



324: Constantine's Choice and the Origins of New Rome

November 7-8

On 8 November 324, Constantine the Great promoted his son Constantius II to the dignity of caesar and bestowed the rank of augusta on his mother, Helena, and his wife Fausta. Having proclaimed his dynastic intentions, he also upgraded the ancient city of Byzantium to the status of an imperial capital bearing his name.

To commemorate the 1700th anniversary of this pivotal event in world history, Istanbul Research Institute and Pera Museum host the international symposium *324: Constantine's Choice and the Origins of New Rome*. Organized by Paul Magdalino and Brigitte Pitarakis, this innovative symposium examines the foundation of Constantinople from a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives.

Why did Constantine choose the modest city of Byzantium for his bold urban project, and what did his plan involve? The symposium takes a fresh look at the textual and material evidence, including new archaeological data, to survey the layout of the new imperial capital and the ideology behind it. It also explores such related topics as the establishment of new cities under the Tetrarchy, the aesthetics of Roman cities, the ideological and cultural influence of Alexandria, Constantine's relationship to Thessalonike, Nikomedeia, and Troy, including the latter's role in the foundation legends connected to Constantine.

Recent advances in interdisciplinary research also allow for examination of New Rome's development in light of fourth-century trade in the Eastern Mediterranean and the influx of wealth into Constantinople. Related topics include the provision of grain to the capital, the coin issues of Constantine and his sons, the production of imperial mints in the Marmara region, and the revelations of recovered amphorae and their contents. In addition, new horizons of examination have been opened by the inscriptions, coins, and other finds from the recent and earlier excavations in Istanbul and its environs, Küçükçekmece, İzmit (Nikomedeia), and İznik (Nicaea).

Constantine's lifetime (ca. 272–337) defines the symposium's time frame, but written and material evidence from earlier and later periods that contribute to contextualizing the primary focus is given appropriate weight, for example, his sons' contributions to fulfilling of his bold program. The foundation of Constantinople will also be considered in relation to the dichotomy between his privileged relationship with Apollo and his adoption of Christianity, the other momentous development for which Constantine is famous.

The symposium, which will take place at Pera Museum Auditorium, is free of charge. No reservations are required. Simultaneous English-Turkish translation will be provided.



Thursday, November 7

10:00–10:20 **Greetings and Opening Remarks**
M. Baha Tanman, Istanbul Research Institute

Symposium Overview
Paul Magdalino, University of St Andrews
Brigitte Pitarakis, CNRS, Paris

Session One: Constantine's New Capital: From Concept to Reality

Chair: Nevra Necipoğlu, Boğaziçi University

- 10:20–11:10 **Keynote Lecture**
Paul Magdalino, From Byzantium to Constantinople
- 11:10–11:40 **Bryan Ward-Perkins**, Why Did Constantine Build His New City at Byzantium?
- 11:40–12:00 **Discussion**
- 12:00–12:20 **Coffee Break**
- 12:20–12:50 **Efthymios Rizos**, What Can New Cities Built under the Tetrarchs Tell Us about Constantine's New Rome?
- 12:50–13:20 **Sylvain Destephen**, Byzantium and the Emperors: Backwater or Hub? (Virtual Presentation)
- 13:20–13:40 **Discussion**

Session Two: Contexts and Comparisons

Chair: Alessandra Ricci, Koç University

- 15:00–15:30 **James Crow**, Hadrian's Aqueduct and the New City of Constantinople, a Never-Ending Story
- 15:30–16:00 **Anastasios Tantsis**, Thessalonike in the Fourth Century: The Image of the City and Its Importance
- 16:00–16:30 **Tuna Şare Ağtürk**, Nikomedeia: The Grandmother of Constantinople
- 16:30–16:50 **Discussion**
- 16:50–17:10 **Coffee Break**
- 17:10–17:40 **Hüseyin Sami Öztürk**, Milestones from Nikomedeia and Nicaea Dated to the Reign of Constantine II, Constantius II, and Constans
- 17:40–18:10 **Mantha Zarmakoupi**, The Aesthetics of Urban Space in the Roman World of the Tetrarchy
- 18:10–18:40 **Elena N. Boeck**, Trojan Relics and Imperial Destinies: Constantinople and Rome
- 18:40–19:00 **Discussion**



Friday, November 8

Session Three: Society, Coins, and Trade

Chairs: Yavuz Selim Güler, Pera Museum, **Ivana Jevtić**, Koç University

- 10:00–10:30 **Brigitte Pitarakis**, Constantine's City: A Man's World?
10:30–11:00 **Oğuz Tekin**, Coins in Turmoil in the Late Third Century and Under the Tetrarchy
11:00–11:30 **Cécile Morrisson**, Constantine's Religious Iconography before and after 324: The Coin Evidence
11:30–11:50 **Discussion**
11:50–12:10 **Coffee Break**
12:10–12:40 **Dominique Pieri**, The Birth of Constantinople: The Commercial Revolution of the East
12:40–13:10 **Alkiviadis Ginalis**, Food Provisioning and Maritime Connectivity of Constantinople in the Fourth Century CE and Its Effects on Future Urban Developments
13:10–13:30 **Discussion**

Session Four: Urban Archaeology

Chair: Günder Varinlioğlu, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University

- 15:00–15:30 **Arne Effenberger**, The Course of the Fortification of Byzas and of the Emperor Septimius Severus
15:30–16:00 **Neslihan Asutay-Effenberger**, The Course of the Constantinian Land Walls Re-Visited
16:00–16:30 **Emrah Kahraman and Emir Son**, Istanbul Archaeological Museums' Mosaic Excavations at Zeytinburnu
16:30–16:50 **Discussion**
16:50–17:10 **Coffee Break**
17:10–17:40 **Batu Bayülgen**, Two Monumental Walls in Regions III and V of Constantinople: Some Remarks about the Pre-Constantinian Walls and Harbours
17:40–18:30 **Rahmi Asal**, Fourth-Century Istanbul, from Sultanahmet to Bathonea, and from Kadıköy to Aydos.

Conclusion

- 18:30–19:00 **Results and Prospects**
Open discussion led by Alessandra Ricci