinople and see if Constantinople does appear to have been founded as a new capital.

### **Krautheimer: Three Christian Capitals**

As regards the role of Constantinople as capital Krautheimer focused, rightly it appears, on the role of the Hippodrome, the construction of the palace, and the statue of Sol Invictus in the forum (1983:60). He examines each of these monuments and decides that, although Constantine's version of Christianity was slightly dubious (1983:64), these monuments coupled with several churches and religious references provide ample evidence that the city was a Christian capital. However Krautheimer is too willing to associate churches with Constantine when their foundation is less obvious, in particular the first cathedral of Constantinople Hagia Sophia (1983:53). He accepts the relative paucity of textual evidence for churches in Eusebius but is too willing to accept the mausoleum Constantine built to house his body as a church when its exact function in religious terms is ambiguous (1983:56). Krautheimer firmly believes that the intent to build a Christian capital was present in Constantine's mind. He believes Eusebius was embarrassed and evasive in his description due to the lack of churches for him to describe but that the intent was there to fill the city with churches (1983:61)<sup>2</sup>

Krautheimer's interpretation is flawed in not examining Eusebius fully enough. He accepts Eusebius as a source that provides a very distinct view of Constantine, strongly Christian. There is also inadequate appreciation of other sources. Krautheimer accepts the problems of Sol Invictus, the problem of a pagan god being placed in the city of a 'Christian'

Emperor (1983:64). He points out the apparent contradictions that baffled and embarrassed contemporaries and modern scholars alike: a first 'Christian' Emperor in the guise of Helios on his statue and still adopting his imagery (1983:64). Krautheimer suggests that Constantine perhaps considered himself as an earthly manifestation of Christ, he suggests Constantine was not willing to "abdicate his inherent divinity in favour of a "by the grace of God"" (1983:66). The theological problem Constantine faced was one of where he, who was divine, could fit into a religion that acknowledged only one God. To Krautheimer the obvious Roman solution was to blend the godhead of Constantine as Roman Emperor with Christian divinity, and this is what he believes occurred with the continuation of pagan imagery and the incorporation of Christian imagery (1983:66). A belief and implication of Christ and Constantine ruling in tandem is created, that Christ rules earth through Constantine. To prolong our confusion indefinitely Constantine never defined his religious beliefs (1983:67). Krautheimer suggests that this all changed on Constantine's death, that his sons' advisors re-interpreted Imperial religious policy to make it more defensible. In studying Constantinople Krautheimer places great importance on four monuments that did provide focal points in the city, the palace, hippodrome, the forum with the Porphyry column, and finally the Apostle church (1983:67).

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<sup>2</sup> For a map of Constantinople see Appendix 3

### **Dagron: *Naissance d'une capitale***

There are other ways to approach Constantinople; Dagron's image of the original city was very different. It revolved around a dynastic city that played its part not in creating a new Christian Empire but through a new and dynamic system of unity that helped prolong the survival of Rome (1974:542). He believed that Constantinople was founded to join the East and the West and while Rome was still there, the link between the two cities was strong and that it is only because in the future the Empire broke apart that we consider it to have been divided. Rome was where the idea of Constantinople was formed and that when Constantinople was created it was seen less as a successor city and more as a citadel of western Rome in the East (1974:542). He suggested that the reason for the city being built was because of the inability of Roman institutions to stretch eastwards and a need to provide a Roman presence in the east. He suggests that the relationship between Constantinople and Rome was that as the Empire split into smaller groups so the Empire was capable of supporting more than one capital (1974:542). Dagron makes the important point that the city provided no link with the Eastern provinces; the only institution capable of fulfilling this function was the Emperor (1974:544). Thus it was not Constantinople that linked the Eastern Empire to the West; it was the Emperor (1974:544). It shall be argued in this paper that Krautheimer's view of Constantinople was fundamentally flawed with his insufficient understanding and use of sources other than Eusebius, and his less than complete use of Eusebius in itself. It shall be shown that Dagron provides a much better description of the founding of Constantinople, focusing more on dynastic reasons and not seeing Constantinople as a divisive influence on the relative status of the cities of Rome and Constantinople in the Empire.

## CHAPTER 1

### EUSEBIUS AND CONSTANTINOPLE

The *Vita Constantini* (VC) is the focus of studies on Constantine and his reign as it is the most complete description we have of the Emperor. It was written towards the end of Constantine's rule in the late 330's by Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea<sup>3</sup>. As it is the most important source about the life of Constantine it shall also be extremely important in an examination of Constantinople. For this reason it is the first source that must be examined. To use Eusebius as a source accurately one must be aware of the bias and themes that are ever-present throughout Eusebius' work.

The description by Eusebius of Constantinople is given in book three, chapter 49 of the VC. This places the description of the city towards the end of the chronological (Cameron & Hall 1999:10) section of the work and before the introduction of a section that focused more on describing the personality of Constantine. Barnes (1981) raises the importance of studying other contemporary works of Eusebius, in particular the two panegyrics, *De Laudibus Constantini* (LC) and *De Sepulchro Christi* (SC) because the works are roughly contemporary (the VC dates to circa 337-339, the LC to 335-6 and the SC to 335) and thus reference will be made to the speeches Eusebius gave as well as his other works. This is necessary for an examination of the content of the VC for they provide other descriptions by Eusebius of the events in Constantine's reign. What we must attempt to establish from examining Eusebius' description of the city is

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<sup>3</sup> The most recent translation is that of Averil Cameron and Stuart Hall (1999)

whether or not Krautheimer was correct in his assertion that the city was constructed as a Christian capital.

### **Eusebius: Description of Constantinople in the *Vita Constantini***

Before one examines in detail what Eusebius said one must first decide whether it is legitimate to use him as a source for the city by asking quite simply, did he know what was there? After all he was bishop of Caesarea, not Constantinople. In this case it is reasonable to assume that Eusebius was able to describe the city with a great deal of accuracy because we know enough about his movements to make two important points. The first point is that he had traveled there, the second point is that he traveled there late enough in Constantine's reign for the city to have been built: in other words he did not visit it when it was still a building site, though as we shall see there are problems with this idea.

Eusebius traveled to Constantinople at least twice before he started writing the VC, in 335 to deliver his speech on the celebration of the building of the Holy Sepulchre and in 336 to visit with regard to the matter of Marcellus (see Barnes 1981:253); in addition, if Drake is correct in his assumption that Eusebius remained there from the summer of 336 until the spring of 337 (Drake 1988:30), then Eusebius would have had plenty of time to have become acquainted with the city. In fact with the Emperor dying in early 337 one must make the point that when Eusebius was in the city it had already been built for somewhere between thirteen (going back to the beginning of work, in 324) and seven years (going back to the official opening of the city, in 330) and, since the Emperor died shortly after Eusebius' visit, the city cannot be expected to have changed much after Eusebius left. In a sense therefore Eusebius saw it in its most complete *Constantinian* form before Constantine's sons came to power, though this point shall be returned to later.

Eusebius' description of the city of Constantinople is brief (see Appendix 1). He begins by telling us that Constantine built and furnished many churches throughout the "provinces" that were considered in higher esteem than their predecessors (III:47:2). However it is not clear whether Constantine *built* new churches and furnished them, thus raising the public esteem of the provinces because they had beautiful new churches, or whether he furnished churches that had been newly built (but not necessarily by Constantine) thus raising the public's esteem for these churches.

As Cameron and Hall note (1999:297), Eusebius generalizes greatly in his description of the city. He writes that there were "very many places of worship, very large martyr-shrines", but he does not describe any (III:48:1). After a brief mention of nice houses built he describes the tombs of the martyrs being honoured by Constantine and the consecration of the city to the martyrs' God (III:48:2). The martyrs' God is naturally Eusebius' God and the honouring of the martyrs is the creation of a church in their honour. One can make this assumption from his description of the martyrion of the Apostles being built "in memory of the Apostles in the city named after him" (IV:58). Idol worship is purged from the city under the guidance of God's wisdom (III:48:3). Eusebius reveals that nowhere in Constantinople could one find images of "supposed gods" that there were no altars, no sacrifices "in fire", no pagan feasts and none of the other "customs of the superstitious" (III:48:2).

Eusebius then describes in more detail some of the things one may see in the city. He describes fountains that contain the emblems of the "Good Shepherd" and Daniel "with his lions" (III:49:1). The statues and images that appeared in Constantinople are given a second mention when Eusebius describes how Constantine stripped the pagan temples of their decoration (III:54:1-3). Many of these are described as emerging in Constantinople (III:54:5).

The reason for this was as that statues were to be displayed as “contemptible” and in general they were used as the “toys for the laughter and amusement of the spectators” (III:54).

As with the purging of idol worship Eusebius credits a “divine passion” as the motive for Constantine placing in the very center of his imperial palace an emblem of the “saving Passion” that “appears to have been made by the Godbeloved as a protection for his Empire” (III:49:2-3). The palace also appears as an incidental description while Eusebius is describing the superiority of Constantine to the Tyrants (III:1-3). Here he describes a picture that was present in the palace that appears to have shown Constantine with the Saviour’s sign piercing the dragon (possibly symbolising Licinius) with a spear (III:3).

Eusebius describes the festivals held at Easter in 336 (IV:22) and 337 (IV:57-60). For 336 we can witness a glimpse of Constantinople as Constantine is described as having had torches and tapers lit to be spread throughout the city, their effect was so great that the night was “more radiant than bright day” (IV:22:3). For 337 Eusebius does not describe the festivities, he merely states the Emperor “kept vigil with the others” (IV:57).

The shrine of the Apostles, the Mausoleum of Constantine, is described in Book IV (58-60), and is described in very glorious terms. According to Eusebius it was of an “unimaginable height” and was decorated very elaborately, with “various stones of every kind” on the walls and “plated ... with gold” on the ceiling (IV:58: 2). The roof was of copper, not tile, to protect against rain (IV:58:3), and surrounded by gold that “sent dazzling light to those who looked from afar” (IV:58:4). Around this central building Eusebius describes a courtyard that was open to the air and had a quadrangle of porticos around the outside facing the middle building (IV:59:1). These porticos contained many other small buildings, “official houses, washrooms...

and a great many other buildings suitably furnished for the custodians of the place” (IV:59:1). The description of the shrine of the Apostles appears at the end of Eusebius’ discussion of Constantine’s reign, as he describes the place in which the Emperor was buried. He goes on to describe the burial conditions requested by Constantine and the services that should be performed (IV: 60:4) before describing the actual position of Constantine’s coffin in relation to the Apostles, “in the middle with those [coffins] of the Apostles ranged six on either side” (IV:60:5).

The Imperial Palace is not described in detail. It is mentioned only twice. A picture in the palace is described and it is mentioned later for the purpose of describing the presence of the sign of the “saving passion” Eusebius does not actually say which palace this picture was in but it was most likely on the Bronze Door of the palace in Constantinople (Cameron and Hall 1999:255). In both these instances Eusebius has refrained from describing the palace itself. The only building Eusebius truly appears to be giving a complete description of is the shrine of the Apostles, and this comes not in his description of the city itself but in a later chapter. He gives partial descriptions of the decoration of the city (it contained many fountains) and gives a cursory nod towards the hippodrome. The city also appears in a letter written to Eusebius in which it is requested that the bishop oversee the creation of fifty new bibles to fit the city of Constantinople out (VC IV:36). Constantine wrote that “with everything there [Constantinople] enjoying great growth it is fitting that more churches should be established” (IV: 36:1).

### **Eusebius as a Source: The VC in the context of Eusebius' work**

Eusebius' description of Constantinople is incomplete. He does not describe the hippodrome though this was enlarged by Constantine. Eusebius mentions it a few pages after the description of the city, he describes it later as holding the pagan statues (III:54). This demonstrates that when he described the city he is not simply writing down everything that is there, he is picking and choosing what to write about. We must therefore attempt to understand the motivation and the criteria Eusebius used and bear this in mind when we examine Eusebius to see whether he supports the assertion that Constantinople was founded as a Christian capital.

Eusebius' motive was the promotion of Constantine as a Christian Emperor and though events such as wars remain in the version of the VC that came down to us, it was not Eusebius' intention to describe the secular half of Constantine's policy (I:11:1). Therefore the VC was primarily a piece of ecclesiastical history, part of Eusebius' tradition of writing a history of Christianity (Barnes 1981:128). Barnes believed the reason that Eusebius was writing about Constantine as a divine and holy Christian Emperor was because he had seen many pagan Emperors written about before (1981:271). The intention was to promote the religious policy of Constantine; for Eusebius wrote in the first book of the VC his "purpose in the present work is to put into words and write down what relates to the life which is dear to God" (I:11:1).

This context in which Constantine was to be written about was new. As Wilson put it, now "Ideal lives rather than ideal deaths were called for" The rise of Christianity was such that stories of brave deaths were not so important any more, it was necessary for Christians to have a literary tradition that emphasized good lives (1998:108). As Wilson demonstrates the literary response was to substitute *bios* for *Martyrion*, to stop focusing on those who had become

famous by the ways they had died and bring to the fore the ideals that would be embodied by a new generation of Christians and inspire people by the way they had lived, characters such as Saint Anthony (Wilson 1998:108). This then was the motive of Eusebius; he intended to use Constantine as an ideal Christian monarch and to give Constantine the panegyric treatment that had been given out to so many Pagan Emperors (Barnes 1981:271).

When one accepts that Eusebius is focusing not on historical fact but on a form of literature that emphasizes the greatness and piety of Constantine one can accept the VC and use it as a historical source. Eusebius uses omission as one of his methods of implying the pious rule of Constantine: for example, he glosses over the problems within the church at the council of Nicaea by omitting Eusebius' excommunication and rehabilitation and the exile of Eusebius' friends and allies (Barnes 1981:270-1). In addition the construction of the VC is such that Eusebius draws parallels between the lives of Constantine and Moses, as illustrated by Wilson (1998:116-119). For example the description of Constantine and the battle at the Milvian Bridge (VC I:37-38) is an incident in which time and again the link is made between Moses and Constantine, the link being the crossing of the Red Sea by Moses and the crossing of the Milvian Bridge by Constantine.

The VC account of the founding of Constantinople needs to be seen in this context of Eusebius' emphasis of the Christian traits of the Emperor. Eusebius gives the impression that the city is connected to the safety of the Empire: with regard to the symbol in the royal palace Eusebius writes "This appears to have been made by the Godbeloved as a protection for his Empire" (III. 49:3). That Eusebius writes that the symbol "appears" to have been for the protection of the Empire gives the impression that Eusebius was interpreting something that Constantine had not strictly said.

The parallels with Moses and the attempt by Eusebius to enforce the Christian connection between God and Emperor suggest that the city should have a critical role to play in the VC. It should be, as Eusebius implies by suggesting the city contained a symbol of protection for the Empire, the centre of the Christian presence in the Empire and the seat of the Emperor who was the personified connection between God and Humankind. It should take pride of place in the organization and layout of the VC. In effect, we should expect to see it described as a Christian capital. Yet it is not. Instead it is relegated to an extraneous chapter, and is considered only after detailed descriptions of churches built in the Holy Land, in Eusebius' VC, the Christian presence in the city is vague at best.

An alternative view of Eusebius' aims in the VC is given by Dagron. Dagron interprets Eusebius' VC as an attempt to show Constantine displaying a policy of unity (1974:22). He interprets Eusebius as believing that Constantine was connected with his father. He believed that Constantine inherited from his father the same desire to unite the Empire; and part of Eusebius' aim is to display the Empire as being united and not divided as it had been under Diocletian. Dagron believes Eusebius achieved this not through describing Constantinople but by describing Constantine's entry into Rome (Dagron 1974:22-3).

“He announced to all people in large lettering and inscriptions the sign of the Saviour, setting this up in the middle of the imperial city as a great trophy of victory over his enemies, explicitly inscribing this in indelible letters as the salvific sign of the authority of Rome and the protection of the whole empire. He therefore immediately ordered a tall pole to be erected in the shape of a cross in the hand of a statue made to represent himself, and this text to be inscribed

upon it word for word in Latin: ‘By this salutary sign, the true proof of valour, I liberated your city, saved from the tyrant’s yoke; moreover the Senate and People of Rome I liberated and restored to their ancient splendour and brilliance.’” (Eusebius VC I:40)

Dagron highlights the manner in which Licinius is portrayed as bad in the VC: he is described as having abandoned the traditions of Rome, and “he criminally annulled long established good and wise laws of Rome and substituted foreign ones of harsh effect” (VC 1:55). To Eusebius, the importance lies in the unity of Rome, not in the construction of Constantinople (1974:24). Eusebius intended to portray the world as being united around Constantine and the Empire did not have space for two Emperors (Dagron 1974:24-5). The idea that Eusebius was attempting to promote unity in the Empire above all else is attractive but was not the prime motive. As has been shown by Barnes and other authors Eusebius was very much a Christian scholar writing to promote his Christian Emperor.

The description of the founding of Constantinople comes in the section of the VC that had been edited before the death of Eusebius. As a result we can be reasonably sure that its place, structure and content were something Eusebius was happy with<sup>4</sup> With this in mind it is interesting to note that Eusebius was happy with a subservient role for the description of Constantinople coming as it does in-between two of the most important points of Eusebius’ argument, it comes before Constantine’s attack on the Pagan Temples (III: 54-8) and after the construction of the Holy Sepulchre. This small description is sandwiched between two much

larger sections and as a result its impact is minimized. Therefore one gets a distinct impression that Eusebius structured his work to take emphasis away from the foundation of Constantinople. This idea is supported when we examine the similarities between Eusebius' description of Constantinople in the VC and the description of Constantinople in Eusebius' other works.

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<sup>4</sup> On the rewriting of sections of the VC see Barnes (1981:267) in particular Barnes emphasizes the "relics of the abandoned panegyric" that approach the idea of displaying Constantine as a Christian Emperor in a different way, for example the comparisons, later removed, between Constantine and fourth-century Emperors

## **Constantinople in Earlier Works: Was the description of Constantinople in the *Vita Constantini* a lifted section?**

In the two panegyrics<sup>5</sup> delivered by Eusebius we find the presence of Constantinople. Its presence and the amount of space and effort involved is small, in the LC it is limited to one sentence “Not only did he embellish the city named after him with distinguished houses of God and honour the capital of Bithynia with one of the greatest and most beautiful, but he also adorned the capital cities of the remaining provinces with their equals” (LC IX:14). Upon reading this description of the city of Constantinople one can see a connection with the description in the VC, a form of self-plagiarism that Eusebius employed often as demonstrated by Cameron and Hall<sup>6</sup>. Although not strictly lifted from his speech in the LC it seems sensible to accept that Eusebius’ description of the founding of Constantinople is connected to this tiny mention in the LC. If we compare the description in the LC with that in the VC we can see parallels. “Not only did he embellish the city named after him with distinguished houses of God” (LC IX:14) compares very closely with “In honouring... the city which bears his name, he embellished it with very many places of worship” (VC III:48:1). The similarities continue the position of the description of Constantinople is similar in the LC and VC; they both come in the context of discussing several Eastern cities and churches. After discussing Constantinople in the VC, Eusebius goes on to examine Nicomedia (capital of Bithynia) and Antioch, in a passage that is almost certainly lifted from the LC (see Cameron and Hall 1999:15).

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<sup>5</sup> This assumes that Drake is correct in his assessment of the two parts being different speeches, an argument that seems very sensible. See Drake 1976.

<sup>6</sup> See Cameron and Hall 1999: 14-15 for a list of all the segments in Eusebius’ VC that are lifted from his other works

It appears that what has happened is that Eusebius has taken a part of his work and lifted it straight into the VC. The significance of this is that because the description in the VC is probably largely copied straight from the LC it sets back the date of composition of this section of work. The tricennial celebrations were the reason for the first visit of Eusebius to Constantinople and it is reasonable to assume that Eusebius had written his speech before he arrived in Constantinople. Therefore his first, tricennial, description of the city was probably composed before he had been to Constantinople. This would explain why his description of the city is vague in the LC: he had not been there, for he delivered this speech on his first arrival in 335, seeing as the description in the VC comes from this original version we can date his work to 335-6. This means that Eusebius did not consider the city important enough to warrant a new description based on his further travels in the city.

However, what this does mean is that the small changes that do appear in the VC suddenly become much more important, for they are now not just part of a hurried vague description, they have purposefully been placed in a document in which Eusebius does not change much else, for example the descriptions of Antioch and Nicomedia have no changes. Thus we must examine what Eusebius has changed in this description for these factors must be significant or Eusebius would have left the whole section alone. In his second description, in the VC these changes do not significantly increase our understanding of the layout and description of the city. The fountains of Daniel tell us little if anything, by understanding there were fountains we do not suddenly visualize and understand what the city was like, so why bother with it?

Eusebius' first insertion, on the destruction of pagan idols, is both an allusion to the piety of the Emperor and also reinforces the previous chapter in which Constantine creates a church,

and the next chapter in which Constantine destroys idols: it highlights the conversion of the Empire. Likewise the presence of the symbol is there, as Eusebius himself wrote, 'as a protection for his Empire', is highlighting the link between Constantine, God and the safety of the Empire. Yet what of Daniel and his lions? Whether Daniel and the lions are present because they actually existed as Daniel or whether this was Eusebius re-interpreting a pagan statue in a Christian context we are unable to decide. However what we can see is that again Eusebius is using a part of the city to help in his description of Constantine. In this case by linking him with Daniel he is linking Constantine with a Jewish King who was surrounded by pagan enemies and thrown into a den of lions to be killed, yet was preserved by God (Daniel VI:16-19). The connection with Constantine, a single Christian amidst many Pagan enemies in the civil war who survived thanks to God, is distinct. This is similar to the attitude Eusebius has of Constantine in his work, describing how Constantine is fighting against first Maxentius and then Licinius for religious reasons (VC II:3-5 for the religious war against Licinius), and the fate of the pagans that accuse Daniel is surely linked to Constantine's eventual triumph. Indeed it is possible we can take the main themes from Eusebius' description about Constantine and see them in miniature in this one paragraph, Constantine surviving thanks to his Christian faith as opposed to his pagan rivals before converting the Empire to Christianity and Constantine being a symbol for the safety and security of the Empire.

It is interesting therefore to see how the detailed descriptions of the buildings that Eusebius does give are taken out of context of the city. The most notable descriptions about the city that actually occur elsewhere are the bringing of pagan statues into the city for ridicule (III:54) and the description of the church of the Holy Apostles (IV:60). Certain elements in the

city were important to Eusebius, the shrine of the Apostles and the importation of pagan statues and their ridicule, and to that extent they were described and illustrated, but their importance lay, for Eusebius, not in their collective importance in the city but instead in the individual message they portrayed.

### **Does Eusebius praise Constantinople?**

Eusebius used Menander Rhetor as a guide for his work (Cameron and Hall 1999:32) so it is reasonable to ask whether his description of Constantinople appears to follow the guidelines laid out by Rhetor for giving praise to various things, in this case the city of Constantinople.

Menander Rhetor wrote that the basic technique to be used in describing a city is partially taken from that involved in describing a country and partially taken from that used to praise an individual: “we should select ‘position’ from the topics relating to countries, and ‘origins, actions, accomplishments’ from those relating to individuals. These form the basis of encomia of cities” (Treatise I: 346:30). The initial phase in praising a city is to praise its position, how well it fits in with its surroundings. Eusebius does not write praise on the position of Constantinople at all; indeed, in describing the city there is not one mention of the countryside in which Constantine founded the city, and we cannot even tell from his descriptions of the city whether Constantinople was positioned on the coast or inland, a most obvious point to make. Likewise many other topics given by Menander do not appear in Eusebius’ description of the city: there is not mention of the seasons (Menander I: 347:15) no mention of the produce, climate and security all described by Menander as being important in the praise of a city. In general the description of Constantinople is too brief and lacks sufficient

points to truly be able to say that Eusebius was praising the city. Thus we must conclude that Eusebius did not consider it necessary to praise Constantinople. Eusebius obviously considered that the praising of the city of Constantinople did not enhance the view of Constantine as a Christian Emperor.

If one compares the descriptions of the church of the Holy Sepulchre and the caves given by Eusebius in the LC with the meager description of the founding of Constantinople in that source one can highlight a point that is missing from the description of Constantinople overall: piety. The issue of piety occurs in Menander Rhetor when praising a city. The importance of this is considerable for although Eusebius is describing a building as opposed to a city, he is still praising it and in particular through the use of pious praise. In addition, the motive he has for praising it, strongly religious, allow us to accept that he would have felt correct in excusing many of the attributes linked to Menander's normal description of a city, in favour of highlighting religion above all else. This indeed is something that Menander himself highlights, 'whole subjects may be found in a single part of a city... in these cases, remember not to formulate a complete division, but only as regards the subject which has been set, handling all else with the greatest possible brevity' (I: 365:20).

Menander wrote that love of the Gods could be assessed in private and public terms (I: 362:25). In public terms one is told to emphasize the rites of initiation, festivals and sacrifices being punctual and numerous, and this occurs when Eusebius describes how Constantine built great public signs of God (LC: IX:17). Also one can describe numerous temples and the duties of the priests being carried out accurately (I: 362: 25-30); the numerous temples, in this case churches, duly occur in Eusebius' description of multiple churches within a short space of each other (IX: 16-17).

There are other elements in Menander's praise of a city present here but the most potent are not reserved for Constantinople. Instead, they occur when Eusebius described the origins of the Church. Jerusalem is described as being in the heart of Palestine, in the heart of the Hebrew kingdom (LC: IX: 16). Such a description would add prestige to the church, as it associates the Church with the most sacred sites in Christianity, and indeed Eusebius highlights such an issue when he describes the caves that Constantine decorated as being on the site of the "ascension" and "first theophany" (IX:17). Likewise Eusebius tells us that Constantine builds "opulent structures", signs of "salvation and victory" (IX:17) and he links the success of Constantine and his family to Christ "the Sign that, in turn, gives him compensation for his piety, augments his entire house and line, and strengthens the throne of his kingdom for long cycles of years, dispensing the fruits of virtue to his good sons, his family and their descendents" (IX:18). This again is Eusebius creating and expanding the link between Christianity and Constantine and it is likely he is attempting to enhance the importance of the origin of these sites, following Menander Rhetor who wrote that the founder of a city could bring extra potency to a city (I: 353:10). As Cameron and Hall point out: in the VC there is a new idea being pushed forward by Eusebius, "the idea that this is the New Jerusalem prophesied in scripture" (1999:14). While the VC describes the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in a very descriptive way the method used in the LC is rhetorically distinct. In the LC, to praise the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Eusebius uses language such as "the Sign that, in turn, gives him compensation for his piety, augments his entire house and line, and strengthens the throne of his kingdom" (LC IX:18).

## **Conclusion**

Here we must draw our first conclusion about Constantinople. For Eusebius the motive was always the promotion of the Emperor. When we understand this we must view his work on Constantinople in this context, Constantinople is not viewed by Eusebius as an adequate means to provide praise of the Emperor. Thus he glosses it over by hiding it away in the middle of two very important points that he makes. What we are attempting to understand is whether or not the city was a Christian Capital and Eusebius does not appear to support this idea. His description is short, uninspiring and hidden away in the middle of other more important topics. It is quite obviously lifted in part from previous speeches by Eusebius and he does not appear to have seen anything of greater importance when he wrote (and in parts re-wrote) his work after his visit later in his life. His removal of certain elements from the context of the city implies that he considered them more important than the city itself. The example of the Mausoleum proves this very well indeed. The changes that have been made to his description are unimportant in the context of a discussion of the description of a city and, I believe, are there to directly allude to elements of the Emperor's character, to reinforce the Christian aspects of the Emperor.

## CHAPTER 2

### OTHER SOURCES' DESCRIPTIONS OF CONSTANTINOPLE

After an examination of Eusebius it is necessary to also examine other sources (see Appendix 2). Eunapius the Pagan author of the *Lives of the Sophists* does not offer a very positive view of Constantine. An author who favoured Julian provides a very different opinion to that of Eusebius, and such was the nature of Christian distaste of Pagan history that this book that covered from Claudius Gothicus to Arcadius and Honorius did not survive (Lieu and Montserrat 1996:9). To use Eunapius as a source one must for the most part use his *Lives of the Sophists*. A description of the city occurs in the Life of Sopater, a Pagan advisor to Constantine who attempted to convert Constantine back from Christianity before being killed as a scapegoat for a famine that occurred in Constantinople, he was accused of having withheld the corn fleet through use of a magic spell (Lieu and Montserrat 1996:11).

In this description Eunapius focuses not on the buildings or the contents of the city, instead he focuses on the motive that Constantine had for building the city. Eunapius believes Constantine built the city and transported people from elsewhere so that the city became a center of debauchery and drunkenness (Eunapius in Lieu and Montserrat 1996:11:462). He is not complementary of the city, the people are described as an “intoxicated multitude” (Eunapius:462). The motive for the city’s founding appears to be in the mould of Zosimus and our other adverse sources, it is a city Constantine built so the people would laud and praise his name, even if the people were “so stupid were they that they could hardly pronounce the word” (Eunapius:462).

Zosimus as a source is very close to what we have of Eunapius (see Appendix). While Eunapius' history has to a great extent been lost to us we are able to piece together pieces of it due to the reliance placed on it by Zosimus (Lieu and Montserrat 1996:13). What is very interesting to note here is that the main motive for the bad reputation afforded to Constantine comes not from his religious policy but instead comes from his illegitimacy and his bloodthirsty and cruel personality (Zosimus II:29:1). It is this natural cruelty that is blamed as the motive for the conversion to Christianity, and one can see the different motives for conversion, the pagan belief he converted due to fear after he had murdered his son, and the Christian belief that he converted due to the presence of the sign at the battle of the Milvian Bridge. This Pagan version of the conversion fits with Zosimus' description of the foundation of Constantinople, he revealed that the city was built because he "could not bear to be thus accused by practically everyone" (II: 32:1) about his harsh treatment of his son Crispus who he had murdered<sup>7</sup> This is very interesting if one compares it with Eusebius' description of the scenes in Rome at the death of Constantine "the inhabitants of the imperial city... fell into unrestrained grief" (IV: 69:1). The description continues with tales of unhappy people and finally it is said that they "begged that the remains of their imperial Emperor should be kept by them and laid in the imperial City" (IV: 69:2). This is a far cry from the hostility between Constantine and Rome implied by Zosimus.

Constantine is said to have looked for a city an equal to Rome, the motive being to have a site worthy of his palace, Zosimus reveals that Constantine first tried to build a new city before giving up and moving to the site of Byzantium, a change of mind that is not revealed elsewhere

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<sup>7</sup> See Pohlsander (1984) for a detailed description of Crispus. We know that Constantine had Crispus killed, but his motive is unknown. As Pohlsander details Crispus was killed in 326 in very cruel circumstances either on his way

(II: 32:1). Again Zosimus emphasizes the need for a site “appropriate for an imperial residence” before describing the geographical position of the city, it being on the isthmus past the “Horn and the Propontis” (II:32:2). Zosimus mentions the impact on the city by Septimius Severus, “It had of old its gate which completed the porticoes which the emperor Severus had built” (II:32:2). Money is described as being spent on “structures that were mostly useless, while some he built were shortly after pulled down, being unsafe owing to their hasty construction (II:32:2).

John Malalas’ chronicle of history includes a book on Constantine. Malalas did not write contemporary history of Constantine, it came from the sixth century (Scott 1994:58). John Malalas provides a large treatment of Constantine and he focused on the chronicles of Domninos, Nestorians and Timetheos, three sources about which we know very little indeed (Scott 1994:59). That they were important is indicated by Malalas’ use of them as main sources in preference to the ecclesiastical histories of, for example, Eusebius. It is possible that Malalas provided a different and unique re-interpretation of Constantine (so believes Kazhdan 1987) or it is possible that he simply copied from sources that provided a different interpretation. That he was an innovator is suggested by his treatment of Constantine’s baptism, he places it incorrectly during Constantine’s first few years in his visit to Rome (Scott 1994:60). Malalas glosses over the Christian nature of Constantine, as to him this was an established fact and no issues of heresy bothered him, his aim is to focus on the building and administration of Antioch and Constantinople in particular for by the sixth century Constantinople was at its peak in

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to or from Rome after Constantine’s *vicemalia* (1984:99)

importance. It is important to emphasise briefly that the structure of Malalas builds up to having the description of Constantine and Constantinople as the most important events in the book<sup>8</sup>

Malalas tells us that the city of Constantinople was dedicated in 330 and in its founding the emperor rebuilt the original wall built by Byzas and made an extension of it (thus enlarged the city's area (XIII:320)). He completed the hippodrome (it was started by Septimius Severus) and adorned the hippodrome with statues and ornaments as well as a box for the Emperor to watch the games (XIII:320). He describes this box as being similar to the one in Rome but does not describe the hippodrome in being similar to that in Rome (XIII:320).

The palace is also described as being similar in design to that in Rome and that it had a passage leading from the palace to the hippodrome and back (XIII:320). He also built the forum, and here Malalas describes the porphyry column set up in the middle of the forum (XIII:320). The statue is described as being of Constantine, with seven rays on his head (XIII:320). Malalas describes the statue as having already stood in Ilion (Phrygia) before being moved to Constantinople (XIII:320). The Palladion was secretly taken from Rome and placed in the forum underneath the column on which his statue was built (XIII:320). Constantine made a 'bloodless' sacrifice to God and then took the Tyche and called it Anthousa (XIII:320). He also reveals some of the past of the Byzantine town; it was built originally by Phidalia who had been married to Byzas, king of Thrace. Barbysios who was toparch and warden of the port and Phidalia's father told Phidalia to build a wall down to the sea, this area was ruled over by Byzas who named it also (XIII:321). The leading from the palace to his forum a road with colonnades on either side, the road was named the Regia (XIII:321). He also built the Senaton, Senate

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<sup>8</sup> Scott emphasizes that the subject matter can be grouped into books and from these groupings Constantinople begins the "third hexad and the second triad of the second half" (1994:62). For us it is merely necessary to

House of Basilican form, opposite of this was a statue of his mother Helena, on a smaller porphyry column, this was named the Augusteion (XIII:321).

He completed the baths that had been started by Septimius Severus, called the Zeuxippon (XIII:321). To celebrate the founding Constantine is described as holding a race-meeting at which he wore a pearl diadem in reference to the psalm that says “You placed on his head a crown of precious stone (Psalm 20:4), Malalas emphasizes that no previous Emperor had worn such a crown before (XIII:321). Interestingly Malalas describes another festival in 330 (XIII:322), implying the first occurred previously, on this festival the public baths were opened and a second statue of himself was dedicated, holding the tyche of the city in his right hand (XIII:322). It was this occasion when Constantine decreed that the carriage bearing his statue be carried into the Hippodrome and worshipped on feast days (XIII:322). Upon the completion of his consulship the Emperor was described as giving largesse to the crowd, tokens that were used to give out food and clothes (XIII:323). We must also emphasise that Constantine is reported as removing Constantinople from the province of Europe and from the jurisdiction of Herakleia, it was given Imperial status (XIII:323). The city was given magistrates, a praetorian prefect and a city prefect (XIII:323). From this time onwards it remained “an imperial capital” (XIII:323). These magistrates are described as being only Christians, though this we know to be not exclusive; Constantine had an advisor, Sopater who was written about by Eunapius (see above).

The chronicle of John Malalas is the chronicle on which most early Byzantine descriptions are based. The *Chronicon Paschale*, a later Byzantine chronicle from the seventh century, is a Byzantine chronicle based on John Malalas. Such a description is very similar to that of John Malalas, but, Constantine is described as having stayed in Nicomedia, from which

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acknowledge that in Malalas' opinion the founding of Constantinople was very important.

he visited Constantinople (328). From there the similarity with John Malalas is strong, the renewal of walls, completion of the Hippodrome and so on. The great palace is described as being linked with the Hippodrome and the forum containing a porphyry column. Likewise the statue is described as containing radiate bands and suchlike.

The Emperor Julian alludes to Constantinople on occasion in his panegyric in honour of Constantius. Julian tells us of Constantinople that “she does not assert that she is your native place, but acknowledges that she became your adopted land by your father’s act” (OR 1:5d). Julian also reveals that the Emperor found a great treasure of Licinius “that money was very scarce, while there were great hoards of treasure in the recesses of the palace... and then, in less than ten years, he founded and gave his name to a city that as far surpasses all others as it is itself inferior to Rome” (OR 1:8c)

Themistius a mid fourth century orator gave many orations of which some talk about Constantinople. The most important of these for Constantinople was his third oration delivered in May 357 to Constantius in Rome. Detailed analysis is given by Heather (2001). Heather understands the speech to give the impression of the cities being close allies though the very fact he writes such a speech suggests there had to have been some friction between the two groups of senators that needed abating (2001:120-1).

There are a few Latin *Breviaria* of roughly contemporary dates, these sources, though short in quantity, are still important for they only tell us vital points, they do not ‘waffle’. Sextus Aurelius Victor was a Latin author of an epitome about Constantine and portrays a very positive view of Constantine. Being an epitome it merely brushes over the vast majority of the

events in Constantine's reign (Lieu and Montserrat 1996:2) and his mention of the founding of Constantinople is limited to "Constantine turned his noble spirit away from political struggles by founding a city, developing religious beliefs and reorganising the army." (41:13)

Eutropius was a fourth-century "comrade in arms" (Lieu and Montserrat 1996:2) of Ammianus and he, as Victor, wrote only an epitome of Constantine's reign. Nevertheless he offers more insight into the founding of Constantinople by telling us that "He was the first to devote all his efforts to raise the city which bore his name to such heights that it emulated Rome" (X:8). In both of these epitomes we follow the Latin tradition of this time that focuses on politics and warfare and less on society and religion, thus it is no surprise that the founding is considered less important than say the annihilation of the Goths and Sarmatians (Victor 41:13 and Eutropius X:7). Yet in such a brief summary of the reign Eutropius reveals that Constantine put great effort into the city with the attempt to raise it up so it emulated Rome. To emulate and copy Rome, but not to surpass it is the implication we get from Eutropius. The *epitome de caesaribus*, written by an unknown author provides even less information about the foundation of Constantinople. It reveals that "His body was buried in Byzantium which became known as Constantinople" (41:18). On the whole it is not a very positive picture of Constantine and Lieu and Montserrat suggest some of his criticisms could be the basis of Zosimus' critical account and linked to Eunapius (1996:4).

These texts, all epitomes or *breviaria* are all brief and pagan and Latin. Constantinople as a Christian capital is not mentioned, but then much is missed out so we should not make too much of this. Nevertheless Constantinople is mentioned in all the sources and Eutropius reveals more, that the city was built to emulate Rome.

The *Anonymus Valesianus* script is another historical account of Constantine. The author was “almost certainly a pagan” and as with previously mentioned sources his focus is a political and military history (Lieu and Montserrat 1996:40). The original contemporary history is added to in the early fifth century and the script is changed and has bits of Christian history added to it taken from the work of Paulus Orosius thus the source is a pagan script added to in a later period to make it more acceptable to the Christian period (Lieu and Montserrat 1996:40). Constantinople the city is founded in “memory of his famous victory” (30) and named after himself. He enriched the city “as if it were his native city” and “wanted it to become the equal of Rome” (30). Here it is once more visible that he founded the city to rival Rome and once more there is no mention that the city was founded as a Christian capital. The citizens for the city were brought there from “everywhere” and he is said to have “lavished so much wealth on it that he almost exhausted the resources of the imperial treasury” (30). He gives a mention of the senate of the new city writing that it was of the “second rank” and the members were called ‘*clari*’ (30).

Photius summarises a now lost history of Praxagoras that describes the foundation of Constantinople as “having gained control and displayed the whole empire to be united, he founded Byzantium, which was renamed after him.” (translated by Lieu and Montserrat 1996:8:7). The copying of Praxagoras by Photius was carried out undoubtedly because Praxagoras was a pagan who saw Constantine in a good light, however, even being a pro-Constantinian pagan based in the East (Athens) he does not provide any additional reason or information about the foundation.

Praxagoras seems happy that the Empire is united, and a religious split would have disunited the Empire as opposed to uniting it. That Praxagoras does not mention religion is because he was more concerned with politics and war, this suggests religion was not an issue to him and, being based in Athens, he would surely have been well-placed to have heard, if not actually seen, 'Christian' Constantinople. Lieu and Montserrat are very likely correct in attributing a lack of interest in Constantine's religious policies as indicating a lack of impact at this stage (1996:9). That he does not mention Constantinople as being Christian when Photius (a patriarch) would have leapt at the opportunity to record a pagan mentioning a Christian Emperor or Christian capital in a favourable light is surely significant.

Socrates, a Christian author who was born around 380 lived in Constantinople for much of his life and his description of what Constantine was responsible for doing in the creation of the city is thus important as he was a native. He wrote that "he enlarged, surrounded with massive walls, and adorned with various edifices; and having rendered it equal to imperial Rome, he named it Constantinople, establishing by law that it should be designated New Rome" (EH I:16). Intriguingly he mentions a church built by Constantine that Eusebius does not mention, Hagia Eirene, as well as the church of Apostles (I:16). He does say that Constantine built "two churches" (I:16) as opposed to the "very many" churches of Eusebius. As with Eusebius he describes the arrival of pagan monuments into the city in public view as ornaments of the city (I:16). Socrates believed it was "superfluous" to mention these monuments as people were not really interested in them (I:16). Socrates finished his description by referring authors to Eusebius (I:16).

A panegyric delivered by the Antiochene Libanius provides a viewpoint on Constantine from slightly later in the period in the reign of the Emperor Julian. In a panegyric written to praise Constantius and Constans Hans-Ulrich Wiemer points out that in this period when the Emperor Julian was attempting to undermine the Constantinian policies it is slightly curious that Libanius is not especially anti-Constantinian (Wiemer 1994:512). Constantine is praised and seen as the archetype to be echoed by future rulers, at this time Constans and Constantius (*Oration 59:17-47*). The praise and the relatively positive opinion of Constantine is because the panegyric was, writes Wiemer, “little more than a reproduction of official views on Constantine propagated by his sons” (1994:514). This propagation of imperial views does not include anything being written about the foundation of Constantinople. In a series of speeches delivered under Theodosius one can see a different attitude emerge from Libanius. The attitude of these fragments of speeches is very different. In one of these speeches we get a mention of the city of Constantinople, in talking of the lenience of both Julian and Constantine to rioters he wrote “Indeed we can see that both Julian sought to achieve fame from this source, and that the founder of the new city which he built to rival the city of Rome at least sometimes displayed this quality” (*Oration 19:19*).

A future mention of Constantinople occurs in the work of Libanius when he is explaining the decline of the city councils. He believes the city was a centre of debauchery and the like, similar to Eunapius and Zosimus, but in addition he believed the city was a parasitic city, sucking money and resources from other centers of Eastern culture (*Oration 1. 74-80*).

The use of numismatic evidence is of critical importance to us as it is one of the strongest methods a Roman Emperor had of displaying his personal policy and, perhaps more

importantly, coins do not reach us via the pen of a discerning author. A good summary of the reign is given by Bruun who wrote “From the time-hallowed imagery picturing the gods we have arrived at a ceremonial and hieratic representation of the emperor and his family” (Bruun 1966:55). Of the two types of coin, common bronze against rare gold/silver, it is accepted that the bronze coinage was responsible for the expression of general themes and ideas (Bruun 1966:46). Against this the gold and silver coinages were used to push out individual events and ideas with the express purpose of highlighting one off events, in addition they would only circulate among very small groups of people (Bruun 1966:47).

The mint at Constantinople does not appear to have acted out of line with the general theme of the reign. It began life as a normal mint, and began minting bronze coins in 326 and began with the usual types of coin at the time that emphasized the providence of the Emperor (Bruun 1966:566). In 327 Constantinople began to produce coins that had not been seen before, these praised the army, the Roman people, the liberty of the people and the death of a tyrant (Bruun 1966:567). This stage of so-called ‘*gloria*’ types continued until 328 when they were replaced by the types of coins of CONSTINIANA DAFNE type (Bruun 1966:567). This type continued for two years until 330 when the coins begin to show two soldiers standing with standards behind them, the GLORIA EXERCITVS type (Bruun 1966:567). It is from 330 that Constantinian coinage reverts to a “neutral and retrospective” type concentrating on the army and to a lesser extent the capitals.

There are very few early gold coins, before 330, that we have available, for the most part those that we do have are largesse types, showing the Emperor scattering coins and Victory coins, (Bruun 1966: 563). What gold coinage we have does vary however, for example a type with Victory holding a palm branch and with a kneeling captive at her feet exists in 328, most

likely a gold coin made from a bronze die<sup>9</sup>. In 330 coinciding with the dedication of the capital come several new coin types, again showing the security and unity of the Imperial family and the victory of the Roman Empire. The solidi of this period is mostly shows Victory advancing with a wreath (Bruun 1966:563).

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<sup>9</sup> Alföldi 1926 as cited in RIC VII:563

### CHAPTER 3

#### WAS CONSTANTINOPLE A CHRISTIAN CITY?

##### **Introduction**

The idea of Christian Constantinople comes from Krautheimer who believed that a topographical discussion of the city suggested it was a Christian city. To assess whether Constantinople was a Christian city several points shall be examined. We must now draw the sources together and question whether they suggest Constantinople was a Christian city. One must also examine the topography of the city whether the buildings and the images inside them and the statues and icons present in the city appear to indicate whether the city was a Christian city or not. We must also examine Constantinople in relation to the coins of the period and finally question whether we can make any assessment of the population of the city.

We have already seen how Eusebius did not use Constantinople in the VC to highlight much of a Christian connection with Constantinople, notably his removal of certain Christian descriptions from the context of Constantinople and the lack of emphasis on the city in the VC. Other sources provide similar attitudes, Eunapius and Zosimus do not provide any information on Constantinople being a Christian city, indeed Zosimus suggests Constantine founded two temples, not a very Christian thing to do and surely indicative of a non-Christian attitude towards the city (II:31). We have many *brevaria* that mention the founding in a few lines. In these contexts the city is never described as a Christian city. As we have seen from the pagan

sources their reasons for the founding do not appear to have been religious, Eunapius (Lieu and Montserrat 1996:11:462) and Zosimus (II: 32:1) both suggesting the city was created by Constantine because he wished to escape from Pagan Rome and the Roman people with whom he had quarreled. As we have already noted the majority of sources do not talk about the religious side of Constantinople, concerned as they are with politics and war.

### **Topography and imagery of the City: Churches, the Mausoleum, Hippodrome and Imperial Palace.**

The most obvious thing that we would expect to see if Constantinople was a Christian city would be the presence of Churches. Eusebius tells us there were many churches in Constantinople (III: 48: 1) but he only describes one. Socrates is slightly more favourable, telling us that Constantine built two churches, the Mausoleum and Hagia Eirene (I: 16). In this instance Socrates' exact naming of two churches is surely more significant than Eusebius' vague mention of many churches which implies he had no real inkling of how many there are and, as we have seen, it is possible this was written before he came to Constantinople and so he didn't really know.

Eusebius proves himself quite capable of describing churches, he describes churches in Antioch and Nicomedia (VC III:50). Yet he does not describe any of the churches in Constantinople, despite there being many (according to Eusebius). The answer is surely that Eusebius was unable to concoct churches that did not exist. To this can be added the position of Constantinople in a chapter along with descriptions of churches built at Nicomedia, Antioch and

Mamre we can see that it is curious indeed that a description of a churchless city appears in a section devoted to descriptions of churches.

This is even more pertinent when one understands that, as we have seen, his underlying motive was always the expression through his literary works of the success of Christianity in over-coming Paganism (Barnes 1981). Indeed the very last sentence of the Ecclesiastical History sums his attitude up nicely

“They, having made it their first task to wipe the world clean from hatred of God, rejoiced in the blessings that He had conferred upon them, and, by the things they did for all men to see, displayed love of virtue and love of God, devotion and thankfulness to the almighty” (EH X: 9: 9).

These “things they did for all men to see” do not appear to have been the construction of churches in Constantinople. A conclusion it is reasonable to arrive at is that there were no churches for Eusebius to describe. Indeed the vivid description of the picture of Constantine spearing the dragon in the Imperial palace shows quite clearly Eusebius was capable of remembering details from his visit to Constantinople. Let us also remember his visits and the time of his writing any time up to fourteen years since the original founding of the city in 324, plenty of time for a church to have been built. Indeed the fact that Eusebius did not re-write the section on Constantinople is surely indicative that when he returned there just before he re-wrote the VC there was not enough Christian influence present to persuade him to re-write his section about the city.

It is possible the church of Irene (peace) was founded by Constantine, as is cited in the history by Socrates (I: 16). The church that would later become the Haghia Sophia of Justinian was dedicated in the reign of Constantius II, with construction being variously attributed to Constantine (the *Chronicon Paschale* 92:737) or Constantius (EH I:16). Krautheimer suggests a foundation date of 326<sup>10</sup>. We do not know for sure what it would have looked like, though Krautheimer (1993:549) does give a description of it based on the fifth century successor, he envisages it as a basilica with twin aisles on either side and with a gallery above possibly with an atrium (1993:549). It is a nice idea, but then we have no evidence other than a mention in the *Chronicon Paschale*. To accept its foundation by Constantine would require more evidence, surely Eusebius would have mentioned it if it had been there.

The new forum lay just outside the original city walls next door to the new senate house and it was in this forum that the porphyry column with the statue of Sol Invictus was positioned. Inside the original city walls in the Roman section Constantine concentrated the civil buildings, the enlarged hippodrome and palace alongside Hagia Irene and the various commercial buildings (1993:123). Inside the old city the old buildings were left relatively untouched and the old temple to the Capitoline Gods, possibly set up by Septimius Severus, was still there in a dominating central position and possibly the target of a triumphal way, a great honour indeed and surely not one that would have existed in a Christian city (Mango 2000:176-7). While Krautheimer believes the continuation of the old pagan city to be indicative of a policy to leave the old city to decay (1984:47) this is extremely unlikely. If Constantine was as Christian an

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<sup>10</sup> The *Chronicon Paschale* gives a building period of 34 years and a dedication date of 360 (92:737) thus giving the start of building as 324 but there is no other evidence to corroborate this start date

Emperor as Krautheimer would have us believe it simply is not enough to just say Constantine left the Greek city alone. We must assume that Constantine does not destroy this inner city because he has no quarrel with it. Constantine is quite clearly powerful enough to destroy this section of the city and the symbolism of the ancient Greek city still existing in what Mango describes as the “magnificent site of the Acropolis” is surely significant (1993:123). A brief glimpse at a map of Constantinople shows how far outside the old city Constantine actually had to go to find a site ‘worthy’ enough for his mausoleum.

## **Mausoleum**

A building of great importance to Krautheimer in his description of Christian Constantinople is the Mausoleum of Constantine. The mausoleum of Constantine has been examined by Mango (1990). In this description the mausoleum is seen to have consisted of two buildings by the end of the fourth century (Mango 1990: 56-57), a basilica and an actual mausoleum. During the reign of Constantine there had only been one building in the complex (as described by Eusebius VC IV:58-60). The twin buildings consisted of a basilica for the apostles and a mausoleum for the Emperor's body. The problem of which of these buildings is the one described by Eusebius is treated by Mango, and it is highly likely that he is correct to suggest that the mausoleum was built by Constantine while the basilica was a later addition. The first reason for this being the case is the similarity between the Emperor putting up a tomb in his honour and the same things being done by his family and immediate successors, and along the same architectural lines (1990: 57).

The description given by Eusebius of the building fits the description of a rotunda better than it does a basilica, both the description of the actual building and also the fact that Eusebius wrote that services were held in the building, something that would have been obvious in a church, implying services were held in a slightly odd environment (1990: 57). In addition later sources suggest the church of the apostles was built not by Constantine but by Constantius II (1990: 58). As Mango highlights Eusebius mixes the truth and does not always give the whole story, and in this case Mango suggests Eusebius attempted to hide the Emperor's intention to be buried alongside the Apostles, it would have been conceived as blasphemous after all (1990: 58). Mango suggests the link which is extremely tempting to make between Constantine's

burial in the midst of the Apostles and the possibility he is putting himself forward as the equal of the Apostles or indeed as Christ (1990: 58). He suggests that as time went on people did indeed realize that such a layout was offensive as it implied the apostles were inferior to Constantine, and that under Constantius a compromise was reached whereby the Apostles were moved and buried in a separate building (1990: 59).

In 356 the first relics arrived in Constantinople and were placed in this building. The first apostle to come was Timothy, later being followed by Andrew and Luke. The implications are simple to see, Constantinople lacked a proper Christian religious tradition and the translation of relics occurred and was created to provide a means to give the city a Christian heritage that it simply did not have (Mango 1990:60).

In the VC Eusebius described pagan monuments that existed in Constantinople. Pagan monuments could be seen “in all the squares of the Emperor’s city, so that in one place the Pythia was displayed as a contemptible spectacle to the viewers, in another the Sminthian, in the Hippodrome itself the tripods from Delphi, and the Muses of Helicon at the palace” (III 54:2-3). The city was “filled” with these objects from all over the empire and the reason that we are given for their being brought to Constantinople was “for the laughter and the amusement” of the people (III 54:3). Such a situation is very hard to believe. It seems unlikely that Constantine would have focused on bringing works of art from all over the Empire to Constantinople merely for ridicule. To this end Bassett (1991) and Mango (1963) have both argued convincingly against such a scenario. Bassett wrote that the hippodrome contained at least twenty-five antiquities by the end of the fourth-century and the vast majority of these statues were figural sculptures, athletes, gods and animals (Bassett 1991:87). Bassett’s classification of the

monuments falls into four groups, apotropaia, victory monuments, public figures and finally Rome monuments (Bassett 1991:87).

Such a system of classification allows us to see clearly the meaning that the statues held in the context of the hippodrome monuments. Apotropaia monuments functioned as representations of patron gods or talismans to protect against evil, in this context it seems very apt that statues of Zeus and Artemis emerged in the hippodrome as they were associated with horses and breeders (Bassett 1991:89). Bassett concludes that the apotropaic statues were “the most useful and practical objects to adorn the course, for by purging the circus of evil they kept the track and its personnel in good running order” (Bassett 1991:89). The practicality of these statues in the hippodrome makes it hard to envisage the primary motive for their presence as being farcical as Eusebius would have us believe. Therefore we must conclude that the reason for the presence of these statues was not ridicule but was intended, by Constantine, to play an important role in the image of the city.

The group of victory monuments is concerned with monuments that symbolize victory and success, for example the three statues of Herakles fall into this category. The association of Herakles with masculine prowess and physical strength as well as being a “patron” of athletic contests, thus his presence in the Hippodrome was well-suited (Bassett 1991:91). Alongside Herakles was a statue of Scylla, a beast that preyed on travelers and heroes. Her presence was intended to highlight the attributes of the ancient heroes, to bring them to life and perhaps to help embody the athletes that competed in the hippodrome (Bassett 1991:91). In this context of analyzing the religious nature of the city it is important to see the continuation not just of Pagan Gods in the form of Zeus and Artemis but also Pagan tradition, the carrying on of Pagan

positioning of monuments, what God and hero represented what in the circus arena, not a very Christian position.

The description of the imperial palace, illustrating the presence of the emblem of the saving passion in a prominent position in the decoration, carries a note of caution. It is possible that the symbol (most likely the chi-rho) was, as Bruun has suggested, merely an Imperial symbol that implied Christ only to Christians and carried some sort of Imperial connotations for most other people (1966: 61). Yet an Imperial palace undoubtedly had a great many other images and symbols inside it. These other symbols were not mentioned by Eusebius and it is reasonable to assume that he must have felt uncomfortable about some of them at least and did not describe them. Possibly he refrained from describing the palace in general because he did not wish to set the Christian chi-rho inside a Pagan building, or at least an ambiguously Christian building. The reason that he would have avoided describing other more pagan symbols would be, presumably, the same reason that he did not describe the statue of Sol Invictus described by John Malalas (XIII:320). At this stage that was still too overtly a pagan image for Eusebius to have wished to associate it with his Emperor.

### **Sol Invictus: Christian monument?**

One of the center pieces in Constantinian Constantinople was the statue of Sol Invictus in the new forum. It is very likely that Constantine would have had a great role to play in the creation and positioning of the statue, due to its importance it is reasonable to assume that he played a role in its creation (Mango 1993:III:4). There is no accurate representation of the column of Constantine, the best we have are text descriptions of which the most useful is John Malalas. The statue held a spear in the right hand and a globe in the left hand, quite likely having a “victory” on the globe (Kantorowicz, E (1961) as cited in Mango 1993:III:2-3). The statue wore a crown with seven radiate rays and likely wore military dress (similar to a statue of Diocletian at Alexandria (Fraser, P. M (1972:89) as cited in Mango 1993:III:3)). The interpretation of the statue can be looked at in two ways. First it can be argued that Constantine was presenting himself, as Emperor; or second it can be interpreted as signifying Constantine as an oriental deity, such deities were often shown in military gear with a radiate crown equipped with a globe and spear (Mango 1993:III:3). The statue was placed on a large column, with seven drums and somewhere around forty metres high, this made it very visible around the city as one of the most important landmarks and extremely important (Mango 1993:III:2). The statue itself was originally built either for Constantinople intentionally or possibly moved from somewhere else where it had been placed. Malalas suggests that the statue originally came from the city of Illion. It is an attractive possibility that the statue was built for another site and moved to Constantinople and this site would made important sense, for it was legendarily founded by Tros, the founder of Troy thus bringing an indirect link to Aeneas and much prestige. Such a connection would be important for it would give Constantinople a similar

heritage to that of Rome, both cities would have had a link to Troy, Rome through Aeneas and Constantinople (or Illion) to Tros (Mango 1993:III:4). The prospect of the city originally being intended to have been built at another site can be traced back to Zosimus who tells us that Constantine originally decided to build his palace “in the Troad between Sigeum and old Ilium” (II:30).

The prospect of the statue containing a Christian message is hotly disputed by Mango; he emphasizes the silence over the statue in Eusebius’ description of the city, silence presumably because Eusebius found it impossible to put a Christian interpretation to the monument. Mango also questions the policy whereby Constantine removes this image from his coinage in 326, presumably because Constantine was becoming more Christian, this symbol was one that illustrated the Emperor above all else, for otherwise we would have the embarrassment of a Christian Emperor putting a pagan monument as the centre-piece of his city (Mango 1993:III:6). That the monument signifies Constantine is the most likely option, the ambiguity about the sign is perhaps intentional, to be interpreted either as a pagan god or the Emperor, but Mango points out that its interpretation as a Christian monument is extremely difficult (1993:III:6).

### **Constantine and Christianity: Coins from Constantinople.**

There is a connection between the statue of Sol Invictus and the image of Sol Invictus that appears on the coins of Constantine, as examined by Bruun (1966). In the Empire in general the image of Sol Invictus the patron god of Constantine disappeared in this period in around 324 and Sol Invictus was not replaced by any other god divine figures were simply dropped from the coinage. They were replaced instead by “imperial anniversaries and high offices” (Bruun 1966: 48). Bruun summarises, “it is easier to see that a coinage expressing the emperor’s submission to a god was succeeded by a coinage exalting the emperor” (1966: 48).

As Bruun asserts the fact that the Emperor did not consider it necessary to tie himself to particular deities, that he did not need their help, is indicative of a break with tetrarchic traditions in which the Emperors associated themselves with Gods to highlight their power, and displays a new confidence and sense of superiority in the Emperor (1966:48). A break with tradition and supremacy over the older tried and tested gods is surely significant. Yet, as noted these old gods were not replaced by the Christian god in the coinage. Constantine breaks away from a need of gods to conserve him, and moves towards becoming his own conserver (as quoted from Nock (1947) in Bruun 1966:49). This occurs after the civil war and here he began to introduce new designs to replace the gods, first of all are the “Victory” schemes in which victory in the civil war is celebrated through coins such as, “Eternal Rome” and vota coins (Bruun 1966:49). Up until 330 the images go through changes that celebrate parts of the emperor’s virtue, for example “foresight”, illustrated by a camp gate. Finally from 330 “The army is the dominating feature, with the foundation of the two capitals in the background”

(1966:49). From this time onward Constantinople occurs on the coinage and the image is associated with Rome, however they are not linked with Christian symbols at all.

The image on the obverse side of the coins was based on earlier Trajanic images with elements of Hellenistic rulership brought in, in particular there is a late Constantinian trend to have the Emperor's or the Caesars' eyes facing heavenward (Bruun 1966:33). The eyes gazing heavenward has been taken to be a part of Christian symbolism, mostly this is a result of Eusebius who in his VC describes a coin in which "he had his own portrait so depicted on the gold coinage that he appeared to look upwards in the manner of one reaching out to God in prayer" (IV 14:14). This is unlikely to have been the case however, as will be shown Constantine adopted a policy of consolidation, association with the past and he enjoyed a unique opinion of himself and his Imperial position. It makes much more sense to see the eyes gazing heavenward as an attempt to incorporate Hellenistic traits into his style of rulership as opposed to starting a new Christian style, by linking himself with Hellenistic rulers he is linking himself instead with the past, not creating something new (Bruun 1966:63). In response to the suggestion that Constantine minted coins with Christian symbols, in particular the chi-rho symbol, Bruun emphasizes first the relative rareness of these symbols and secondly he suggests such a symbol was carried by Constantine not as a symbol of his Christian faith but instead as it was a symbol adopted as by Constantine as a victorious sign and an emblem of his power (Bruun 1966:63). He concludes that the subsequent victory of Christianity ensured that such a symbol became representative of Christianity very soon (Bruun 1966:64).

What this means is that the image of Sol Invictus becomes defunct in the ideology of Constantine at around 324. Instead of replacing him with Christian symbols and Christian ideology Constantine becomes concerned with preservation, stability, unity and his own

imperial prowess. This does not tell us that Constantine was not a Christian nor does it tell us that Constantinople was not a Christian city, but it does reveal that Constantine had higher priorities than promoting Christianity in his coinage.

### **Aristocracy: A new Christian Upper-class for a New Christian Empire?**

. It can be suggested Constantine was not on good relations with the Pagan aristocracy, Zosimus tells of a split between Constantine and the aristocracy in Rome (II:32:1) and that he needed to found some kind of new aristocracy to help him rule his new Empire. This shall be examined later but first we must ask whether these aristocrats would have consisted of Christians and whether they would have made the city seem like Krautheimer's Christian city.

We can be certain that there were at least some aristocrats in Constantinople, after all, Eusebius describes beautiful homes presumably for rich owners (VC III:48:1) and sources such as Themistius and Libanius describe a new senatorial class. The exact function and use of the aristocracy shall be examined later but here it is only necessary to first establish that an aristocracy did exist before examining their religious role.

It is possible that we may see, as Malalas did, that Constantine created a new aristocracy devoid of pagans, made up entirely of Christians (XIII:323). However the religion of the Senators and the people was more likely a mixture, there would have been Christians, but still there would be many Pagans. For the aristocratic populations it is worth remembering that conversion had been a gradual process as described by so many authors such as Brown (1961), Van Dam (1985) and Trombley (1994). One important political position that is missing from Constantinople, and whose absence is extremely important is any bishop of Constantinople. If

Constantine had created a Christian city we would certainly expect to see a bishop, yet we do not. There was no bishop of Constantinople at the council of Nicaea<sup>11</sup>, and it was not until 381 that the city began to make its spiritual muscle felt (Beck 1979:31). Indeed one can suggest that if Constantine had wished for Constantinople to have had any kind of spiritual might in the Christian world then holding a council at Nicaea would have under-mined such a possibility.

On a more general note we should remember that the people in Constantinople were not all Christians, this is one point of which we can have no doubt. Trombley makes a convincing case that in the cities, where the Bishops and Churches were, no real signs of total conversion appeared till the early Fifth Century (Trombley 1994:34). Paganism continued, and Harl suggests that part of the reason was “a reverence for a cultural legacy by pagan aristocrats” (1990:18). We should remember that Emperors were often insecure against a Pagan backlash, for example laws were passed against predicting the future and other such pre-emptive measures taken (Trombley 1994:53). Estimates of the pagan population vary but it was certainly still very substantial in Constantinople (Dagron 1974:139-40 and 377-8).

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<sup>11</sup> See Tanner 1990 for details of the Christian bishops present at the council of Nicaea.

## **Conclusion**

We cannot say that Constantinople was a Christian city as there was too much ambiguity around it. The statue of Sol Invictus was so certainly a pagan symbol in the middle of the city, and alongside it we can place the old Greek city, still pagan, and still important in Constantine's reign. We do have Christian symbols and images, the mausoleum, the image in the palace and the symbols that Eusebius describes as filling the city. Yet they were around and amongst a great many pagan symbols as well. There was the Hippodrome full of pagan statues and the Imperial Palace that would very likely have contained many symbols and images. It says a lot that Eusebius avoids putting emphasis on the city, indeed we must note his lack of interest in the city as being religious in nature, for Christianity was what Eusebius was fundamentally interested in. Likewise other sources do not describe the city as Christian, and we know from other cities that the people in this era were not universally Christian, in the same way they were not universally pagan. Perhaps most tellingly of all, we do not have any churches from this period and they would surely be the most fundamental factor in accepting Constantinople as being a Christian city.

## CHAPTER 4:

### WAS CONSTANTINOPLE FOUNDED TO REPLACE ROME?

#### **Introduction**

We must now re-trace our steps and examine once again many of the elements already viewed but we must question them with different motives, we must ask whether it appears that Constantinople was founded to supplant Rome as the capital of the Empire. To do this we shall again examine the content of the city, we must see if it appears that Constantine has built monuments or used images that imply a break with Rome, or indeed an absorption of Roman culture and identity. The issue of Constantinople being founded to supplant Rome is one that certainly appears in the sources. Dagron interprets Zosimus' work as implying that Zosimus saw Constantinople as founded to be the anti-Rome (1974:21). There is this possibility that Constantinople was founded to supplant Rome but Dagron points out that the sources often mention the city when talking about renewal suggesting that the city united the Empire as opposed to dividing it (1974:25). In many of the *breviaria* their descriptions of unity come just before a mention of Constantinople (in Victor for example he mentions "Constantine turned his noble spirit away from political struggles by founding a city" (41:13)) the importance of this implication is that the sources seem to associate Constantinople with renewal of the Empire and not breaking it apart. However, many of the sources do mention Constantinople being founded to rival Rome, this surely is a contradiction with the association of Constantinople and unity, but this is not necessarily the case. When authors such as Eutropius describe Constantinople being



raised to “such heights that it emulated Rome” (X:8) it does not necessarily mean that Constantinople was founded to supplant Rome. It was possible that this was merely a simile suggesting that the city was grand and beautiful.

### **The Dates of the Founding of Constantinople**

The date on which Constantinople was founded is important to us for Constantine’s reign was one of shifting priorities and it important to understand when the city was founded as this may well reveal what attitude Constantine took towards the city through it’s relation to his general policies. We cannot date the founding any earlier as 324 as this was the date at which the battle of Chrysopolis occurred and the date at which the territory came into Constantine’s possession. Krautheimer believes that from its very conception in 324 Constantinople was laid out already to be a capital (1983:43). He cites the vast amount of land set aside to be houses as the great size of the Hippodrome (up to 50,000 people) and the numerous important buildings, including the new senate house, palace and cathedral, as all suggesting that the city was laid out to be a capital from its conception (1983:43). Krautheimer suggests that from 324 the entire city was planned out to be a capital. An original date of 324 is also given by Alföldi (1947:11) for the original founding of the city but he did not believe that all the buildings were intended to be built in 324; he believes there was a later stage of building and that this was when Constantinople was intended to be a capital. We can be certain that there was a festival held in 330 to celebrate the dedication. Alföldi believes there was a change in attitude that coincided with the death of Crispus (326) as suggested by Zosimus (II:32:1). What Alföldi suggests is that the intrigue that occurred due to Constantine’s part in the murder of Crispus caused a rift

between Constantine and the Roman aristocracy, to escape this rift he went eastwards to found his new city (1947:11).

What we know for certain was that enough of the city was constructed by 330 for its dedication (Malalas (XIII:320)). One ought to be hesitant to accept the completion of any of the buildings in the city to before 330 except for the forum and porphyry column. The reason for this is that the symbol occurs on the coinage of Constantine until 324 (Bruun 1966:48), a reasonably immediate ordering of the construction of the column seems likely as the idea he abandoned this symbol on his coinage and then resurrected it on the statue anywhere up to six years later is far-fetched (Mango 1993:III:4). We cannot be sure of an exact date for many of the other buildings. A reasonable estimate for the beginning of more work is given by Socrates (EH I:16), he designates the re-construction of churches by Constantine as occurring just after the *vicennalia* (July 325 or 327<sup>12</sup>). The majority of the building work would have been completed by around 335, as Dagron points out (1974:33) Julian says Constantine built most of his city in ten years (Oration for Constans:6).

The suggestion of at least two different stages in the founding of Constantinople seems extremely likely. Not only do the forum and the porphyry column appear to belong to an earlier stage in Constantine's use of imagery they are also built in a different place to other buildings. The forum was built outside the old city of Byzantium, the palace; senate house and possibly the cathedral were all inside the old city. The Hippodrome was likely to have been one of the first monuments that Constantine had rebuilt, the importance of this site being the political and

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<sup>12</sup> This depends on which *vicennalia* for Constantine celebrated two, one in Nicomedia and one in Rome, the second date is more likely as John Malalas described the founding occurring after a trip from Rome to Byzantium (XIII:319:7) and in 325 he was going from the East to Rome and 326-7 he was traveling from Rome Eastwards reaching Constantinople in 327 (Bruun 1966:77).

ideological importance of the hippodrome, as already seen. I would strongly enforce Alfoldi's suggestion of two stages in the construction of Constantinople, an initial phase in which the wall was expanded and the forum and porphyry put up in the recent aftermath of Chrysopolis. It was completed with a second phase occurring shortly after Constantine's return from the *vicennalia*.

That Constantinople was initially founded to supplant Rome from 324 was extremely unlikely. As has been illustrated the first initial buildings were an expansion of the city walls and the porphyry column and forum, neither of which give the intention of the city being founded as a new capital. The majority of the buildings began to be constructed around 325 after the *vicennalia* of Constantine. These two periods of construction are important as they likely illustrate two periods of interest in the site. While there does appear to be a change in attitude towards Constantinople in 326-7, a decision to create a more monumental city with the construction of the hippodrome, senate house and other buildings, it was not because Constantine wished to supplant Rome, simply that he wished to have his own monumental site as his home. He had already shown an interest in the site after his victory at Chrysopolis and so it was only natural that if he were to pick a site to make his new home this would be a good site.

It is tempting to consider some major conflict between the Romans and Constantine but this is hard to accept. Our main source to describe the conflict between Constantine and Rome was Zosimus but he is problematic. As Ridley points out Zosimus was upset at the abandonment by Constantine of many old Roman traditions (1982:xiii) and this is why he did not like Constantine. The other sources are mostly silent on an argument between Constantine and Rome so I do not believe that Constantine was at odds with Rome, indeed Eusebius tells us that the people of Rome wished to have the Emperors body when he died (IV:60:4) and

presumably if Rome had been at odds with Constantine then Eusebius would have been at odds with the Roman people. But he is not, he still calls Rome the Imperial city (IV:69:2) and does not appear to have any malicious feelings towards it.

Rivalry between the new and old capitals is constantly present in the sources, many authors describe Constantinople being founded to rival Rome and this is a theme that must be examined further. It is no surprise that Zosimus throws up the charges of debauchery and bad behaviour, that had always been a traditional way to throw slander on people and in particular on Easterners. To use Augustus as an example it is well-known how he used to insult his rival Mark Antony for his ties to the East<sup>13</sup> Yet we should stray from assuming that people who disliked Constantine and Constantinople did so for religious reasons. We have pagan sources who admired him as well as Christian ones. As for Christian sources, it is not surprising they were mostly positive; Constantine did become something of a mythical hero in Byzantium (Scott 1994:61). In general we must make the connection, as described and focused on by Dagron, that Constantinople is often described in sections in which authors describe the Empire being united (1974:25).

### **Hippodrome: Site of the absorption of Rome**

We have already seen how the Hippodrome was a site that contained many old Pagan symbols and thus appears to be a non-Christian site. We must now examine whether the Hippodrome was built to usurp Roman ideology, this proposition has been examined by Bassett

(1991). In this context while some monuments were relatively standard in their places in the Hippodrome, monuments commemorating gods, athletes, victory and leaders, there is one group of monuments one is surprised to find in Constantinople, monuments devoted to Roman images.

Bassett points out that the first statue, a wolf with the twins Romulus and Remus represents two different possibilities. On the one hand the wolf and twins are related to the festival of the Lupercalia that took place in the hippodrome. Yet this festival itself, linked to the founding of Rome is also an example of Constantinople appropriating Rome's past (Bassett 1991:92). Likewise the second image, of a sow and piglets, recalls Rome's heritage with the legend of Aeneas, Aeneas was told he would found a city, race and empire where he saw a white sow suckling thirty piglets (Bassett 1991:93). These two sets of statues both highlighted the connection with Rome, indeed it is possible they did in fact come from Rome, (1991:93). Another statue taken from Rome was the Lysippan Herakles, the importance of this statue is emphasized by Bassett. This statue, taken from Rome, implied "the absorption of the old city's traditions into those of the new. In this case however the traditions referred to were not ancient, quasi-mythical events but documented historical proceedings that proclaimed the triumph of Roman power. What was implied was "not only the Constantinopolitan absorption of Roman tradition, but also the assimilation of the old city's power, authority, and prestige." (Bassett 1991:93).

The "Serpent Column" was erected originally in commemoration of Greek success in defeating Persia and preserving Greece from Persian rule. In the Imperial context of the hippodrome it can be interpreted as implying Constantinople was the new protector of civilization (Bassett 1991:94). Finally the 'Ass and Keeper' was originally erected by Augustus

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<sup>13</sup> For Augustan propaganda against Mark Antony see Zanker 1988

to celebrate his success, consolidation of power and creation of the Principate. By removing the statue to Constantinople it “recalled these events and the ensuing evolution of Roman rule” and there is a possibility that it implied an analogy between Constantine and Augustus (Bassett 1991:95).

Four statues of important public figures statues existed; the first three were all great leaders, Julius Caesar, Augustus and Diocletian (Bassett 1991:92) and the fourth Theophanes of Mytilene. Their importance as symbols is great for it is likely, as Bassett points out, that they provided some kind of evocation of Rome’s Golden Age. By this one can interpret Julius Caesar and Augustus as great Republican and early Imperial figureheads while Diocletian was great for his stabilizing of the late empire. Bassett makes the important connection between the presence of these statues and the Arch of Constantine in Rome, both evoking a golden past (1991:91). Theophanes was seen as being representative of the link between the provinces and the Imperial city as Theophanes was responsible for bringing the Mytilenes into the Empire (1991:92). This connection is worth investigating as it highlights the legal question of where Constantinople stood in relation to Rome. Constantinople was provided with independence from the city of Heraklia as described by John Malalas (XIII:323) and Socrates (I:16). It was given its own Praetors and suchlike as well as being granted Imperial status by the Emperor. This means that we must view Constantinople as being superior to many other cities; it was an Imperial city, but a capital?

Thus these statues also contained strong political messages. This message was the creation of an Imperial environment in the Hippodrome. Bassett is surely correct to assert that the multiple examples of uniquely Roman statues, something that does not occur in any other

circus, is a large part in the possibility that Constantinople was portraying itself as “New Rome” (Bassett 1991:95). Bassett also identifies an important issue in that although all of these statues were “Roman” they did not exist in the context in which they found themselves in Constantinople; their context consisted of many monuments taken from many different places to create a new artificial Roman environment (Bassett 1991:95). The use of *Spolia*, of taking monuments from Rome and placing them in the Hippodrome at Constantinople is to be seen as a form of absorption of the past of Rome into the city of Constantinople. Bassett highlights how the presence of Roman statues in a “Rome-like ambience” would have implied the transfer of power from Rome to Constantinople (Bassett 1991:94). Yet while Bassett tells us that the monuments were absorbed into Constantinople through their abduction as *Spolia* we must ask absorbed into what? There was no culture to be a base on which new monuments could be linked onto. While Bassett is correct that *Spolia* implied the conquest and absorption when Rome conquered other cities this was because monuments were taken from other cities and “tantamount to dragging the city away in chains” (1991:92). The citizens of Rome knew their city was powerful and capable of defeating other cities, but are we truly to believe that Constantinopolitans thought their city had metaphorically conquered Rome, after all many of them probably originally came from Rome.

This is surely not the case, the message was about Constantine, not the city, and the message was that Constantine was Emperor able to perform these grand acts of moving the heritage of Rome around. In this way he attached the monuments to himself personally, they were positioned where they were because he had moved them there, thus he was powerful. Socrates tells us that people were not really interested in the monuments in the city, they were superfluous (1: 16). This is a critical point for although it seems unlikely that the statues were

superfluous I suggest that what happened was that people were under no illusions of the importance of the city. They did not believe that the city had suddenly adopted Rome's past and heritage simply that in their city Constantine had expressed his power through the procurement of numerous monuments. Let us bear in mind that Zosimus describes the Hippodrome as being decorated "beautifully" (II:31). To Zosimus the act of building the Hippodrome was embodied by a need to display beauty, Zosimus was an extreme believer in the heritage and past of the Empire than the Hippodrome, if it were the site of the absorption of Rome's heritage, would be exactly the kind of site that he would attack. Instead he does not; he treats it as a work of beauty.

Surely then the Hippodrome symbolizes the creation of a Constantinian arena of great Imperial power and strength, Constantine can do what he wants, but it does not supplant Rome. The monuments and their symbolic display of strength are such that if Constantine had simply wished to display his imperial authority the only readily available palette of symbolism and design he could draw on would have been Roman ideology. In a sense therefore he would always have appeared to have been copying and dominating Rome's past. This is because the creation of the 'Rome-like ambience' was necessary for Constantine to portray himself as a powerful individual.

### **Mausoleum: Site of Constantine's Burial**

The mausoleum of Constantine can be linked quite strongly with the mausoleum that was built by Augustus. Zanker in his examination of the imagery used by the Emperor Augustus perceives the mausoleum to have been used and created with an express ideological

purpose, he built the mausoleum in Rome to highlight from very early on that he would be buried in Rome, the implication that Mark Antony would have buried himself in Egypt, thus highlighting Augustus' loyalty to Rome and Italy (Zanker 1988:65). A mausoleum was, in the age of Augustus a statement of power and a symbol of the importance of the Emperor (Zanker 1988:65). The connection must be made here between Augustus' mausoleum and Constantine's. Augustus' was a statement of power, and so surely was Constantine's. That the mausoleum highlighted Augustus' intimate connection with Italy surely allows us to conclude that Constantine's mausoleum showed he was to be associated with Constantinople. This would appear to highlight a rivalry between the cities, yet this was not necessarily true. Helena was buried in Rome, surely a statement that Constantine still revered Roman tradition (Eusebius III:47). We must see how personally attached Constantine was to Constantinople, he saw it as his city, as so many of the sources suggest, and this was why he wished to be buried there. After Constantine died there was an argument over where his remains were to be buried, and Constantinople won (Eusebius VC IV:69-70). This does indicate some rivalry, but surely it is rivalry devolved more from a willingness to honour the city's patron than a desire to take over from Rome. Once again one must highlight the personal connection between Constantine and Constantinople.

### **Aristocracy: A new Aristocracy for a new Capital?**

Of great importance when studying Constantinople is an examination of the aristocracy. As Dagron believes there is a strong possibility that Constantine created a new aristocracy and upper class in direct conflict with that of Rome (1974:120-1). Any changes or increase in the

size of the senate would therefore be important to note and we know that there was a reform of the senate (Jones: Later Roman Empire 106-7), this is known from sources such as the Latin panegyric (X:35), Zosimus (II:31:3) and Sozomen (II:3:4). Heather has done extensive work on the aristocracy and suggests that it was created as a governing elite of the East. The early phase of Constantine's senate in Constantinople likely included the creation of praetorships as a high ranking government official, and the creation of aristocrats of a rank lower than their Roman counter-parts (Heather 1994:12). We know there were not many aristocrats in Constantinople, Constantius II had to re-orientate many of the Eastern senators to have them based in Constantinople in contrast to Rome, likewise he "strengthened" the senatorial orders in a series of "recruitment drives"<sup>14</sup> (Heather 1994:12-13).

Heather considers the aristocracy to have been created as a means of control, that Constantine had conquered the East but had no contacts and few hopes of controlling the East without some sort of senior official aid (Heather 1994:15). It was this need for control that forced him to live in the East for a great deal of time and found a new city to house his aristocrats (Heather 1994:15). If true this would certainly suggest that Constantinople was set up to rival Rome politically as it would have controlled the East. However such an idea does not seem likely, if Constantine had been primarily concerned with economics and keeping control in the East the foundation of his city at Constantinople makes little sense. He could have won over vast tracts of the Eastern aristocracy by regenerating one of the great Eastern cities, say Antioch or Alexandria, by favouring one of these cities he could have got the aristocracy from that city on his side. In addition we must note that the new aristocracy founded by

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<sup>14</sup> See Peter Heather (1994: 12-13) for a description of the measures taken to attempt to enhance the numbers of aristocrats in the Constantinopolitan capital. his measures are based on works that mention their adoption into the

Constantine was insufficient to be considered a new governing elite as it required vast expansion in future years. Instead we must assume that creating Constantinople was not motivated by a desire to create a base for a new governing elite.

Against this purely economical role Dagron saw the senate having an extra purpose. Dagron considered the senate not to have been too important in a government sense, though they were undoubtedly responsible for holding government positions in the city of Constantinople itself; this was not their primary motive. Instead Dagron considers the primary use for the senate was that it was a method through which the Emperor was able to bind himself to the traditions of Rome (1974:141). After all, he argues, the keepers of Rome's past were the aristocrats who in their education and lifestyle provided a strong link with Rome's heritage. Thus by providing a place in the city for aristocrats Dagron believed that the senate played a social and ideological role but not a political role, allowing Constantine to emphasize that he was a proper and legitimate Emperor (1974:146).

An important point to consider with regard the aristocracy is that Constantinople was not necessarily a new city that found favour with all. Dagron emphasizes the cost of the founding of Constantinople let alone the actual cost once the city had been set up and started taking taxes. Constantinople would have only been possible through the use of Licinius' treasury, captured after Chrysopolis in 324. Into this treasury would have been added the goods taken from the pagan treasures that Constantine had taken (1974:34). Accepting that the city put economic strain on many of the Eastern cities Wiemer suggests another point of resentment, widespread distaste at the creation of a centre of Western culture in the middle of the Greek East (Wiemer 1994:519). Libanius suggests very strongly that there was not a very positive attitude to

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senate by authors such as Celsus and Iamblichus.

Constantine's founding of his new city in the East. He left it out of his earlier speeches (Wiemer 1994:514) but then concentrated on the negative aspects of the foundation in terms of increased taxes and the decline of city councils in this period (Wiemer 1994:519). What one can conclude is that Constantinople was not a new city that found favour with all in the East, this is far from the truth, and one can see senators such as Libanius disgusted at the cost and impact on the Eastern aristocrats and they were extremely resentful.

### **The Coins of Constantinople: Theft of a city**

The image of Constantinople appears on the coins of Constantine after 324, the date that marked a turning point for Constantinian coin designs as it coincided with the defeat of Licinius and the beginning of Constantine's rule as a single Emperor. It is the adoption of the Tyche of Constantinople on the coins in addition to that of Rome that implies conflict between the cities. One must thus look at the relationship between the cities.

Alföldi suggests the attributes given on coins to the Tyche of Rome were also intended for use with Constantinople as when they both appear on medallions they face each other implying a mutual respect, and thus the new Tyche of Constantinople is intended to signify both the new city and Rome itself, as the "mistress of peace, victory, and abundance" (1947:16).

Of importance is a new method of portraying Rome on a series of Constantinian medals, she is now portrayed not in the same way that she had been, she has gone from being the "product of a magnificent historical past" to "a creation of the alembic of the Emperor's almighty power" (1947:16). What this means is she no longer is the pinnacle of the past of Rome but is instead considered inferior to the Emperor and is used merely as a part of the

Emperor's symbols of Imperial magnificence. This image signifying the past is accompanied by the wolf from the legend of Romulus and Remus, and she looks backwards and is dressed in old fashioned clothes (1947:16). However in the very act of abusing the Tyche of Rome I believe Constantine is also emphasizing the greatness, durability, heritage and strength of the Roman image. As Emperor Constantine could take or abuse virtually everything about Rome, its statues, people, buildings and the Tyche, but what he could not take was the heritage and prestige that Rome owned.

Bruun demonstrates two new designs of coins minted when Constantine was elevated to Caesar in 333 that show the association of Constantinople with the Imperial family and with the unity and safety of the Empire, (Bruun 1966:563). These designs continue until the end of Constantine's reign (Bruun 1966:565). These gold coins can be combined with the bronze coins that show very firmly the *GLORIA EXERCITVS* style, consisting of soldiers and standards, signifying the importance of stability, the army and unity. If one reminds oneself when Bruun remarks that the bronze coins constitute the main thrust of the policy behind coin design and the gold coins provide the individual moments inside the reign one is able to begin drawing conclusions. Instead of believing Constantinople was built to rival Rome we can conclude that the theme he wished to pursue was stability and loyalty, the repeated issues of bronze coins praising the army and gold coins praising the loyalty and stability and 'togetherness' of Constantine and his sons. It is a repetitive period of coin design, from the 330 bronze coinage is dominated by symbols of security and vigilance. In this policy we must observe Constantinople not as a figure of disruption but see the city as being portrayed as being part of the Empire, and connected with Rome. Constantinopolitan minted coins bore the image of Rome on them, while Roman minted coins bore the image of Constantinople. While Constantine drummed out series

after series of coins that emphasized the unity and safety of the Empire, an undercurrent is the equality and duality of Rome and Constantinople. While one must admit that the Tyche of Rome is 'muscle' in on by the Tyche of Constantinople this does not necessarily prove that Constantinople was usurping Rome. By emphasizing the age of Rome he is attempting to take some of the heritage and history of the great city and connect it with Constantinople, and by linking it with Constantinople it is associated with Constantine, a man who was desperate to highlight stability in his Empire as we can see by the bronze coinage.

## CONCLUSION

### **City of Constantine**

In complete contrast to Krautheimer Dagron suggests that the city promoted a victory of the idea that Rome as an Empire and state could continue, not a victory of Constantine over Licinius, but that the city represented the continuation of the Roman Empire in its usual form as opposed to a divided Empire that it had been, certainly in the civil war. This compares very strongly with Krautheimer's belief that the city was founded to divide the Empire, to break the Pagan structures up and create a new Christian Empire. Dagron does not believe this, instead he would say the Empire was strengthened and Constantinople was built to show the triumph of old Roman ideals (1974:26). Dagron highlights that many of the sources included Constantinople in the same breath that they spoke about unity in the Empire, the end of civil war and peace (1974:25). Dagron implied that Constantinople was seen as a direct consequence of the reunification of the Empire; that it allowed the two halves of the Empire to remain interlinked. Indeed Dagron asserts that while Rome itself was strong then Constantinople was not separate from the old capital (1974:26). His suggestion that Constantinople was a little pocket of Rome in the East is very attractive indeed (1974:542). Dagron would thus maintain that we cannot accuse Constantinople of being founded to supplant Rome, to supplement it yes, but not to supplant it. Krautheimer when he originally suggested Constantinople was a Christian capital was underestimating the gravitational pull of Rome, of this we must be certain.

To conclude I would highlight that we know Constantine was inseparably linked with Constantinople, he was buried there and the city bears his marks all over it. However it was not Constantine that made the city last and that ultimately made the city become the capital. If Constantine had died and not been succeeded by his dynasty he would perhaps have faded into the past as another usurper. If Constantine had died and not been replaced by one of his dynasty then Constantinople would very likely have faded into the past as a failed construction. The importance of the city to Constantine is well documented by sources such as the *Anonymus Valesianus* suggesting Constantine decorated the city as if it were his home city, he considered it his home (see Dagron 1974:27 and Lieu and Montserrat 1996:30). A remark attributed to Constantine that “My Rome is Sardica” has been interpreted to mean that wherever the Emperor happened to be then that was where the center of the Empire was (Dagron 1974:27). This can be said to have changed in 324 when he gives his name to the residence of Constantinople, when he founds *his* Rome (Dagron 1974:27).

Yet all this and the other elements discussed are suggesting is that Constantine founded this city for himself as part residence and part ideological stronghold. Other sources we have emphasize the name of the city, implying the link between Emperor and city was strong through their shared name, Eutropius (X:8) and the *Anonymus Valesianus* (Lieu and Montserrat 1996:40) for example. This city was a hot-bed of pro-Constantine imagery and a real support for his cause. The Hippodrome gives him legitimacy by emphasizing his connection with Rome and his power, the statue emphasizes his strength and importance and so on. It is no surprise that Christian ideology falls at the way-side for Constantine was surely in a winning position while the religion of the city could be interpreted either way, able to call on both Pagan and Christian ideology. As Dagron highlights, a motive that occurs in writings about the foundation is often

of vanity and a desire to set up a home for Constantine (in particular Zosimus (II:29:1), and Eunapius (462)), and there is no reason why we should not expect a bit of vanity to have crept into Constantine's thinking, he was Emperor after all (1974:26). If we look at the work of Themistius we shall see this very strongly in play.

Themistius in his oration given to Constantius reveals that he considered Constantinople as inferior to Rome; "Nor is she ashamed for the future to stand in the second rather than in the front rank and is not aggrieved or distressed because it is here that you are holding the first celebrations of victory for those feats of prowess and triumphs for which she sent support and mobilized" (3:42c-d and Heather 2001:121). Themistius spoke glowingly about Constantinople, but also in a manner that is extremely revealing, Themistius talks about what Constantius has done to build up Constantinople, the city is described as having been Constantius', not Constantine's anymore "she is herself, in her entirety, your crown and votive offering" (3:41a). Constantinople is described as the "fair city" as opposed to Rome which is described as the "worlds summit" (3:41b) and "city which rules cities" (3:41c). Such a difference in terminology can surely be linked with Eusebius who consistently avoids calling Constantinople the Imperial city, it is the city that bears the Emperor's name (III:48:1), but Rome is still the Imperial city (IV:69:2).

Another issue raised by Themistius is the possibility that amongst contemporary people it was generally considered that Constantinople would fail after Constantine "almost all men thought that the city's good fortune would die along with your father, you did not permit or allow this, nor have you made the city conscious of the change, but, if truth be told, have generated a great consciousness of improvement" (3:46c-47a). This reveals the likelihood that Constantinople was considered to be only a temporary construction, that it was the continued

work of Constantius that ensured the survival of the city and in addition the expansion of the senate by Constantius was surely a sign of prolonged interest in the city, for a desire to promote the senate is a more permanent attempt to ensure the success of a city (Heather 2001:121). The difference is highlighted when Themistius says “The whole city was the object of your contest and ambitious rivalry and it is now difficult to determine to whom she more justly belongs: to him who sowed the seeds [Constantine] or him who nurtured and brought them to fruition” (3:48b-c). This suggests that Constantinople was renewed and built with new vigor by Constantius, this is emphasized when Themistius says

“Your city differs from your father’s in more respects than his did from its predecessor and has progressed to a true and permanent beauty from an artificial and ephemeral one. She was previously, it seems, the object of desire for an impatient lover eager to satisfy the eye so that even as she glittered she grew old. But the adornment with which you have dressed her, is designed for lasting beauty and, outstripping the ephemeral in her fresh bloom, she certainly surpasses the most ancient cities in her permanence” (3:47c-48a).

What can be seen from here is that Themistius believed Constantinople was a beautiful city but had no permanence, he in particular was interested in the senate and he saw it as an institution that was not a real institution in the early days of Constantinople. This attitude changed with Constantius who kick-started the senatorial aristocracy and also began to make the city a more permanent landmark in the Empire (Heather 2001:122-3). This is important for it suggests that Constantinople was known to be different and was known to be linked with Constantine yet it did not help raise the profile of Constantius in the same way that it did

Constantine. Constantine built this city for him, to highlight his power, his ideology and not as some long-term process.

There can be no question that the future removal of saints' relics and the movement of monuments were motivated in a large way to provide a heritage for Constantinople (see Ward-Perkins 2000). Ward-Perkins identifies such a movement as being necessary to rearrange the ideological geography of the Empire, to suit the reality of late Roman imperial power that eventually it did shift eastwards from Rome (2000:327). This again highlights the lack of an Imperial feel to Constantinople.

Certainly the ideology had begun to change with the foundation of Constantinople. Yet I do not believe the primary motive in the foundation was to provide an alternative capital. It is true that the Emperor no longer felt tied to the city of Rome, he was capable of moving away from Rome and living in a separate city. He was capable of adapting the traditions and beliefs of the Roman people and taking them away from Rome, the Hippodrome is a very good example of this as Constantine took essentially Roman ideals and removed them from the Circus Maximus. Yet we do not see anything that proves conclusively that Constantinople was intended to be something new and special, the 'New Rome' Instead it was the first step in the removal of power from Rome and re-ordering of the ideological center of the Empire. This first step was the desire of the Emperor to construct a separate domain to live in. The re-ordering of a new capital that occurred later, the new senators and so forth, was indicative of large problems in the original founding that made it unable to be considered as a capital. We must certainly accept that Constantine laid the seeds for the removal of Roman power to Constantinople, yet I would suggest that this was only accidental in what were his primary motives. He was concerned with building a home suitable for an Emperor, and this is why we see so many

monuments, such as the statue of Sol Invictus and the Mausoleum that highlight not the power of Constantinople, but the power of Constantine.

## APPENDIX I

### **Constantinople**

47 The Emperor thus constructed the fine buildings described in the region of Palestine in the aforesaid manner. But throughout all the provinces he also furnished newly built churches, and so made them far higher in public esteem than their predecessors.

48 In honouring with exceptional distinction the city which bears his name, he embellished it with very many places of worship, very large martyr-shrines, and splendid houses, some standing before the city and others in it. By these he at the same time honoured the tombs of the martyrs and consecrated the city to the martyrs' God. Being full of the breath of God's wisdom, which he reckoned a city bearing his own name should display, he saw fit to purge it of all idol-worship, so that nowhere in it appeared those images of the supposed gods which are worshipped in temples, nor altars foul with bloody slaughter, nor sacrifice offered as holocaust in fire, nor feasts of demons, nor any of the other customs of the superstitious.

49 You would see at the fountains set in the middle of squares the emblems of the Good Shephard, evident signs to those who start from the divine oracles, and Daniel with his lions shaped in bronze and glinting with gold leaf. So great was the divine passion which had seized the Emperor's soul that in the royal quarters of the imperial palace itself, on the most eminent building of all, at the very middle of the gilded coffer adjoining the roof, in the centre of a very large wide panel, had been fixed the emblem of the saving Passion made up of a variety of precious stones and set in much gold. This appears to have been made by the Godbeloved as a protection for his Empire.

54 In all these undertakings the Emperor worked for the glory of the Saviour's power. While he continued in this way to honour his Saviour God, he confuted this superstitious error of the heathen in all sorts of ways. To this end he stripped the entrances to their temples in every city so that their doors were removed at the Emperor's command. In other cases the roofs were ruined by the removal of the cladding. In yet other cases the sacred bronze figures, of which the error of the ancients had for a long time been proud, he displayed to all the public in all the squares of the Emperor's city, so that in one place the Pythian was displayed as a contemptible spectacle to the viewers, in another the Sminthian, in the Hippodrome itself the tripods from Delphi, and the Muses of Helicon at the palace. The city named after the Emperor was filled throughout with objects of skilled artwork in bronze dedicated in various provinces. To these under the name of gods those sick with error had for long ages vainly offered innumerable hecatombs and whole burnt sacrifices, but now they at last learnt sense, as the Emperor used these very toys for the laughter and amusement of the spectators.

## APPENDIX 2

For Constantinople, originally called Byzantium, in distant times used to furnish the Athenians with a regular supply of corn, and an enormous quantity was imported thence. But in our times neither the great fleet of merchant vessels from Egypt and from all Asia, nor the abundance of corn that is contributed from Syria and Phoenicia and the other nations as the payment of tribute, can suffice to satisfy the intoxicated multitude which Constantine transported to Byzantium by emptying other cities, and established near him because he loved to be applauded in the theatres by men so drunk that his name should be in their mouths, though so stupid were they that they could hardly pronounce the word.

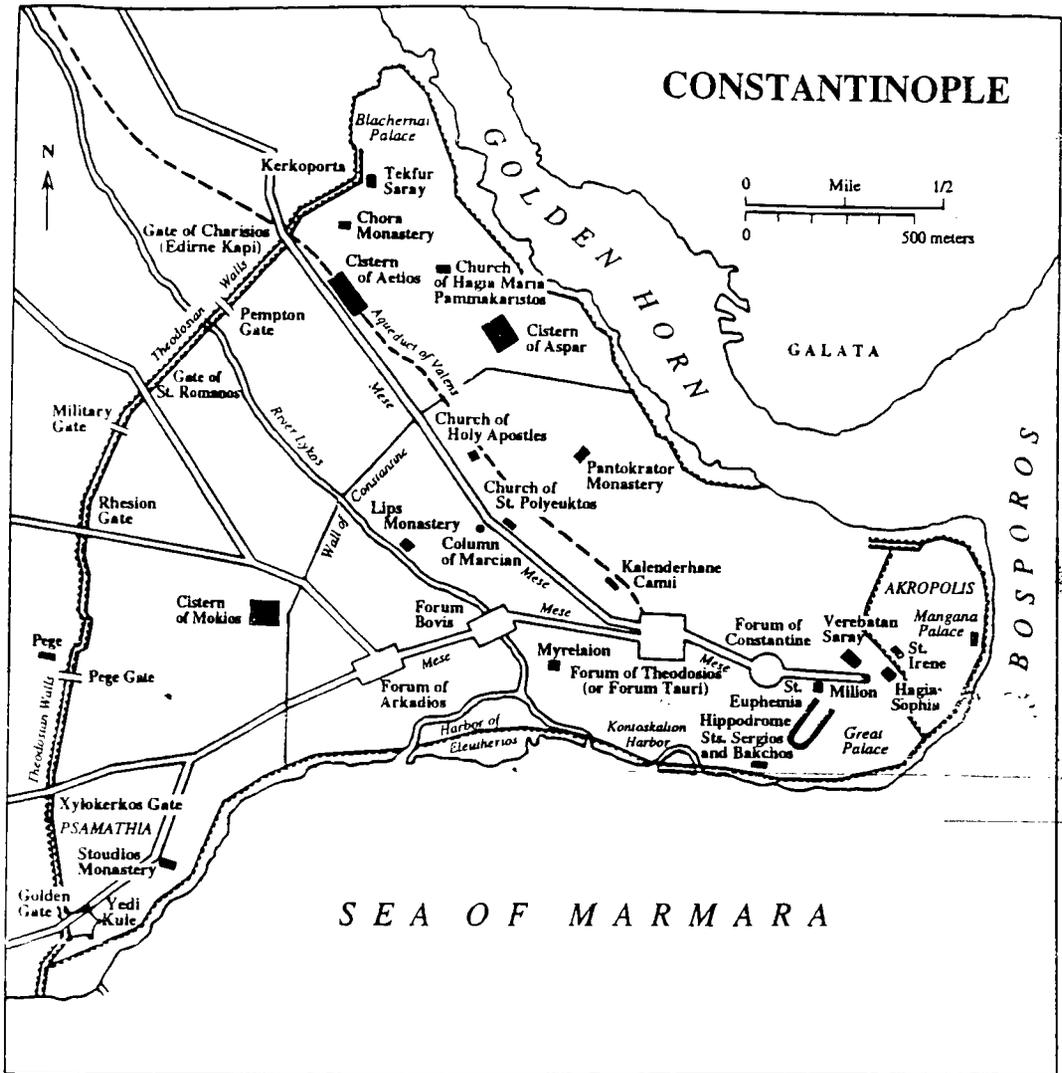
### **Eunapius, Lives of the Sophists 462.**

30. Unable to endure the curses if almost everyone, he sought out a city as a counterbalance to Rome, where he had to build a palace. When he found a place in the Troad between Sigeum and old Ilium suitable for constructing a city, he laid foundations and built part of the wall which can still be seen to this day as you sail towards the Hellespont, but he changed his mind and, leaving the work unfinished, went to Byzantium. (2) The site of the city pleased him and he resolved to enlarge it as much as possible to make it a home fit for an emperor; for the city stands on a hill which is part of that isthmus formed by the so-called Horn and the Propontis. Formerly it had a gate at the end of the portico built by the emperor Severus (3) and the wall used to run down from the western side of the hill to the temple of Aphrodite and the sea opposite Chrysolpolis. On the northern side of the hill the wall ran down the harbour called Neorion (The Docks) and thence to the sea which lies opposite the channel through which one enters the Black Sea. The length of this narrow channel leading into the sea is about three hundred stades. (4) This then was the extent of the old city.

Constantine built a circular forum where the gate used to be and surrounded it with double-roofed porticoes. He set two huge arches of Proconnesian marble opposite each other, through which one would enter the portico of Severus or go out of the old city. To make the city much larger, he surrounded it with a wall fifteen stades beyond the old one, cutting off the whole isthmus from sea to sea.

31. When he had thus enlarged the original city, he built a palace scarcely inferior to the one in Rome. He decorated the hippodrome most beautifully, incorporating the temple of the Dioscuri in it; their statues are still to be seen standing in the porticoes of the hippodrome. He even placed somewhere in the hippodrome the tripod of Delphic Apollo, which had on it the very image of Apollo. (2) There was in Byzantium a huge forum consisting of four porticoes, and at the end of one of them which has numerous steps leading up to it, he built two temples. Statues were set up in them, in one Rhea, mother of the gods, and in the other, the statue of Fortuna Romae. Houses were then built for the senators who accompanied him.

APPENDIX 3



**Constantinople**

Taken from Pohlsander (1996)

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