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THE URBAN IMAGE OF
LATE ANTIQUE
CONSTANTINOPE

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gathering has in effect been dematerialized. The ephemeral nature of the material makes it difficult to imagine its importance and extent. Evidence suggests, however, that among all the activities associated with the foundation of the capital, it was the gathering of antiquities that struck the most profound chord in the hearts and minds of contemporaries. Consider, for example, Jerome's trenchant report on the city's 324 foundation, a single sentence in the compendium of world history known as the *Chronicle*: "Constantinople was enriched with the nudity of almost every other city."⁴¹ It is a curious record. Contrary to expectation, there is no mention of the events surrounding the actual foundation or to the protagonists that shaped them. Instead, without once mentioning statuary or any other type of public monument, Jerome makes the decoration of the city his subject, describing the undertaking in the metaphorical language of the age. Because the remark is one about cities, the reference to "nudity" can only refer to one thing: civic decor, the architecture and sculpture that were the raiment of classical antiquity's great urban centers. As the emphasis on the stripping away of this raiment makes clear, it was the act of collecting in all of its empirewide rapaciousness, rather than the relatively circumscribed event of the foundation, that seized Jerome's imagination and with it that of his contemporaries.

This study is an effort to recognize that fact and in so doing to reclaim that pride of place for this great urban collection. To this end the essays in Part I will attempt to integrate the evidence for statuary in Part II with the larger, conceptual problems through which modern scholarship understands the age. By tradition and necessity, Chapter One will deal with the collection's urban setting, describing the fourth-century development of Constantinople in topographical terms. Chapter Two will set out the evidence for the mechanics of the collection's creation by examining the legal and administrative structure that allowed for the gathering's formation together with attitudes toward public monuments that contributed to the collection's particular development. Chapters Three, Four, and Five will address the Constantinian and Theodosian development of the collection, while Chapter Six will present the evidence for the Justinianic approach to reuse, noting a decline in the interest in antiquities and positing an explanation in changing attitudes toward the Hellenic past.

THE SHAPE OF THE CITY

ON SEPTEMBER 18, 324, WITH THE FINAL DEFEAT AT CHRYSOPOLIS IN BITHYNIA of his co-emperor, son-in-law, and arch-rival, Licinius, Constantine the Great became sole ruler of the Roman Empire for the first time since his proclamation as Caesar nearly twenty years before. This event, momentous in its own right, also had great significance for the urban history of the Roman world. Two months after his victory, on November 8,¹ after having considered and rejected at least one other possible location,² the emperor founded the city that would become known as Constantinople on the site of the old Greco-Roman town of Byzantium.³ With the selection of Byzantium, a town that had been founded in the seventh century B.C., razed by Septimius Severus in the late second century A.D., and then partially rebuilt, Constantine launched one of the greatest projects of urban renewal the ancient world had ever known. City limits were drawn, and an armature of colonnaded streets strung with rich palaces and monumental public gathering places was imposed on Byzantium's extant plan.⁴ Six years after this initial burst of building activity, on May 11, 330,⁵ the emperor and his attendant court oversaw the city's official dedication in a series of extended ceremonies that took place against the backdrop of a newly outfitted urban core of monumental architecture and sculpture.

The exact nature of this city and its dedication remain one of the open questions of Byzantine historiography. Although the main lines of Constantinopolitan development in the years leading up to the dedication are known, there is much about the fourth-century city that remains conjecture, both with respect to the concrete issues of urban topography and in regard to the ephemera of intent. In large part this state of affairs is because of the fragmentary nature of the surviving evidence. The little that was left of late antique Constantinople at the end of the fifteenth century has been absorbed into the modern fabric of Istanbul long since, and the literary and archaeological sources that allow its reconstruction are often lacunary and opaque,

making any but the most general observations regarding topographical development difficult if not impossible.

A similar lack of evidence hampers the assessment of intent. From as early as the fourth century, various claims have been made about Constantinople and its dedication. As befits the age, the discussion was carried on in terms of religion with some claiming the city for Christianity and others for pagan tradition. Shortly after the actual dedication, Eusebios of Caesarea wrote that Constantine had offered the city to "the god of all the martyrs," and by the sixth century when Christianity was the empire's dominant religion, a tradition of Christian dedication had grown up complete with a sense of the ritual associated with the event.⁶ At the same time, however, other sources describe the foundation ceremonies in terms of established pagan rite and state that Constantinople was dedicated not to Jesus Christ, but to the traditional Roman deity Tyche/Anhousa.⁷

The competing claims of the medieval historiographers echo throughout modern scholarship, with some arguing the case for Christian dedication and others for the pagan.⁸ All discussion has been resolutely partisan in its stance, assuming a correct answer lying on one side of the issue or the other. The purpose of this chapter is to build on and rethink some of the assumptions that drive these investigations to propose a new way of thinking about late antique Constantinople. Reexamination of the main lines of the city's fourth-century topographical development suggests that although religious concerns were indeed a component in determining urban structure, religious allegiance was never meant to be understood as an either/or proposition. Nor was it intended as the defining element in the urban mix. Far more important was the manipulation of site and plan to create a city that expressed not the primacy of a single religion, but a truth far more compelling, that of unrivaled imperial rule.

THE PRE-CONSTANTINIAN CITY

Byzantium was long in the making. Although the medieval Greek historiographers that record the beginnings of the Constantinian city emphasize the act of creation and in so doing obliterate any real sense of an urban past, the city that was conjured at the foundation and dedication ceremonies came into being on a site that had been occupied for nearly one thousand years. Founded in the early years of the seventh century B.C. on a peninsula jutting into the Sea of Marmora at the confluence of the Golden Horn and the Bosphoros, the city had had a long, if unremarkable, history

by the time Constantine turned his attention to development of the site. According to tradition, Byzas of Megara, the legendary founder, established a colony around 660 B.C. Over the centuries this foundation developed into a successful center of trade and commerce, deriving its wealth from fishing and, at intermittent points in its history, from customs tariffs levied on ships passing through the Bosphoros.⁹

Little is known of this early city's physical disposition. The original Megarian settlement appears to have been located on the high ground at the tip of the peninsula. As it developed, the settlement took hold on the northern side of the peninsula, leaving the southern shore relatively unpopulated. Temples dedicated to Artemis, Aphrodite, and Apollo stood on the acropolis together with their dependent buildings, and there was a temple to Poseidon at the point. Two harbors, port facilities on the Golden Horn, nestled at its foot. A military parade ground, the Strategion, stood to the west of the acropolis cluster and probably served as the city's original forum. There were also theaters, baths, and residential quarters on the hills sloping down to the sea. A fortification wall ran from the Golden Horn on the north across the promontory's hilly terrain before turning and terminating at the southeastern end of the promontory on the Marmora shore.¹⁰

Although prosperous, Byzantium was never distinguished in any military or cultural sense, and its political development was largely unremarkable for the better part of its early history. This situation changed in the last decade of the second century A.D. when the city found itself embroiled in a civil war between the emperor Septimius Severus and a rival imperial claimant, Pescennius Niger. At the time of the dispute, Byzantium came out in support of Pescennius. Thus, after Septimius defeated and killed the would-be usurper, the town was duly punished. From 193 to sometime in 195 or 196, the emperor laid siege to Byzantium. When the city eventually fell, he not only executed those who had sided with the usurper, but also destroyed the place outright, burning it and razing its walls.

Though radical, the destruction of Byzantium gave way to a monumental urban renewal (Figures 1 and 2). After stripping the city of its ancient name and identifying it with a new title, Colonia Antonina, in honor of his own dynastic line, Septimius Severus began the process of rebuilding, not, as might have been expected, with the reconstruction of the city walls, which appear to have been left in their ruined state, but rather with a development of an area to the south and west of the old acropolis that included five monumental components: colonnaded streets, or *emboloi*, a forum, or *agora*, a basilican complex, a public bath, and a circus, or *hippodrome*.¹¹

The colonnaded streets formed the backbone of the new development. Two avenues were built, one at the western and another at the southern limit of the

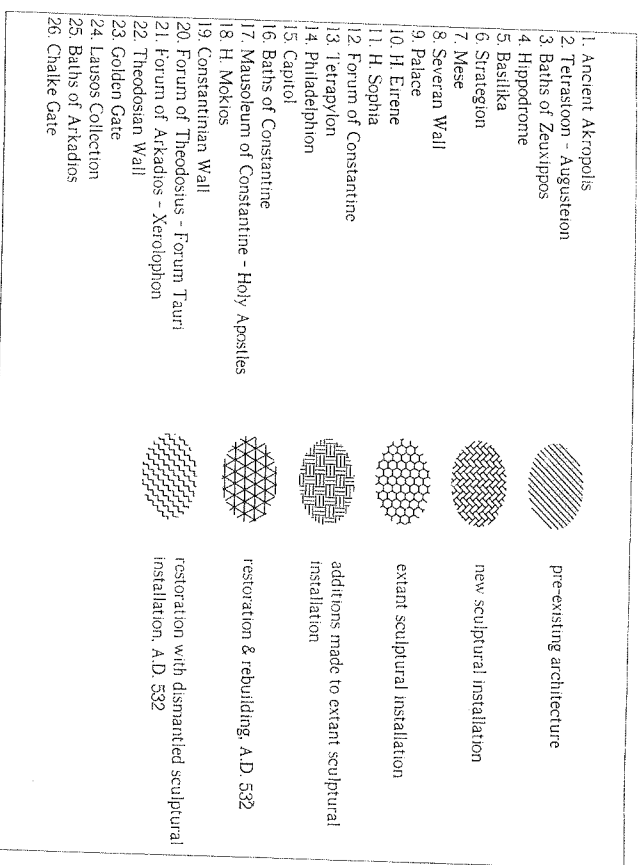


FIGURE 1: Legend for plans of Constantinople (Courtesy of Brian Madigan)

archaic city. The western avenue ran uphill from a point midway above the shore of the Golden Horn toward the center of the peninsula where it met with the second avenue, a shorter road that ran on an east-west trajectory at the southern edge of the old city settlement. A third street, the Mese, formed at the confluence of these roads and ran west to the city wall.¹²

Within this armature, the centerpiece of the Severan restoration was the forum known as the Tetrastoon.¹³ Built between the western and southern emboloi on a previously undeveloped track of land at the city's southwestern edge, the Tetrastoon was a large rectangular space surrounded on four sides by the stoa, or porticoes, that gave it its name. Other buildings clustered around this complex. To the west, on the other side of the embolos that ran north to the Golden Horn, stood another portico-enclosed complex, the Basilika.¹⁴ An imperial bath, known as the Zeuxippos,¹⁵ rose on the south side of the complex, while the last component of the Severan redevelopment project, a circus or hippodrome,¹⁶ stood next to the Zeuxippos on its southwest side.

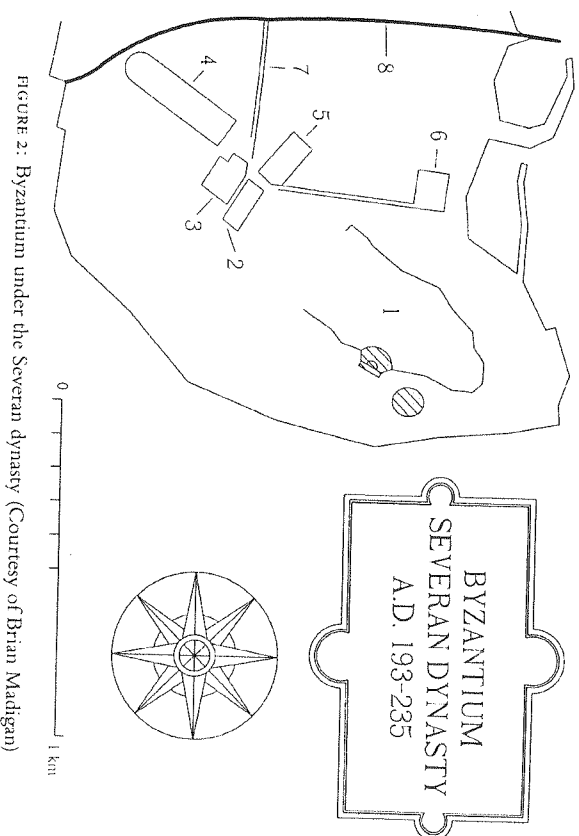


FIGURE 2: Byzantium under the Severan dynasty (Courtesy of Brian Madigan)

For reasons that are unclear, the Severan restoration was never completed. At least two of the five major projects, the Hippodrome and the Baths of Zeuxippos, remained unfinished at the time of the emperor's death in 211, and whether through lack of interest or some more practical reason like finance, Septimius's heirs abandoned the job. Nevertheless, even in its unfulfilled state, the project must have transformed the city. To begin with, construction of these buildings created a new urban appendage the monumentality and lavishness of which must have contrasted sharply with the narrow streets, confined spaces, and more modest buildings of the pre-Severan city. Although Constantinople doubtless remained small by comparison to Rome, the sheer scale of the Tetrastoon, with its unencumbered open space and enveloping marble peristyle, must have been startling in the context of the city's established architectural environment. Further, the controlled, systematic aspect of these spaces together with the institutions they housed are likely to have reframed the urban experience. Popular institutions like the public baths and the circus would have created new focal points for urban activity on the city's western edge that would have drawn the populace out of the archaic center. Finally, the nature of these institutions would have been transformative. In providing Byzantium with this complex of imperially sponsored foundations, the Severans dowered the city with

spaces and institutions that were essentially Roman and, as such, alien to the city's Greek experience.

Both the building typologies and the lavish nature of the construction in Severan Byzantium were in line with projects undertaken during this period in other cities of the Roman world. Colonnaded streets and plazas coupled with imposing public works projects such as baths and circuses characterized the revitalization of cities in the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa in the second and third centuries. Centers such as Ephesos and Miletos in Asia Minor, or Septimius's own home town of Lepcis Magna in North Africa, saw similar types of development transform their urban spaces.¹⁷ The distinctly public nature of such enterprises created new centers for human interaction on a grand scale. Further, the similarity in design and material from one city to the next engendered a sense of cultural cohesion that described shared participation in an urban society under the aegis of imperial Rome.¹⁸ Thus, in providing Byzantium with its new set of monumental forms, Septimius brought the city into the orbit of Rome, at once forgiving and obliterating the memory of civil insurrection. In short, through construction, urban development, and the concomitant introduction of imperial institutions, Septimius Severus redefined Byzantium as a typical Roman city, loyal to the emperor and his cause.

This then was the city that captured Constantine's imagination: an ancient settlement with a modern face that claimed participation in the traditions and destiny of imperial Rome through the very stuff of its building material. Apart from the obvious reasons of situation and strategy that made Byzantium a desirable setting for the emperor's new foundation, this built environment must have been part of the city's great appeal. Even in its incomplete state, it would have given the city the look of *romantitas*, that is of the common culture of the Roman imperial ideal, so essential for any urban center with the pretensions to grandeur implied by imperial patronage. What Byzantium offered was a springboard for the implementation of Constantine's urban vision.

THE CONSTANTINIAN CITY

The building activity attendant upon the foundation and dedication of Constantinople suggests the nature of that vision (see Figures 1-3). In the years between 324 and 330, a flurry of construction activity transformed Severan Byzantium. The emperor's first undertaking was to define the city limit by walking the perimeter, lance in hand. This act, a traditional *limitatio* of the type associated with Roman foundation

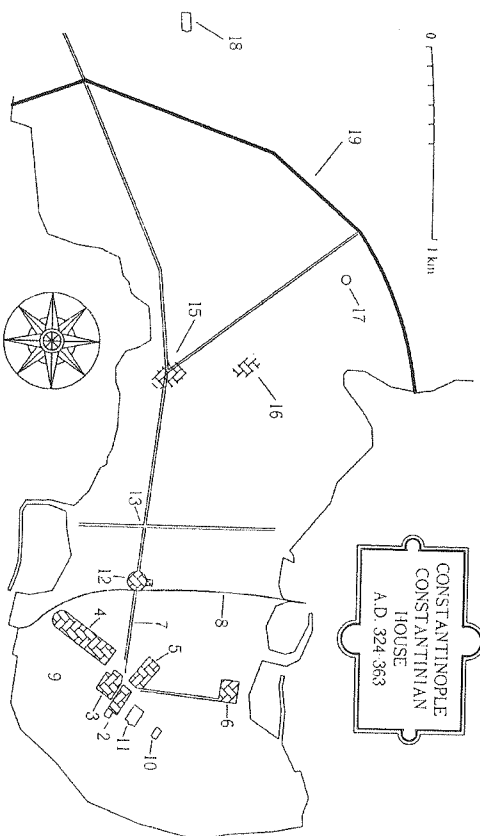


FIGURE 3: Constantinople under the Constantinian House (Courtesy of Brian Madigan)

rituals, extended the city's western boundary nearly three kilometers beyond the limit of the old wall almost quadrupling the urban territory.¹⁹ In the aftermath of this event and in keeping with the traditional protocol of city foundations, it is likely that divinations were made and a horoscope cast.²⁰ These rituals set the stage for construction of the Constantinian defensive circuit, a project that appears to have both renewed and extended the city's existing fortifications by restoring the extant sea walls along the Golden Horn and Propontis to the point at which they joined the new construction that in turn plugged into the land wall traveling in an arc across the peninsula.²¹

With the city girded, the emperor turned his attention to the adornment of its monumental core, focusing first on the potential of the languishing Severan projects. The monumental development that included the emboloi, the Tetrastoon, the Basilika, the Baths of Zeuxippos, and the Hippodrome became the cornerstone of the Constantinian plan. The extant streets and buildings were either completed or remodeled, thereby providing the city with a magnificent new center in and around which the institutions of the Constantinian city might coalesce.

As in the Severan city, the framework for this development was the series of monumental colonnaded streets. First among these arteries was the Mese, which was probably maintained in its Severan form, as were the avenue's shorter branches, its eastern extension running along the southern edge of the Tetrastoon and its northern

fork leading to the Strategeion. In recognition of its importance, Constantine marked the point at which these various avenues began with a large four-way arch or tetrapylon, the Milion.²²

The streets spreading out from the Milion created the framework around and along which the city developed. Standing at the western terminus of the Mese and bounded by the lesser emboloi to the south and west, the Severan Tetrastoon, rededicated as the Augusteion in honor of the emperor's mother, the Augusta Helena, stood at the heart of the Constantinian refurbishing. The extent to which Constantine and his planners actually remodeled the space remains unclear. The addition of a silver honorific statue of the Augusta gave the place its name.²³ Beyond this addition, however, there is no mention of any peristyle remodeling or modification of the building's footprint. Whether maintained in its Severan form or adjusted to Constantinian needs, the forum's scale remained grand. Exact dimensions are not known, and estimates range between 17,500 and 3,500 square meters.²⁴

This imposing space functioned as a place of public assembly and ceremonial display.²⁵ Its locus at the heart of the city made the forum a place of convergence, a true civic center where the community as a whole could meet, interact, and exchange information.

To the west of the Augusteion, separated from the forum by the embolos running north from the Milion, stood the complex known as the Basilika.²⁶ Like the Augusteion, the Basilika was an inheritance from the Severan era. Designed as a rectangular peristyle court, it accommodated a variety of institutions, a public library, the university, and a law court among them. Two temples erected by Constantine also stood in the complex, one dedicated to Rhea/Kybele, the other to Tyche/Fortuna. These buildings may have stood on the eastern side of the courtyard,²⁷ framing the doorway that led out of the complex, down a flight of steps, and across the road into the Augusteion itself.

The Basilika was only one of several complexes to develop around the nodal point of the Augusteion. A second important group grew up to the south, the triad comprised of the Hippodrome, the imperial palace, and the Baths of Zeuxippos. The Hippodrome²⁸ (Figure 4) stood south and west of the forum. Although it may have been in use from as early as the second century, the building was finished only in the fourth century with the extension of the cavea. The Hippodrome followed the standard circus form, which stemmed ultimately from that of the Circus Maximus in Rome. Characteristic features included a U-shape with starting gates (*carceres*) at one end and a central barrier (*mnipus* or *spina*)²⁹ that bisected the track along its central axis.

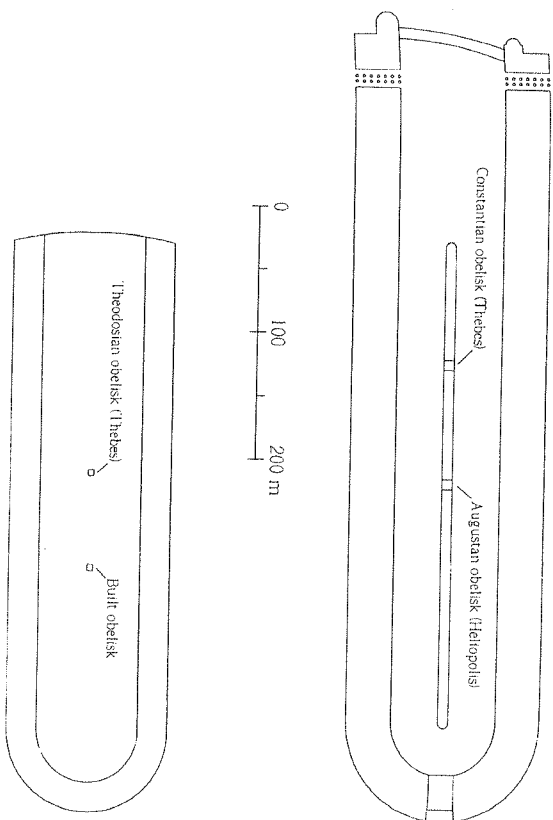


FIGURE 4: Comparative plans of the Hippodrome, Constantinople and the Circus Maximus, Rome (Courtesy of Brian Madigan)

In conjunction with the completion of the Hippodrome, Constantine began work on construction of the imperial palace.³⁰ The complex abutted the circus on its south side and was given a direct link to the racetrack through the kathisma or imperial box. The palace spread across the southern flank of the peninsula in a series of terraced gardens and pavilions that spilled down the sloping terrain to the Sea of Marmora. Its major ceremonial entrance, the Chalke Gate, on the northeast side of the complex, stood at the terminus of the road running to the south of the Augusteion, the Regia.

The third building in this group, the Baths of Zeuxippos³¹ (Figure 5), stood between the Hippodrome and the palace immediately south of the Augusteion. Architecturally the Zeuxippos appears to have been a bath-gymnasium. Common as a bath type in western Asia Minor from the second century A.D., the characteristic features of this type included an integration of vaulted bathing chambers with open, rectangular exercise grounds.³² Surrounded by the palace on two sides and Hippodrome dependencies on a third, the main entrance to the complex was from the Regia. At the time of the Constantinian development, the building must have been substantially

complete in terms of structure, and Constantine's main contribution to its revitalization appears to have been its ornamentation with polychrome marbles and sculpture.³³

Knowledge of the city in the area to the north of the Augusteion is less complete. The avenue running north from the Milion led to the military parade ground known as the Strategeion³⁴ that stood on a level, terraced area just above the harbors on the Golden Horn. Little is known of the Strategeion's appearance beyond the fact that it was an open, rectangular space suitable for military exercises. Its placement at the terminus of the northern avenue at once brought the area into the orbit of the city center but also kept it at some remove. Far more crucial was its ready access to the port facilities below it.

East of the Strategeion and north of the Augusteion lay the city's oldest section, the acropolis of Byzantium. Numerous temples, which appear to have been abandoned in the fourth century, are attested; however, the area was not a religious precinct as such. Theaters and other urban buildings also are mentioned, but there is no evidence for the location of individual buildings or the plan into which they were integrated.³⁵ It was in this area that Byzantium's first Christian ecclesiastical foundations were established, probably in a residential neighborhood. Constantine enlarged one of the foundations, possibly a domus ecclesiae, to create the city's first cathedral, Hagia Eirene.³⁶ Consecrated by the bishop of Constantinople in 337, the appearance of this early church is not known, although it was likely to have been a basilica.

THE LATE ANTIQUE URBAN CONTEXT

The Constantinian manipulations of the extant Severan buildings created a monumental set of interrelated yet independent public spaces that responded to and defined urban life in its most public aspects. It did so in two complementary ways. On the one hand, the creation of the monumental street system and the placement of buildings within it worked on a purely pragmatic level to provide the kinds of spaces and settings that would accommodate the institutions of Roman urban life. On the other hand, the carefully mapped design and the painstaking detailing of this armature drew deliberately on the traditions of late Roman visual culture to go beyond the mere facilitation of the practical to shape an idea of urban life that was itself expressive of the relationship between city and empire.

The overall planning of Constantinople worked to create a set of monumental public spaces linked by a series of wide, easily navigable avenues that accommodated

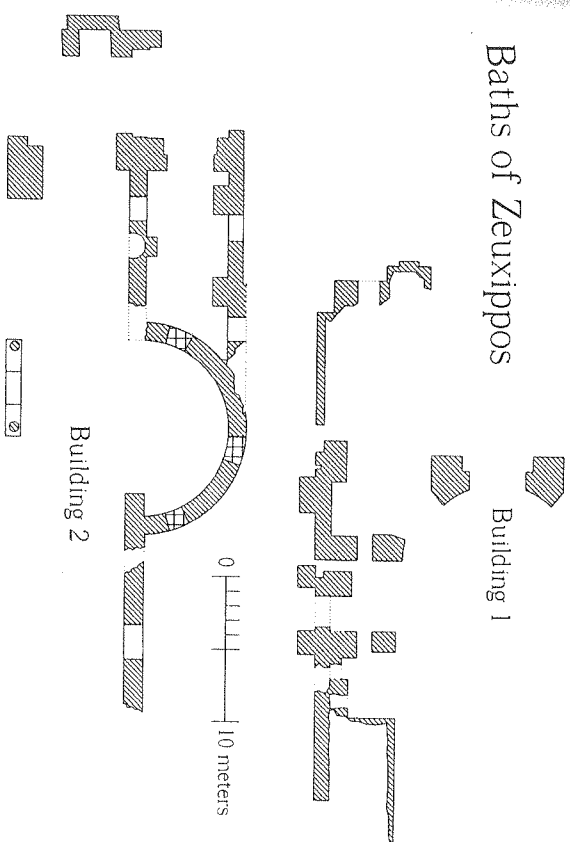


FIGURE 5: Plan of the Baths of Zeuxippos (Courtesy of Brian Madigan, after Casson, 1929)

the requisite urban institutions and facilitated movement within the city. Apart from these practical aspects of accommodation, access, and crowd control, however, it was the underlying choice of institutions and the concomitant manipulation of design traditions that gave Constantinople its particular urban character. To wit, the concentration of no less than five major imperial foundations, the Augusteion, the Basilika, the Hippodrome, the Great Palace, and the Baths, in a relatively confined area signaled the elaboration of a Roman imperial city.³⁷ Like Septimius Severus before him, Constantine created a city that downplayed indigenous Greek tradition in favor of the overarching magnificence of Rome, its empire, and its institutions.

Nowhere is this appeal to *romantias* more evident than in the elaboration of the complex accommodating the Baths of Zeuxippos, the Hippodrome, and the Great Palace. Each of these institutions was the manifestation of a singularly Roman mentality. Great thermal foundations, an expression of imperial beneficence and favor toward a given population, were a uniquely Roman institution that had been transplanted from the city of Rome to the outlying territories of the empire. So too was the phenomenon of the circus and its associated palace, a combination evident in the Tetrarchic capitals of the Roman world that derived ultimately from the relationship

between the Circus Maximus and the imperial residence at Rome.³⁸ Finally, as the name suggests, the Milion, the great tetrapylon marking the intersection of the city's major thoroughfares, was conceived on the model of the Roman *milianum aevum*,³⁹ and like it was meant to mark the start of the highways radiating from the city to points across the empire. Thus at the same time as it marked and made comprehensible the confluence of city streets and in so doing channeled the comings and goings of urban visitors, the Milion worked symbolically, directing the imagination beyond the city itself, to evoke the Roman world as a whole and the city's place within it.

The image of *romantias* conjured by the city's institutions and monuments was at once general and specific. On the one hand, the outfitting of the city with places such as the Hippodrome and the Zeuxippos was of a piece with large-scale development in other cities of the Roman world, and it created a sense of participation in the Roman imperial experience. On the other hand, the specific conjunction of Hippodrome and Palace or the introduction of a monument such as the Milion created a more specifically Roman link that bound Constantinople directly and intimately to the city of Rome in ways not common to other cities of the Empire.

Whether general or specific, it was the visual language of late Roman architecture, particularly the prominent use of trabecated building systems made of rich, elaborately carved marbles, that gave ultimate expression to the concept of *romantias*. Synonymous with the splendor and grandeur of the east, this architectural style was co-opted for imperial use in the second and third centuries when rising columnar facades and colonnaded avenues became the norm in urban design and the means by which the cities of the Roman world, increasingly under the sway of imperial authority, forsook their sense of autonomy to express, instead, an idea of participation in the enterprise of empire.

The most visible means by which this image was projected was the colonnaded street. In cities such as Palmyra, Gerasa, and Antioch in the east, as well as Tingad and Lepcis Magna in North Africa, the embolos became the prime expression of *romantias*.⁴⁰ Deployment of this motif in the armature of Constantinople was thus a deliberate appeal to and expression of this idea. The grand colonnaded avenues radiating out from the Milion would have functioned in a variety of ways. Formally these emboloi would have acted as a kind of connective tissue that bound the city together by creating a single monumental environment that directed movement and controlled access to individual buildings and public spaces. In turn, this environment, with its rich display of marbles and overwhelming sense of control, was an

expression of power.⁴¹ Like the Milion, which conjured images of Rome and empire, the architecture of the colonnade placed the seal of *romantias* on the city and its inhabitants.

The redevelopment of the old city center set the stage for the city's westward expansion. With the construction of the new defensive wall, Constantine and his planners brought heretofore undeveloped areas into the urban territory, thereby enlarging the space available for building and development. The resulting expansion took place around an armature of streets and public spaces that grew up around the western extension of the Mese. The avenue ran west in a straight line from the now obsolete Severan fortification wall. About halfway between the old defensive wall and the new, it split, one arm veering north and west to connect with the Adrianople road, the other carrying on to the southwest where it met the Via Egnatia. A second, north-south avenue connecting the Proponis with the shores above the Golden Horn crossed the Mese at right angles at the midpoint between the Severan and Constantinian fortifications. In a manner similar to the Milion at the city center, a tetrapylon arch, the Chalkoun, or Bronze Tetrapylon, marked the intersection. Finally, a rectangular street grid set down in defiance of the peninsula's irregular terrain was marked out within the larger framework of the emboloi.⁴²

Construction of the street system established a context for urban growth. The first and most important development along the extended artery of the Mese was the Forum of Constantine.⁴³ Although the Forum has long since been destroyed, its location is well known as its centerpiece, a porphyry honorific column known as the Column of Constantine (cat. no. 109), survives as modern Istanbul's Çemberlitas. The Column and the forum over which it rose straddled the Mese at the point immediately to the west of its intersection with the old city wall.

The new space around the column was round. A pair of two-story, semicircular colonnades in Proconnesian marble opened out from the Mese just beyond the point where it passed through the old wall to frame the space north and south. Triumphal arches marked the entrance to the plaza on its east and west sides. A Senate House stood at the center of the north colonnade, a nymphaeum at the south. Somewhere near the southeast area of the Forum was the Praetorium, or courthouse, to which a prison was attached.⁴⁴

The distinguishing feature of the Forum was its round shape. Although unusual among the public spaces of Constantinople, rounded public spaces delimited by colonnades were familiar from the cities of the Empire. As with tetrapyla, round forums were a means of marking important intersections. This was the case at both

Bosra and Gerasa where circular forums were inserted into the extant city plan in the second century and later articulated the intersection of the cities' *cardo* and *decumanus*. In both instances, further addition of imposing *tetrapyla* at the center of these newly articulated intersections created a focal point that not only anchored and aggrandized these spaces, but also lent them a decorative and ceremonial air.⁴⁵

Rounded and oval shapes could also mask planning difficulties in that circular forms gave architects and planners the means to join irregular elements in seemingly regular ways. At Bosra,⁴⁶ for example, an oval forum across the main axis of the road leading from the west gate to the center of the city disguised a seven-degree angle that the *decumanus* was forced to take. Similar tactics were used in the development of the plan of Gerasa.⁴⁷ This capacity made such shapes ideal for linking disparate areas of a city that it might not otherwise be possible to join. Such was the case at Constantinople, where the Forum of Constantine stood at the juncture of the old city and the new. Built around the city's main thoroughfare, the space represented an elegant and practical solution to the problem of grafting the old city onto the new. The Forum also marked progress through the city. For those moving east toward the center, the space was a gateway into the old city. For those moving west, it signaled arrival in the city's new territories. In this sense the place served as a hinge between old and new.⁴⁸

The grandiose development of the Forum was a function not only of location, but also of use. The place is described as a forum or *agora*, which suggests a commercial function.⁴⁹ This activity is borne out by the development around the Forum rather than in it: the *Artropoleion*, or Bread Market, grew up around the *Mese* immediately to the west and the silversmith's quarter was along the avenue to the east. It was not, however, this commercial focus that lent the Forum its distinctive look, but rather, Constantine's decision to make the space the site of a Constantinopolitan Senate House and, as such, a locus of government and its rituals. The building stood at the center of the colonnade on the north side of the Forum. Four porphyry columns supported a rising entablature and pediment. The contrast between the dark stone of the columns and the lighter Proconnesian marble of the Forum's encircling colonnade at once defined the entrance and created a sense of visual unity with the great column at the Forum's center. The building itself was a centrally planned domed structure. The combination of a classical, trabeated porch facade with domed interior structure made the building a miniature version of the Roman Pantheon.⁵⁰

Although the building itself must have been impressive, it was the institution of the Senate that called for this type of grandiose architectural development and defined the place within the city. Founded by Constantine,⁵¹ the Constantinopolitan Senate was in some respects the final manifestation of a series of reforms enacted by the emperor that were designed to refortify the Senate as an institution after its all but virtual suppression under Diocletian. Although most of the Constantinian legislation was directed at the Roman Senate, the institution of a Constantinopolitan body, albeit at a lesser rank than that of the Roman, was a radical move in and of itself. The creation of a second body was unprecedented. No other city in the Empire was accorded such an honor, and the move set Constantinople apart, although the function of the Senate was largely an advisory and ceremonial one. Given the importance of this act, the location of the Constantinopolitan Senate was no idle matter. Logically and logistically the building probably should have been erected in the old Severan core near the palace and the *Augusteion*. Its placement in the new Forum and the concomitant aggrandizement of that space must therefore have been in an effort to establish a new ceremonial center that would pull the city west.

Monumental development of the area around the bifurcation of the *Mese* underscored the emphasis on the city's western growth. Constantine oversaw two projects at this point, the Capitol, a temple dedicated to the triad of Roman state gods, Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, and the Philadelphion. The Capitol stood on the tract of land between the two branches of the *Mese*. Its design was probably similar to those of other Capitoline temples in cities throughout the Empire: that of the traditional Roman temple with a high podium with a single flight of steps on one side leading up to a portico that both shaded and articulated the entrance to the inner chamber.⁵²

The exact location and nature of the Philadelphion is not fully understood.⁵³ Technically speaking, it was not a public square, but rather a lavishly decorated stretch of the *Mese* that appears to have been situated in the area immediately to the east of the bifurcation. This segment of the street may well have opened up into a triangular plaza on the ground in front of the Capitol itself. The purpose behind this decorative articulation, which included porphyry columns and statuary, was doubtless to signal the approach to the Capitol.⁵⁴

Inclusion of a Capitoline temple in the fourth-century city plan was a developmental and institutional choice consistent with Roman urban tradition.⁵⁵ Since the earliest days of imperial expansion, incorporation of a Capitol, the prime expression of the State, into the design of the Empire's cities was a means of expressing the

binding relationship between Rome and its dependant territories. Capitoline temples generally stood at the heart of the city in the Forum and were an expression of the presence of the Roman state in the life of the local polity. For any city with pretensions to urban stature, they were one of the ultimate expressions of *romantias*.

Construction of the Philadelphion and the Capitol represent the last major Constantinian developments along the Mese. Thereafter the focus of the emperor's building activity shifted north and west to the territory bordering on the newly established city limit where he established the site of and began construction on the last major monument to occupy his imagination, his own mausoleum, a centrally planned domed structure that was either circular or octagonal in form with radiating niches for the placement of sarcophagi. This structure stood in the middle of a peristyle, and the whole complex rose just to the east of the Mese's northern extension.⁵⁶ Thus, although its location near the wall distanced the mausoleum from the city center, proximity to the main artery offered access to the site and drew it into the city's orbit.

The inclusion of the mausoleum within the city walls was unusual. Only in exceptional cases was burial permitted within the walls of a city in the Roman world. The prime example of such an exception was the Mausoleum of Augustus in Rome, and it is possible that in the placement of his own mausoleum Constantine was imitating his predecessor.⁵⁷

The comparatively restricted development of the western territory's monumental aspect was a function of two circumstances: the undeveloped nature of the terrain and use. Unlike the city center, which was the locus of public life, the area to the west of the Forum of Constantine was dedicated largely to private activity. Thus, development of the area around the armature that spread west from the Forum of Constantine appears to have been largely residential.⁵⁸ The nature of the housing is, however, conjecture.⁵⁹ Posh, single-family residences probably dominated the development, although there may also have been apartment buildings to accommodate lower income families. In addition to housing, institutions sprang up in these areas that would accommodate the rituals of daily life, fountains and privately owned and operated bathing establishments prime among them.

Although limited, the public projects that were undertaken in the new territories were of a piece with those in the old city. Like them, they were dedicated to shaping and articulating public space in a way that summoned an image of *romantias*. Institutions such as the Senate and the Capitol fostered the sense in symbolic terms, while the very stuff of the architecture, its richly carved marbles and

classical forms prevailing, expressed the sense of unity with empire in its most concrete aspect.

SPATIAL CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

Six years after the initial perimeter walk that set the limits of the new city's development, a lengthy *processus* from Rome to Constantinople inaugurated the events associated with the 330 dedication. In Constantinople itself, ceremonies that are said to have unfolded over the course of forty days took place against the backdrop of the newly restored and expanded city.⁶⁰ Cut by Constantine and his planners from the cloth of Greco-Roman antiquity, that city contained, in ways ephemeral and concrete, all of the elements of late classical urban design. At its creation, the rites and ceremonies that tailored the urban fabric were those associated with Roman foundations and dedications from time immemorial. In the years that followed, the institutions and administrative structures that organized life within this polity were unarguably Roman. So too were the design principles that underpinned the larger network of the city's streets and public spaces and the individual buildings within it. As the fifth-century historian Sozomen commented, Constantinople was provided with all of the "requisite edifices."⁶¹ In this sense then, it was no different than any late Roman city with any claim to prominence or hope for preeminence.

For all of its conventionality, Constantinople was, however, a city like no other. At the same instant it drew meaning from and participated in the traditions of late Roman urban design, it also manipulated those traditions in ways that were unfamiliar. The development of the Augusteion is a case in point. Transformation of the Tetrastoon created a magnificent colonnaded space in the grand manner of Roman civic forums, and location at the heart of the new city's development further underscored the traditional sense. Yet appearances and placement aside, the Augusteion was unlike any forum in the Mediterranean world. Befitting their function as a civic center, most Roman forums were dedicated to mixed use and, as a result, were home to a variety of public institutions. Buildings dedicated to commercial, civic, and religious activities stood cheek by jowl, accommodating the various needs of Roman communal living. At Constantinople, however, there is no evidence for the variety of building or the rich layering of activity attendant upon the diversity of building function seen in other cities. Instead, the Augusteion seems to have been an open, almost neutral point of convergence outside of which a series of independently framed single-use complexes accommodating the variety of civic, commercial, and religious

functions grew up. This development constituted a variation on a traditional theme of urban space that at once depended on but deviated from tradition.

The patronage and placement of religious foundations appears to reflect a similarly split sensibility. On the one hand, the emperor's support of such institutions continued a tradition of imperial patronage as old as the empire itself. On the other hand, the choice of institutions and their placement within the city represented a departure from these same traditions.⁶²

Beginning with Augustus, it was the pious duty of emperors to endow cities with religious foundations. Constantine was no exception and no less than four institutions are associated with his development of the city: the two temples in the Basilika, the Capitol, and the church of Hagia Eirene. Together with the Capitol, the temples dedicated to Tyche/Fortuna and Rhea/Cybele represented the traditional type of Roman state religious patronage in that they were both temples dedicated to deities associated with the divine destiny of the state.⁶³ Unprecedented, however, was the inclusion of a Christian religious foundation, the church of Hagia Eirene, in the mix.

Although Constantine had shown himself an active patron of church-building in cities such as Rome and Jerusalem in the years leading up to and including the period of the development of Constantinople, his incorporation of Christian buildings into these centers was substantially different from that of Constantinople. In each of these places church-building was undertaken in well-established urban centers with strong historic identity. This circumstance meant that church-building responded not only to the needs of Christian cult, but also to the particular history of the place and the need to establish a Christian identity within a preexisting structure. In Rome, for example, construction of the Lateran basilica on the grounds of the Sessorian Palace, an imperial property with strong associations with the imperial guard, was not, as once thought, a bid to define a Christian presence in the city by building unobtrusively on its outskirts, but rather an aggressive act of architectural appropriation that was intended to obliterate the memory of an imperial guard that had been allied with Constantine's rival Maxentius.⁶⁴ Likewise, in Jerusalem, construction of the church of the Holy Sepulchre on the alleged site of Christ's burial and resurrection was one of a series of building events designed to mark sites sacred to Christian history and in so doing sacralize the region.

Each of these events treated Christian building as a separate, defining activity designed to reshape the urban landscape and with it civic sentiment. By contrast, the construction of Hagia Eirene was part of a much larger building campaign that included simultaneously the erection and decoration of pagan temples. As such,

the project was unique as it established Christianity not as an overwhelmingly triumphant, conquering force, but as one option, albeit an important one, among many.

Building distribution appears to have confirmed this claim. The Capitol, traditionally the *lynchpin* of any civic forum in the heart of a Roman town, stood nowhere near the center of the city. Instead, it was relegated to the outskirts of the new territories. To any visitor accustomed to the conventional lay of Roman towns, this repositioning must have been startling. Its effect can only be estimated, but by and large it must have relegated the traditional tutelary gods to a secondary role within the urban system.

This is not to say, however, that their role was immediately taken over by others. Although located at the center of the city, the remaining temples and the one Christian church stood detached both from the Augusteion and from each other. In a sense, Constantinople was infused with the sacred, but in spaces carefully removed both from each other and from the flux of urban life. This organizational choice must have been deliberate and in a very real way was the concrete manifestation of the policy of toleration that was stated nearly two decades before with the legalization of the Empire's religions, Christianity included.⁶⁵ Constantinople created the ground on which that imperial vision could stand. In the reshaping of ancient Byzantium, Constantine and his planners struck a balance between pagan and Christian in their organization of public space. The city plan that they devised accommodated each of the Roman state's main religious cults, be they pagan or Christian, in a set of discrete, yet monumental precincts. This act of accommodation was nothing if not shrewd in that it not only recognized the inevitable and fundamentally irreconcilable differences between key members of the empire's population, but also took steps to defuse them by creating the conditions for peaceful coexistence.

The unique accommodation of the empire's religious cultures arrived at in the Constantinian plan makes it tempting to focus on this aspect of development as its defining feature. Although undoubtedly important, and indeed crucial to the success of the city, this manipulation of public religious space was but one element in the overall plan. Temples and churches were after all but single elements in a grand imperial scheme. Far more important to the overall success of that scheme was the common ground on which these buildings and the institutions they housed stood. This communality, expressed in the very fact that pagan and Christian religious institutions were both accommodated in the capital, was proclaimed with as much if not more insistence through the common visual language of late Roman architecture. Throughout the city all buildings with any pretense to importance presented their

faces to the city using the rich marbles and towering columns that were the defining features of imperial architecture. Using the shared visual language of *romantias*, Constantine and his planners subsumed the interests of individual parties into the one overriding interest, the creation of a grand urban space that was itself the expression of Roman imperial rule.

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CREATING THE COLLECTION

THE CITY SHAPED BY CONSTANTINE AND HIS SUCCESSORS IN THE AFTERMATH OF the 324 foundation ceremonies forged an urban space that expressed the single truth of imperial dominion. Although it was the organization of public space and the placement of institutions and the buildings that housed them in and around that space that laid out that idea in broad, if explicit, outline, it was the city's sculptured decor that articulated and legitimated the specific nature of this truth. In the years between the foundation and the dedication, Constantine and his planners outfitted the city with a formidable collection of public sculpture. Assembled in the capital's foremost public gathering places, spaces such as the Augusteion, the Baths of Zeuxippos, and the Forum of Constantine, this great collection was designed to enhance the generic claims for imperial status made through the manipulation of architecture by creating and giving visual expression to a unique civic history that in turn confirmed the emperor's urban vision.

The monuments assembled in the service of this vision were diverse. Prominent in the new urban displays were imperial portraits: Images of Constantine, his sons Constans and Constantius, and his mother, Helena, stood throughout the city.¹ At the same time, however, these modern works represented only a fraction of the capital's sculptured wealth. The mainstay of the public displays was a group of works of ancient, pre-fourth-century manufacture. Culled from the cities and sanctuaries of the Roman world, these antiquities presented a varied aspect both in terms of iconography and in terms of style. Subject matter included portraits of pre-fourth-century emperors (cat. nos. 8, 103, 116, 158) and culture heroes such as poets (cat. nos. 54, 55, 65, 66, 67, 68, 73, 81) and philosophers (cat. nos. 45, 52, 60, 82). These images stood side by side with statues of gods (cat. nos. 3, 5, 7, 11, 14, 16, 17, 19, 22, 24, 102, 106, 107, 108), demigods (cat. nos. 4, 21, 39–43, 46, 57, 85, 128), and fantastic creatures (cat. nos. 104, 142, 143). Nonfigural monuments such as tripods