

## TOWARDS A NEW HONORIFIC COLUMN: THE COLUMN OF CONSTANTINE IN EARLY BYZANTINE URBAN LANDSCAPE (1)

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1. This paper is partially based on the PhD dissertation titled "Christianizing the Skyline: Appropriation of the Pagan Honorary Column in Early Constantinople" submitted in 2015 to UCLA, Architecture and Urban Design.

2. Zos., *Hist. nov.*, II.22.3-7.

3. Zos., *Hist. nov.*, II. 33-36.

4. B. Ward-Perkins 2012, 53. In the early years of its foundation, Constantinople was designated *altera Roma* (the other Rome) by the Latin poet Porphyrius in one of his panegyric poems addressed to Constantine in commemoration of Constantine's defeat of Licinius in 324. See *Optatianus Porphyrius, Carm.* 4.6 and 18.34. In AD 357, the pagan orator Themistius identified two metropolises: the city of Romulus and the city of Constantine, the second Rome. See *Them. Or.* 184a.

5. For the accounts of the city's foundation: Zos., *Hist. nov.*, II. 30, and *Chron. Pasch.*, 528-9. For the archaeology of the city of Byzantium and the foundation of Constantinople: Alföldi (1947, 10-6); Müller-Wiener (1977, 16-9); Dagrón (1974); Erkal (1995), Kuban (2004, 27-33).

6. For the building activities under Constantine, see Barnes (1981, 44-62), Bardill (2011).

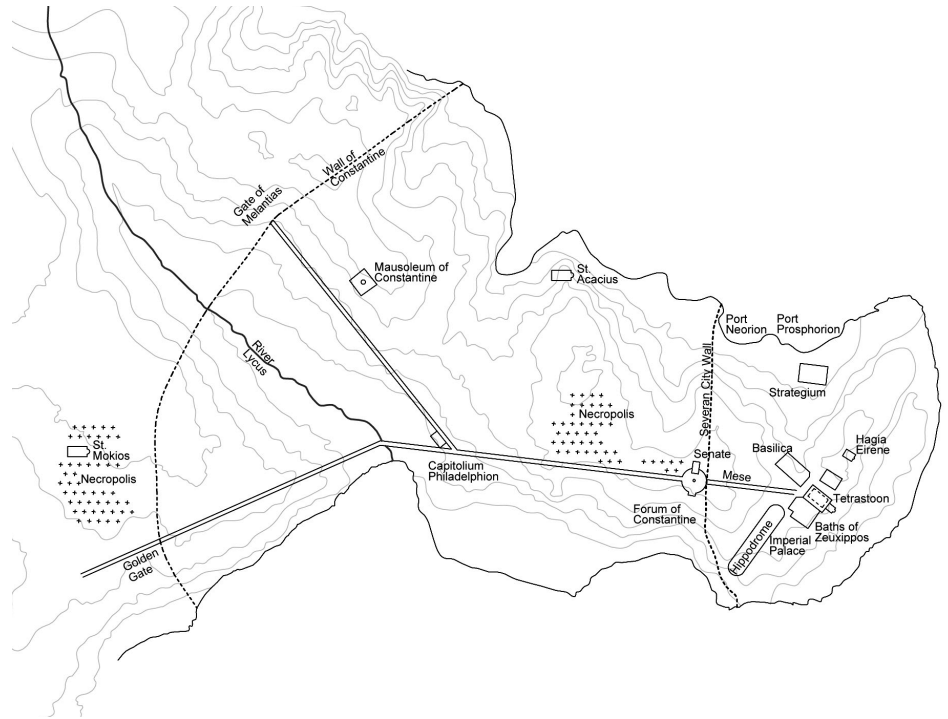
7. Müller-Wiener (1977, 229-37).

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### INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 324, Constantine besieged the city of Roman Byzantium to capture Licinius after the Battle of Adrianople (2). During the two-month long siege, the emperor stayed in a military camp built on the second hill of the promontory, outside the main land gate built by Septimius Severus in the second century AD. At the time when the city was falling, Licinius escaped to the opposite shores of the Bosphorus to Chrysopolis (Üsküdar). In the battle of Chrysopolis on September 18, 324, Licinius was defeated and lost his imperial titles as well as the East of the Empire (3). Hence, with the elimination of his rival, Constantine became the sole ruler of the Roman Empire. To perpetuate the memory of his naval victory, or what Krautheimer (1983, 42) suggested, to commemorate the unification of the Roman Empire under one ruler, Constantine refounded the city of Byzantium as his own capital. It was renamed after the emperor, Constantinople, and was also called the New or Second Rome as early as 326, probably inspired by the desire to make the new able to stand comparison with the old Rome (4).

Subsequent to Constantine's decision, builders and designers were established to create a proud material expression of the new regime and the new imperial capital (5). The renovation and restoration activities started immediately (6). At first, the city core around Tetrastoon, the old Greek agora located towards the southeastern tip of the peninsula, was renovated and monumentalized (Figure 1). Constantine rededicated this plaza in honor of his mother and named it as the Augusteion, a word derived from her title *augusta*. To the south of the Augusteion was Constantine's palace, the earliest phase of the later Great Palace (7). To the west of the palace grounds was the Hippodrome that had existed as early as the second century (8). As part of the rebuilding, an imperial loge, called the *kathisma*, was placed on the eastern track. It provided direct access from the palace to the sports and the entertainment center of the new city (9). Across the



**Figure 1.** The city of Constantinople in the fourth century. (Image by the author based on maps from Bardill, 2011, 254, figure 171; Mango, 1985, Plan 1; Berger, 1988, 197)

starting gates of the Hippodrome was the Porticus Severus combining the Augusteion to the western city gate (10). Constantine elongated this path until it reached to the new set of city walls nearly 3 km beyond the Severan boundaries. The path was renamed as the Mese, the middle street in Greek language (11). Colonnades were placed on both sides of this 26m wide avenue (Mundell Mango 2001, 36). A new city gate, the Constantinian Porta Aurea, was placed at the western end of this artery (Kuban 2004, 30) (12).

Among Constantine's other construction projects, his imperial forum matters most for this research. As described by Zosimus (II, 32) in the fifth-century and later in the *Chronicon Paschale* (528) of the seventh century, the Forum of Constantine was built in front of the Severan city gate, at the top of the second highest hill of the peninsula, and remarkably, at the exact spot where Constantine had his military camp during the city's siege. The plaza was circular in shape and surrounded by two-storey colonnades in white Proconnesian marble. The side colonnades were reported as big enough to fit an equestrian statue inside (13). Nothing remains from the legendary circular space today except the central, freestanding column and some wall pieces of a cistern found by Fıratlı (1964) near the Forum. Therefore alternate reconstructions are possible.

Bauer (1995, 170) used rather limited archaeological evidence as reference points and suggested a diameter of 140m to 150m for the circular paved area. He offered a circular sketched plan of the Forum (largely accepted today) based mainly on textual data (14). Regarding the plan of the two-storey porticoes, Mundell Mango (2000, 196) convincingly cited a circular streetside exedra excavated and documented in Roman Scythopolis as a partial model. According to the reconstructions by Bardill-Oner collaboration (2012), mainly following Bauer's lead, a two-storey circular colonnade surrounded the porphyry column, isolating it from the rest of the city (Figure 2) (15). The textual evidence, however, suggests a less defined, not so much a uniformly set border.

8. For the institutional and imperial importance of the Hippodrome: Dagron (2010, 29-36).

9. For the archaeology and architecture of the Hippodrome: Bardill (2010, 83-91).

10. For the early Constantinopolitan street layout: Berger (1988) reevaluated eighth-century studies from Byzantine literature for indications of street layout, and then published a map illustrating possible streets in fifth-century Constantinople. In the reconstruction, an east-west oriented colonnaded avenue functioned like a bone fed by short parallel streets running toward the sea in the south and towards the Charisius (Adrianople) Gate in the north. Also see Berger (1997) and (2000). In 2004, Ken Dark discussed the problems in Berger's approach. See (Dark, 2004).

11. For the archaeology and architecture of the Mese: Mango (2000), Mundell Mango (2001), Bauer (1996) and (2008).

12. For the location of the Gate: Berger (1988,354), Ötügen (1974,131-164).

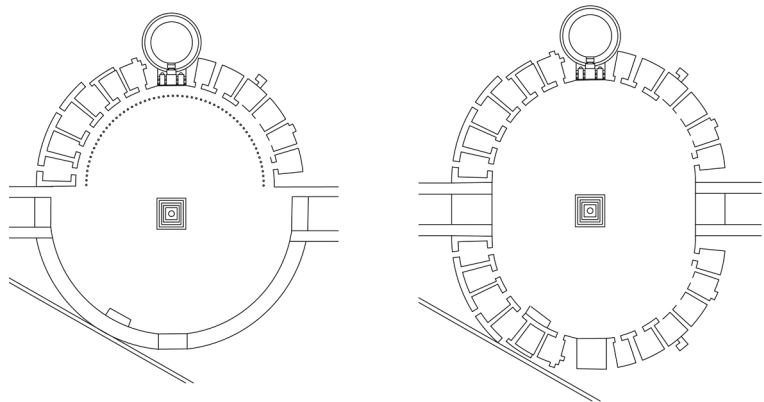
13. Zos., *Hist. nov.*, II, 32.

14. For the diagram, see (Bauer 2001, 31).

15. For the latest reconstruction of the Forum of Constantine prepared by Tayfun Oner, see <http://www.byzantium1200.com/forum-c.html>, last accessed (12.25.2015).



**Figure 2.** The Forum of Constantine as seen in the 1/2000 scale model displayed in *Again, and New World City Istanbul* exhibition, Jan., 15 – Feb., 22, 2014, Galata Greek School, Istanbul. Photo by the author.



**Figure 3.** Schematic reconstruction plans for the Forum of Constantine (drawn by the author)

16. Zos., *Hist. nov.*, II. 32, *Chron. Pasch.*, 528. On the configuration of the buildings around the Forum: Bauer (1996, 167-85), Bassett (2004, 29).

17. *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae*, written in 425, recorded most of the monuments separately for each of the city's fourteen administrative regions. The number of streets, colonnaded avenues, baths, bakeries, palaces, houses (*domus*), and civil officials responsible for each region are all identified clearly in this text.

The sources described a Pantheon-like round Senate House in the north of the forum area and an attached nymphaeum, an imperial tribunal, a Chapel of Anastasia, and the Praetorium, to which a prison was attached (16). The fifth-century *Notitia* divides the city into fourteen regions and lists the tribunal of the Forum in the third region along with certain *gradūs* (public steps) (17). The sixth region covering the north half of the Forum, including the Column of Constantine, had seventeen *gradūs*. Given the regular association between Roman forum staircases and steep topography south of the forum, it is logical that there were public stairs leading down from the Forum of Constantine to the Propontis. The edges of the Forum, then, might not have been strictly defined by columnar walls as was the case at the Forum of Trajan in Rome. Rather, like the Forum Romanum, this space could have been delimited by the structures around its edges rather than by a continuous colonnade. Or else, as seen in my alternative reconstruction drawings (Figure 3), a circular streetside exedra, similar to the one in Scythopolis could have been applied to both sides of the forum. Or, the colonnades around the Forum could have had openings or detachments to include the tribunal and the prison.



**Figure 4.** The Column of Constantine (Çemberlitaş), İstanbul. Photo by the author.

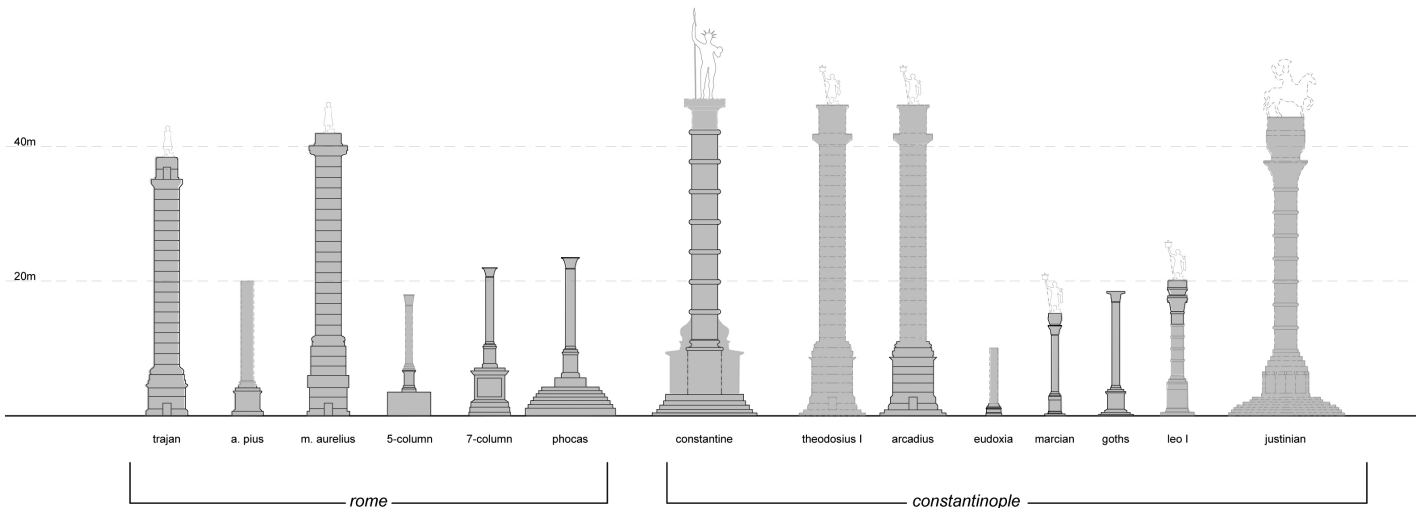
The centerpiece of the Forum of Constantine was the colossal honorary column (**Figure 4**) (18). It was probably erected around 328, although the date may vary by a few years (Mango, 1985, 25). On May 11, 330, Constantine the Great proclaimed the foundation of the new capital, New Rome, with the dedication of this Column and the celebrations that continued for forty days (19). The column’s shaft was made out of porphyry—the hardest and most imperial building material used for Roman monuments—which was utilized on an unprecedented scale, almost 50 m, to suit the new capital. This monument is still standing today on Yeniçeriler Caddesi along the Divan Yolu (the old Ottoman ceremonial avenue that sat on the same course as the Byzantine Mese). It is called Çemberlitaş due to the iron rings applied to the shaft during the renovations around 1515 in the Ottoman era (20). Also referred as the Burnt Pillar due to black scorch mark caused by a fire in 1779, this column is the oldest and one of the most prestigious early Byzantine monuments of İstanbul.

**THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE COLUMN**

Between 1929 and 1930, the Swiss scholar Ernest Mamboury and his Danish colleague Karl Vett performed excavations around and under the Column. The white-marble Column base rises from 2 m high, five-step socle situated 2.35 m under the modern-day surface (21). The lowest step is 11.25 m x 11.25 m. The width of the upper surface of the steps reaches 8.25 m at the highest level. The square pedestal of the Column is placed on this level and has a side length of 3.8 m and a height of 6.5 m. In fact, the relatively smaller surface area makes the upper step function as a platform of about 2.25 m on each of the four sides.

Above the monumental pedestal raised the porphyry shaft comprised of seven cylindrical porphyry drums with an approximate height of 3.2 m and a diameter of 2.9 m. Each drum is wreathed with laurel crowns that conceal the joints with the upper and lower drums. While the origin of these drums is debatable, most scholars argue that they were not reused

**Figure 5.** Comparative image of honorary columns of Rome and Constantinople, all drawn to the same scale (drawn by the author based on various reconstructions and photographs).





18. The modern interest in colossal columns first appeared in Unger (1879, 109-37) where the author examined four colossal columns (the columns of Constantine, Theodosius, Arcadius, and Justinian) in detail with textual references and on-site observations. For specific references to the Column of Constantine: Gurlitt (1909); Janin (1950, 67-9, 81-4); Mango (1965), (1981), (1993); Müller-Wiener (1977, 255-7); Dagron (1984, 37-42); Jordan-Ruwe (1995); Fowden (1991); Bardill (2011); Ousterhout (2014).

19. *Par.*, 5, 38, 56, Malalas, 321.22-322.16, *Chron. Pasch.*, 529.20-530.11. For the specific rituals of the ceremony: Alföldi (1947), Dagron (1974).

20. On the late Byzantine and Ottoman history of the monument: Ousterhout (2014).

21. The dimensions were taken from the reconstructed elevation drawing prepared by Ernest Mamboury, originally preserved in the German Archaeological Institute, İstanbul. The drawing was reproduced in Mango (1981, 104) and Müller-Wiener (1977, 256).

22. For a recent reconstruction of the original upper structure: Ousterhout (2014, 316).

23. *Chron. Pasch.*, 373.

24. For a detailed comparative study of Greco-Roman column monuments: Yonca Arslan (2015, 43-104).

25. About the falling spear, see Malalas, 486-7; Theophanes, 222; Cedrenus, I, 656. Mango (1993, III, 2) notes that the scepter told by Anna Comnena might be misleading because she was writing more than forty years later after the statue had disappeared. The scepter was probably held upright with its lower end touching the ground (Bassett, 2004, 202). Mango (1993, III, 3, note 7) thinks the original globe could have been surmounted by a miniature victory, though it is known that later replacements (the second or third, or both) were topped by a cross. For similar representations, L'Orange (1962, 102) refers to a fourth-century bronze statuette fully dressed and wearing a rayed crown. The statuette is in National Museum, Copenhagen, inv. no 8040 (published in Bassett, 2004, plate 21).

26. For the latest reconstruction of the statue of Constantine prepared by Tayfun Oner, *Byzantium1200* project: <http://www.byzantium1200.com/forum-c.html>. (also published in Bardill, 2011). For a discussion on the latest reconstructions see (Ousterhout, 2014, 317-8).

27. For the full text from the dedicatory inscription of the Colossus of Rhodes: *Anthologia Graeca* 4, 171.

28. For the Colossus of Rhodes, see (Higgins, 1988).

29. Procop. *De bello goth.* I, 15.

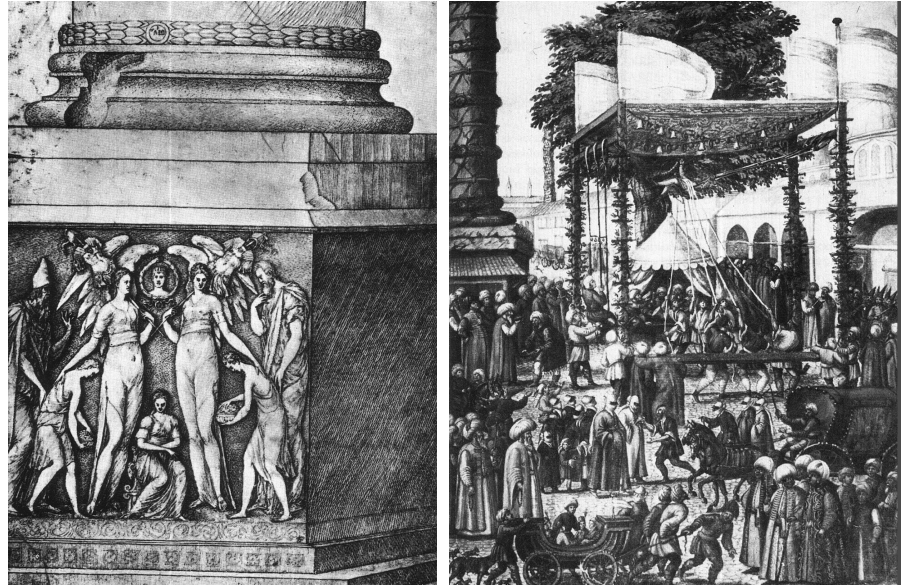
and most likely carved in situ (Bassett 2004, 201). In 416, a piece of one of the lower drums broke off causing the addition of bronze braces around all the blocks. Today, the Column has a built masonry capital added by Manuel I Komnenos (1143-80) (22). During the restoration in the reign of Abdülhamid I, the present masonry base was added covering the original pedestal. For the overall height, Mango (1965, 313) suggests 34.8 m above the present street level, or 37 m above the original level of the Forum of Constantine (23). Jordan-Ruwe (1995, 128), however, argues for a maximum height of 40 m (from the original ground level) without counting the statue at the top. These colossal dimensions made the Column the largest of its type constructed in both the old and new Rome (Figure 5) (24).

The evidence about the colossal bronze statue that originally surmounted the Column is not conclusive and thus presents continued discussion for scholars. Textual records represented a naked statue wearing a crown with seven rays and holding a spear in his right (25). In 2012, Bardill (2012, 28-63) published a long chapter offering a reconstruction for the column and the statue standing at the top. In this widely accepted reconstruction of the Column of Constantine, the statue wore a radiated crown and carried a globe in his left hand and a spear on his right (26). More recently, Ousterhout (2014) has reviewed the available evidence one more time and based on a comprehensive summary of the primary Roman and Byzantine sources describing the colossal column, he proposed a slightly different alternative reconstruction. The symbolic readings of this statue, stylistic features and origin will not be discussed in this article; however some aspects are worth to mention: The bronze medium suggests an honorific dedication, rather than any kind of a cult figure, as the latter were generally made in marble (Smith 1998, 33). The radiant crown is suggestive of Helios, the personification of the Sun in Greek mythology, who was commonly identified with Apollo. Hellenistic monarchies favored the radiant crown for representations of power and a sense of epiphany (Bassett 2004, 203). The presence of the orb and lance can be considered evidence for the unifying rule and power of the emperor. A further indication comes from the statue's similarity to the colossal radiated statues in Rhodes and Rome (Bardill 2011, 166). The former is an over 30m tall bronze statue of Sun god Helios, placed on the harbor entrance and represented Rhodes's "dominion over sea and land," while the latter was the well-known landmark of the Neronian Golden Age (27). It is also worth to mention that the statue in Rhodes eventually became as one of the Seven Wonders of the World (28). The Column of Constantine never had such a status yet its similarity to a Wonder could have been obvious to the early Byzantine audience.

In addition to these interpretations, a few scholars argue for a Christian context for the statue, thus for the column as well. Karayannopoulos (1956) identified the radiated image as the divine Constantine and used this as evidence of the Christian identity of the New Rome. Likewise, Barnes (1981, 222-23) rejected any pagan notion in the foundation of the city, referring to testimony found in later Christian sources. Reportedly, a room inside the pedestal contained the *Palladium* of ancient Rome (a wooden statue of Athena from Troy) and a piece of the True Cross from Jerusalem (Ebersolt, 1951, 71-3; Karamouzi, 1986, 222-3). The former was first brought by Aeneas from Troy to Rome and then taken to Constantinople (29). For the latter, the church historians Sozomen and Theodoret mentioned that Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, discovered the True Cross in Jerusalem, left fragments of it in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher, and brought the nails to Constantinople (30). Zonaras related the rays

**Figure 6.** The relief on the pedestal of the Column of Constantine by Melchior Lorichs (1561).

**Figure 7.** An anonymous engraving describing a Turkish festival in the Forum of Constantine, Vienna National Library, Codex 8626.



30. Soz. *h.e.*: 2.28, 2.31, 4.15; Theodoret, 1.23.

31. *Patria*, II, 45.

32. Leo Gramm. 87, Hesychios 41.

33. A scene of *aurum coronarium* is a motif common in Roman and Byzantine bas-reliefs and it shows barbarians paying homage to the Emperor. See the bottom panel in the Barberini Ivory and the Obelisk of Theodosius for similar examples.

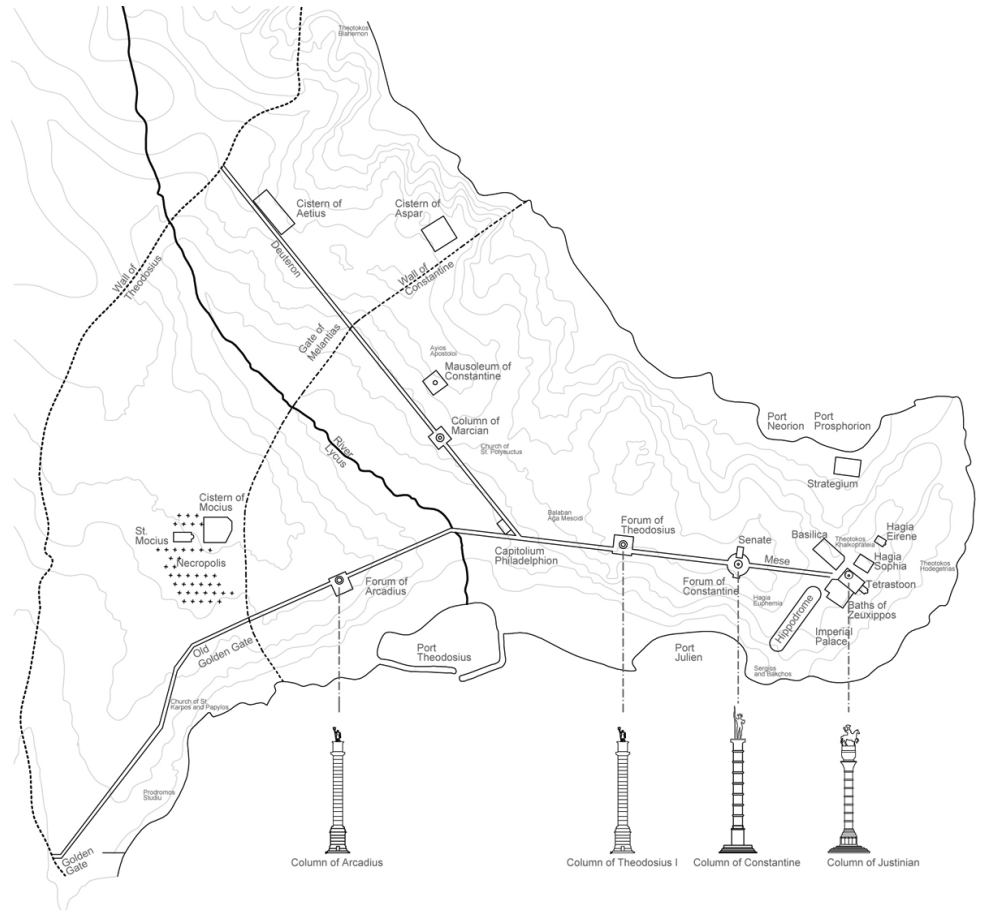
34. For the description and the dating of the relief, see Engemann (1989, 255-6).

35. The Column of Theodosius was built in 393, on the next hill to the west of the Forum of Constantine. It was decorated with a spiral band of relief topped by a statue of Theodosius. Reminiscent of the second-century Column of Trajan in Rome, this column remained standing until the end of the fifteenth century and was then completely destroyed. Fragments of the column were incorporated into the sixteenth-century Ottoman Baths complex. See Theophanes, I. 70.20 for the beginning of construction; see *Chron. Pasch.*, 6-8 for the placement of the statue. See also, Jordan Ruwe (1995, 141); Müller Wiener (1977, 263-5); McCormick (1986); J. Kollwitz (1941, 21-2). A decade later, around 402, Arcadius repeated his father's actions on yet another hill to the west and embellished his forum with another spiral-banded colossal column. The massive masonry base of the Column of Arcadius survives today, attached to an old Turkish house. On the column, see Kiilerich (1993), Konrad (2001). When Justinian became emperor in 527, he placed an equestrian statue of himself on a colossal column in Augusteion, in front of Hagia Sophia. This column was demolished without a trace by the Ottomans in the sixteenth century. On the Column, Theophanes, 224, 13; Cedrenus, I, s. 656, 18, *Par.*, 65, 17; *Patria*, Book II, 17, Procop. *De Aed.*, I.2.1-11; Mango (1993, X); Croke (2005). For a detailed comparative study on Constantinopolitan columns: Yoncaci Arslan (2015).

of Constantine's crown to these nails with which Christ was crucified (Zonaras, III, 17-18). The passage from the *Patria* continues as "and Constantine the Great set up this lofty column and the statue of Apollo as Helios in his name, affixing nails from those of Christ [s crucifixion] as rays on its head, shining like Helios on the citizens" (31). According to the apocalypse of Andreas Salos, the presence of these nails in the crown of the statue meant that the last thing standing in Constantinople would be the Column itself (*Vita S. Andreae sali*, 868B). This atypical collection of objects hoarded at the foot of the Column contained other relics, including "the adze with which Noah had built the ark, the rock from which Moses had struck water, and the remains of the miraculous loaves with which Christ had fed the multitudes" (Hanfmann, 1975, 90).

No inscription was reported for the colossal column except for a dedication reportedly seen by Hesychios and Leo Grammaticus reading, "To Constantine, shining in the manner of the sun" yet no textual or pictorial evidence is available today (32). A drawing by Melchior Lorichs dated 1561 depicts a figural relief, a scene of *aurum coronarium*, on the north side of the pedestal looking to the Senate House (Figure 6) (33). In the relief, two winged victories stand symmetrically in the center. Between their heads is a bust of an unidentified emperor framed by a laurel wreath. He seems to wear a radiant crown (Mango, 1993, III, 2). Underneath the two main figures, barbarians render homage and carry vessels of gold (34). None of the accounts of European travelers describing the Column commented specifically on such a sculptural decoration on the base. As suggested by Mango (1993, III, 1), some temporary structures that were built against the base of the Column might have put the reliefs out of sight. In fact, a sixteenth-century anonymous engraving exemplifies one such use and renders the facades of the base invisible (Figure 7).

The Column of Constantine was not the only large column in the city. Between the fourth and sixth centuries, Constantine's column-in-the-forum design influenced further urban interventions. Emperors Theodosius, Arcadius, and Justinian the Great, all adopted this design feature and constructed three more colossal columns in piazzas along the Mese (Figure 8) (35). To the Byzantine urban historiography, the columns



**Figure 8.** Four colossal columns along the Mese in the sixth-century Constantinople. Image by the author based on Bardill, 2011, 254, figure 171; Mango, 1985, Plan 1; Berger, 1988, 197; Crow, *The Water Supply*, fig.2.2; Müller-Wiener, 1977, Map 2; Jordan Ruwe, 1995, 195.

36. Mango (1965), (1981); Müller-Wiener (1977, 52-6); Gowersock (2009); Ward-Perkins (2012, 53-78).

37. Eusebius, *VC*, III, 54, *Chron. Pasch.*, 324, *Zos., Hist. nov.*, II, 32, *Patria*, II, 73

38. Bassett (2004, 38), Grig and Kelly (2012, 11).

of Constantinople have been commonly considered as a group of city ornaments and immediately and inescapably associated with the Column of Trajan or Marcus Aurelius in Rome (36). I believe such associations were mainly a reflection of the ancient testimony explaining that Constantine gathered statuary from other prestigious cities like Delphi, Athens, Troy, or Rome, and decorated his new capital with the re-use of well-known works of art (37). The archaeological evidence also supports the copies or models were powerful stylistic and literary devices employed by Constantine while building his capital (38). This indicates an imperial intention to use formulas/familiar schemes to liken, or sometimes to equate, two or more distinct cities, as well as to establish a connection between them - which in turn could brought glory, history and maybe eternalness to the New Rome. This argument might be tested against some monuments like the Senate House or the Milion, the milestone serving the same function with *Milliarium Aureum* in Rome. But it seems less valid for Constantine's Column - nor for the other three subsequent imperial columns built in Constantinople. Compared to other column monuments in Rome and in Constantinople, the fourth century porphyry column exhibits markedly distinctive features (Figure 5). Certain differences may be judged cosmetic, but others suggest a transformative shift in the architecture of the column.



39. For surveys of column monuments: Thiersch (1909, 149-153), Haftmann (1972), Richardson (1992), Wannagat (1995), Jordan-Ruwe (1995).

40. Richardson (1992, 96) explains that as early as 439 BC, a column was erected in Rome in honor of L. Minucius Augurinus. That could have been the first statue raised on a freestanding column in Rome. A representation on *denarii* from the second century BC shows this column composed of drums in a votive context with lion heads, grain ears, and bells hung on the capital. It was surmounted by a *togate* figure with two *togati* standing by the column.

41. For the column of C. Maenius, Pliny, *NH*, 34.20. For the rostral column in honor of Gaius Duilius, see Pliny, *NH*, 34.20. Under Augustus, a freestanding column with beaks and anchors on the shaft was erected in the Roman Forum following his victory over Sextus Pompey at Naucluchus in 36 BC. (Zanker, 1990, 41-2).

42. Suet., *Caesar*, 85, Suet., *Galba*, 20 and 23.

43. Tetrarchy describes the Roman ruling system where the Empire was divided among four rulers; two senior (*augusti*) and two junior (*caesars*) emperors. Established by Diocletian in 293, this period lasted until 313, when Constantine was claimed as the only ruler in the West while Licinius was in the East.

44. For some examples see, RIC VI 18b (Ticinum); RIC 10b (Heraclea), C 552a; RIC 14b (VI, Ticinum), C 622d

45. For the palace in Split, see McNally (1996). For Ephesus, see Miltner (1959, 266-90).

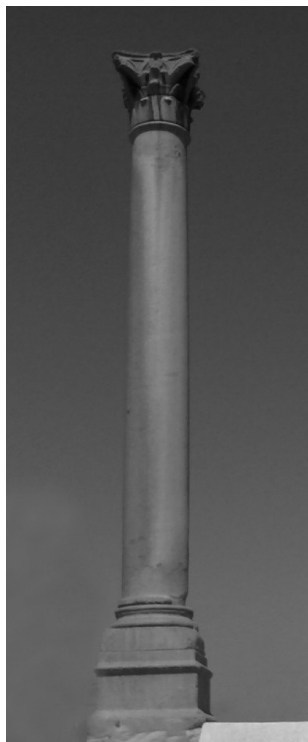
## LOOKING FOR PRECEDENTS

The ancient Mediterranean had many freestanding column monuments. Votive, funerary, honorary, and triumphal columns were urban features that stood out from their near environment, usually under eventful circumstances (39). Pliny (*NH*, 34.27) identifies the Greek columns as the precedents of such monuments. He specifically notes the columns' honorary functions, stating that by placing statues on tall columns, the Greek tradition raised honorary men above mortals. In the Roman Republic, the freestanding column was a form of honorary monument, particularly related to the achievements of a victory (40). It was placed in various public spaces like forums and circuses, thus functioned as a political instrument from the beginning. In that sense, Pliny (*NH*, 34.20-27) implied that the freestanding column was even comparable to the triumphal arch, which is Roman in origin. Both monuments began as a means to show higher status by elevating the sculpture of the honorand.

In Roman architecture, the freestanding column gained various definitions. The well-known form in the Republican era was the rostral column, a small-scale column adorned with the rostra (rams) of captured vessels (41). As an architectural display instrument, the rostral column manifested the victory using actual pieces taken from the fields of war. The emphasis of the display was the objects that were tectonically added to the shaft of the column, hence contributing to the visual realization of the column's meaning. In the High Empire, monumentalization and funerary overtones became prominent. Columns were used as place markers or memorials to indicate where divinity or the deceased dwelled. The columns of Caesar and Galba and the colossal columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius are some known examples (42). The particular importance of the last two columns to the differentiation of the Column of Constantine, besides their colossal scale, is the richness and variety in their narrative component – that will be discussed in the following pages.

By the time of the Tetrarchs, the freestanding column had already become a polyvalent monument (43). The increase in imperial residences due to the rule of four emperors radically transformed and redefined the image of the Empire and the imperial body, hence triggering the intentional move towards new ways of imperial representation in urban realm. The image of the four emperors was stamped on every coin since stability and credibility were necessary for the government's continuation (44). While these artifacts reached the most remote corners of the Empire, statues of emperors appeared at important public places. The five statues standing on high pedestals at the Porta Aurea of Diocletian's Palace at Split, the relatively small-scale monument of the four Tetrarchs set up in front of the Temple of Hadrian in Ephesus, or the so-called Venice Tetrarchs, the porphyry sculpture group representing four emperors, present good cases (45). All these diverse media and multiple political agendas opened up various possibilities to celebrate imperial foursome. Honorific column monuments, in that sense, generated another design venue for the self-representation of the emperor. What follows is a comparative analysis to argue that Constantine's vision of the column monument as an imperial representation tool in urban realm found precedent particularly in two Tetrarchic monuments, one from Alexandria, and the other in Rome, and to a certain extent, a third monument from Nicomedia.





**Figure 9.** The Column of Diocletian, Alexandria (the so-called Pompey's Pillar).

46. On the Column of Diocletian: McKenzie, et al. (2004, 73-121), Vandersleyen, (1958, 113-34), Kayser (1994, 52-7, no. 15), Adam (1977, 31-63). Also see, <http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk, LSA-874> (Ulrich Gehn), last accessed (12.25.2015).

47. The temple was the center of a cult that spread across the Mediterranean during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and certainly in Diocletian's time as he renovated and enlarged the precinct extensively. In AD 391, two years after Emperor Theodosius had ordered the closure of all pagan temples throughout the Roman Empire, the temple was destroyed but Diocletian's Column and the Roman court surrounding it survived, and remained intact throughout the Byzantine era. Under Saladin in twelfth century, the columns at the site were broken up, but Diocletian's Column was left standing. For more information, see (McKenzie et al., 2004).

48. On the *Fünfsäulendenkmal*, see (L'Orange, 1938, 1-34), (Kähler, 1964).

49. Kleiner (1992, 414) speculated that the statues on top of the columns could have been the *genii* (guardian spirits) of the emperors rather than the emperors themselves. For a long discussion on the iconography of *genii* and their function on the *Fünfsäulendenkmal*, see (Wrede, 1981).

**Figure 10.** The digital reconstruction of the Augustan Rostra, UCLA Experiential Technologies Center 2005 © Regents University of California.

## TETRARCHIC COLUMN MONUMENTS

The earliest Tetrarchic freestanding monument is a huge column from Alexandria, erected in honor of Diocletian as indicated by the inscription on the west side of its base (**Figure 9**) (46). The still-standing, 27m high monolith column, inaccurately referred to as Pompey's Pillar, was built in AD 298 to commemorate the emperor's victory over a series of Alexandrian revolts. It stands on the natural high ground within the Serapeum, the most important sacred site in the city, and one of the most famous pagan sanctuaries of antiquity (47). The base of the monument was built within the renovated Roman courtyard around the Temple, above the eastern end of one of two underground passages – that were probably religious in function. The single monolith shaft of red Aswan granite is 20.75m high (26.85m including the socle and pedestal) with a diameter of 2.7-2.8m (Thiel, 2006, 252). The column is surmounted by a Corinthian capital, which apparently once supported a colossal statue. There is an inscription carved in the upper part of the base. This dedicatory text facing the Temple and a piece of a porphyry statue in a cuirass found nearby reveal Diocletian as the honorand (McKenzie, et al., 2004, 89). Inside the 6m high socle exists an unidentified room reached through one of the underground tunnels. A rectangular opening related to this room is still visible on the first step underneath the column's base.

The second Tetrarchic monument is the Five-column monument, the *Fünfsäulendenkmal*, as it is usually called in academia. The first major imperial commission in the Roman Forum since the building of the Arch of Septimus Severus in AD 203, this commemorative structure was associated with the celebrations of 303 for the twentieth anniversary of Diocletian's reign (48). As reconstructed by Verduchi (Giuliani and Verduchi, 1987, 156), it consisted of five freestanding columns stood atop the renewed Augustan rostra (**Figure 10**). The central, larger column carrying a statue of Jupiter was flanked by a pair of *augusti* statues, Diocletian and Maximian (or their *genii*) (49). On their sides were the *caesar* columns bearing statues of Galerius and Constantius Chlorus. It is believed that each column must





**Figure 11.** The decennalia base, the procession of four emperors/senators.

have had similar, if not identical, properties. All pink-granite columns were surmounted with larger-than-life-sized porphyry statues, around 2.5 to 2.8m (Delbrueck, 1932, 56). All columns were supported by white-marble plinths carved with narrative scenes on four sides. Three of these marble column bases were found during the Renaissance in the Forum. They bear structural reliefs that are both contextually and epigraphically similar (Kähler, 1964, 8-9; L'Orange, 1938, 14-5). The best-preserved base, known as the *decennalia* base, bears classical scenes from processional and ritual events (**Figure 11**).

In the Five-column monument, multiple yet equal emperors dominated the main public space of the capital. The isolated use of the commemorative column, as with the Column of Diocletian in Alexandria, was multiplied here with one reserved for each emperor. The solid, symmetrical composition with its internal relations (e.g., having the *caesar* on the side of his *augustus*, or the cross relation with the *caesar* on the side of the other half's *augustus*) strengthened faithfulness and bonding—all of these features had been illustrative of the political ideology of *concordia* (harmony) in the first place. The unity among the emperors was further promoted through *similitudo* (similarity), another essential concept for Tetrarchic art. That is, all the Tetrarchs were meant to be represented in the same manner so that a certain homogeneity and balance would be achieved in the composition (50). Reflecting that, the *Fünfsäulendenkmal* had abstract characteristics with a symmetrical organization: hard and clean pink-granite columns supported by white-marble plinths, and over-life-sized porphyry statues. The geometric and rigid formula visually communicated a sense of structural stability and divine power by presenting a united ruling body instead of four individual portraits.

The transformation seen in the narrative component further differentiates this monument from the rest. The rostral column, for example, had rams on its shaft as a reference to defeated navy. In the Column of Trajan, scenes from the victory procession—of soldiers and prisoners—were registered

50. The Venice Tetrarchs is a well-known example of this practice. It is a porphyry sculpture of four Tetrarchs who look roughly the same, except that two have beards, probably representing the older *augusti*, while the two without beards represent the younger *caesars*. Mostly because of the hardness of the porphyry, these rigid figures with nearly identical faces and clothing were not realistic but geometric. For more information, see (Kleiner, 1992, 18-20).



51. My interpretation of these two different characterizations applied onto a single monument draws upon Rees's reading of the pictorial representation of the Tetrarchs in the hall of the Temple of Luxor, Ammon (Rees, 1993). In her reading, the walls of the temple hall were covered with depictions of the procession of the Tetrarchs, and the niche in the middle was reserved for symbolic representations of the emperors, which were not bound to a specific time or place. I suggest that a similar separation occurs in three-dimensional terms in the *Fünfsäulendenkmal*.

52. Lactantius, *De Mort.* 19.1.

on the monumental column, while booty was placed on the pedestal. The same is true for that of Marcus Aurelius but with more deeply carved relief frieze—certainly an attempt to increase visibility. In *Fünfsäulendenkmal*, the shafts were stripped of narrative and left naked. The ritual events were summarized on the base reliefs with four scenes repeating traditional events like the *souvetaurilia* where the emperor(s) literally took part in. In these scenes, the observer could really see the emperor in action. Higher up, however, the porphyry statues of the emperors were situated in more abstract terms, without referring to any specific occasion, always in league with the guiding god Jupiter. What combined these symbolic and narrative representations was the vertical continuum achieved by the material quality of the granite column shaft (51).

The special attribution to the divine nature may be pursued through another column monument. Lactantius noted that the ceremony of Nicomedia in 305, in which Diocletian announced his retirement and appointed the new *augusti* and *caesars*, took place in front of a “column with a statue of Jupiter” around three miles far from Nicomedia, where the emperor Galerius formerly received his appointment (52). No archaeological data or other textual references are available, yet the middle column of the *Fünfsäulendenkmal* might be suggested as a precedent (or successor) emphasizing the bond between Diocletian and Jupiter. In Rome, the idea of divine relation was embedded onto the four ruler discourse but in Nicomedia, in Diocletian's Tetrarchic residence, relatively free from imperial conventional formulas, the emperor could have isolated the idea and hence operated within a personal propaganda to be memorable even after he was retired.

As described by Lactantius, the soon-to-be sole ruler of the Empire, Constantine the Great, witnessed Diocletian's retirement ceremony in May, 305. I strongly argue that this specific association with the imperial representation was particularly and increasingly relevant with regard to Constantine's reinstalling of the Greco-Roman pagan freestanding column in his new capital. It is worth remembering that the emperor's first reference to a columnar monument dates back to the 310s, twenty years before the foundation of the New Rome. In his *adlocutio* scene on the north facade of the Arch of Constantine, the *Fünfsäulendenkmal* figured literally as the background for his imperial address (Figure 12). He stood at the center of the monument, in front of the Column of Jupiter. In the scene, the monument played a crucial role by representing not only the Forum Romanum but also the eternal city that would embrace the emperor forever. In that sense, the following discussion presents the Column of Constantine with multiple meanings aside from its commemorative function. Two aspects of the Tetrarchic freestanding column monument are particularly significant: the colossal scale and the urban visibility.

Figure 12. The *adlocutio* scene from Arch of Constantine. From Pierce and Tyler, 1932, 53.





### THE COLUMN AS THE COLOSSUS OF CONSTANTINOPE

The column as a form does not allow for a great deal of invention. Hence, the colossal column in Constantinople was undeniably a Roman triumphal column erected to honor victories and to commemorate the ruler and the new capital city. The Corinthian order in the original capital evoked the decorative style of earlier column monuments, as well as grand arches and temples, while the monumental statuary at the top and the possible personification of Victory on the pedestal recalled the iconography of Imperial Roman columns. Therefore, Constantine's Column signified a modified but still clearly recognizable manipulation of the Roman architectural motives and the continuous heritage of regional capital cities.

Yet different than all others, the construction material and the height over 45m (with the statue) assigned a new, or renewed monumentality to the freestanding column, and more importantly, placed this monument within the loose category of colossal scale. To put the scale in perspective, it is worth remembering that the columns proper (including bases and capitals) of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius measure almost 100 Roman Feet (29.5m) in height, and the total reach up around 40m, while the Column of Diocletian in Alexandria was 70 RF (20.75m). According to Pliny the Elder, the colossal bronze statue of Emperor Nero was 30.3m in height, though Suetonius put it at 37m (Suet. *Nero*, 31; Pliny, *NH*, 34. 45). The porphyry column was in the same league with the Pantheon's oculus (43.3m tall) and the outer wall of the Coliseum that is 48m.

In earlier generations, when columns were praised, the scale was commonly stressed as being monolithic. In fact, both Tetrarchic column monuments were monoliths. The columns of the *Fünfsäulendenkmal* are magnificent red-granite monoliths, with no decorating reliefs. The Column of Diocletian was the largest freestanding column constructed outside Rome, so the idea of magnificence created with height was already a design criterion when Constantine became the new emperor.

However, the unique thing about the Constantinopolitan example was not only the size but the use of porphyry. Red porphyry was the imperial building material *per se* and was officially the precious one as it occupied the first place in the price edict of Diocletian (issued in AD 301) (53). The message created with porphyry was about the permanence as well as the imperial-ness. To build with porphyry, yet to circumvent the degree of limitation caused by the inherent limits of the monoliths, Constantine avoided a solid structure and aimed for higher elevation by using drums. Standing over 40m from a nearly 11.25m wide base to the capital, the Column was, and still is, the largest ancient monument built out of porphyry. In fact, porphyry was one of the hardest stones capable of withstanding natural forces, and was also one of the heaviest. The Column was built of drums each weighing approximately 60 tons (54). The spectacle related to the transportation of the monumental drums of the column, was legendarily recorded by George Harmatolos writing in the fourteenth century:

“It took three years to transport the column by ship, and from the sea to Forum it took one year. During this time, the monarch was visiting the place very often and giving away innumerable gold coins to the crowd.” (55)

After the construction of the Column of Constantine, some ancient sources mistakenly referred to the Column as a monolith, probably to support the idea that it was a precious object brought from Rome - almost like an

53. On the edict, see Graser (1940, 305-421); Corcoran (2000, 205-233). On the material significance of porphyry in Roman architecture, see (Popkins, 2015).

54. For an analysis of possible routes for the transport of porphyry blocks within the city, see (Yoncaç Arslan, 2015).

55. George Harmatolos, 500.

obelisk brought from Egypt. Yet the tectonics of the Column explicitly reveals that for Constantine, the use of the spectacular and precious material of the Empire in an unprecedented scale had the preference over other desirable ends.

### THE COLUMN'S VISIBILITY

The gigantic dimensions not only unveiled the Column's aesthetic exceptionalism but also brought an inescapable visibility to the new monument, both in material as well as ritual and symbolic terms. Articulations regarding urban visibility were in fact already a common feature of the Tetrarchic columns. Diocletian's Column in Nicomedia, for example, was probably highly visible due to its relation with the emperor's last speech, if not due to its scale or distinguishing material. Since the early Roman times, the freestanding column became a highly visible post, not only to announce public information – as the Column of C. Maenius that was used as a post for publicly announcing the names of people with due debts (Richardson 1992, 94)– but also to give an oration to citizens and visitors. Besides that, many rulers and generals gave speeches in front of columns. In 128 AD, when Hadrian visited the military camp in Lambaesis, he spoke in front of a column monument, which was later used to commemorate the very same event by recording the emperor's words as a monumental text on four sides of its base.

In the third century, Tetrarchic emperors reassociated the imperial address and the column monument by implanting their commemorative monument directly onto the imperial speaking platform of the *caput mundi*. The *Fünfsäulendenkmal* was directly built on the Augustan Rostra. There, multiple yet equal emperors dominated the main public space of the capital, the Rostra, in very close proximity to the Curia, the Temple of Concordia, and the Temple of Saturn. Anyone exiting the Senate or standing anywhere in the public open plaza of the Forum would have immediately seen the five dominating columns and the ever-present Tetrarchs above. From a far, the Tetrarchs loomed over the Forum, creating a dramatically different spatial effect than, for example, that of the Trajan's Column shadowed by the silhouettes of Basilica of Trajan and the libraries.

Unlike the *Fünfsäulendenkmal*, Diocletian's Column in Alexandria was erected within an enclosed courtyard, but the site itself gave a more scenic advantage to this monument over its Roman counterpart. The column was placed in the most sacred old precinct of the city, on the highest point of the plateau aligned with the main road leading to the precinct from the city center. By placing the column at the center of attention for all possible sides of approach to the high grounds of the Serapeum, Diocletian, or his representatives in Alexandria, used local ways to announce the virtues of the emperor literally to everyone. Especially for anyone approaching from the Gate of the Sun - the spot where Diocletian placed his camp during the siege of the city – the Roman column was highly visible. In fact, Aphthonius confirmed its effect on visitors in the second half of the fourth century AD:

“And in the center, there rises a column of surpassing height that renders the location recognizable. Someone leaving would not at all know where he was heading, were he not to use the column as a reference point for his journey – and the Acropolis visible to land and sea. The beginnings of the world are positioned around the capital of the column” (56).

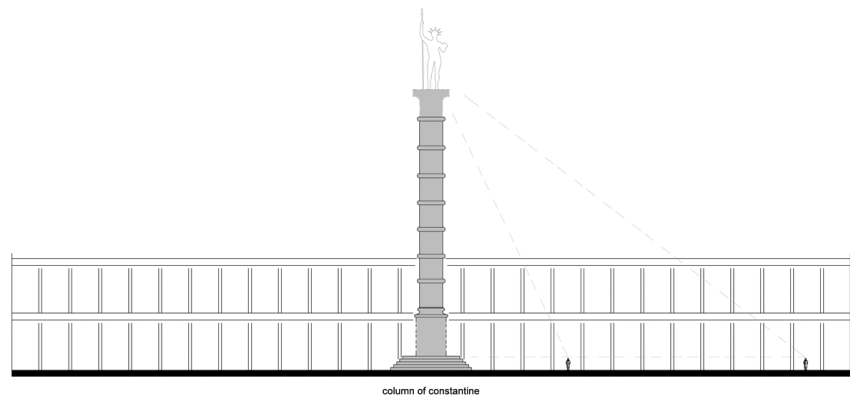


Figure 13. Schematic section drawing of the Forum of Constantine (drawn by the author).

56. Aphthonius, 38.

Here, the visibility of the column expanded the limits of the city and reached even to travelers on the land route or to ships on the sea miles away. This interpretation has a twofold character: one which refers to the extent the column was registered in the collective memory and became a landmark by rendering the city recognizable; and another, which is more spatially oriented and focuses on formal or informal ways in which people used the Column as an orientation device. The column was equally significant as was the Acropolis.

In Constantinople, Constantine combined the Alexandrian Column's crowning of the skyline, which was a local style that emerged from the Greco-Roman history of the site, with that of the Roman one making good use of the symbolic value of the eternal capital, and he built his Column as the ultimate imperial icon of the new capital. To make the Column visible, in any means of the term, he established first a breathing room for the Column by using a perfect firm circle. The two-storey columns of the surrounding portico in this 140m wide spatial urban plaza revealed a significant contrast in scale and, thus, made the size of the colossal column more explicit. This configuration was further emphasized by the natural elevation of the forum plaza since it was already situated on the second highest hill of the peninsula. As one crossed the arched thresholds of the Forum, one would have inevitably felt in the presence of the Column and immediately realized the presence of the emperor (Figure 13). For people looking up to see the emperor, the idea of the brightness, the rays of the crown and all further associations to the sun god Apollo could have strengthened the illusion. Unlike Trajan's Column, for example, the circular breathing room must have provided the space for the Column to radiate out and reciprocally, each sight line that radiated out from the monument extended the limits of the city. As such, similar to the Alexandrian column, the Column of Constantine would have rendered the new Rome recognizable in the wider scale of the Empire.

Another crucial point affecting visibility is the prominent position of the Column of Constantine in the Forum along the Mese, the major ceremonial road in Constantinople. As Constantinople developed into a city having a busy ceremonial schedule full of public spectacles and ecclesiastical processions throughout the fifth century, the Mese evolved into an infrastructural component orchestrating both daily and ritual movement in the city. Unfortunately, none of the fourth century texts is available to us, yet the sixth century ceremonies described in the tenth century Byzantine



57. *De Ceremoniis*, R28-29.

58. The *Tabula Peutingeriana* is a parchment roll of c. 30 cm height and nearly 700 cm width. Discovered by Konrad Celtes in 1507, the *Tabula*, or the *Peutinger Table*, was copied for Ortelius circa twelfth century and published immediately after his death in 1598 (the first printed facsimile of any ancient map, apart from those of Ptolemy). Since 1737, it entered the Hofbibliothek (now Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna). Scholars assume that the map either was a papyrus roll originally, based on the fact that papyrus sheets were typically max. 40 cm tall, or was designed to resemble one as telling a story in a linear fashion, like a frieze or a continuous band around an altar. It lists for example the city of Pompeii (destroyed 79 AD), the Column of Constantine and St. Peter's in Rome - indicating that the *Tabula* might have been drafted no earlier than fourth century AD, or any point thereafter. For further information, see (Broderson 2001, 137-48).

*Book of Ceremonies* explains that the majority of stations in ceremonies (both secular and ecclesiastical) stopped at imperial fora. While describing a procession to the Great Church, the *De Ceremoniis* referred to the Column of Constantine as the terminating point of an episode:

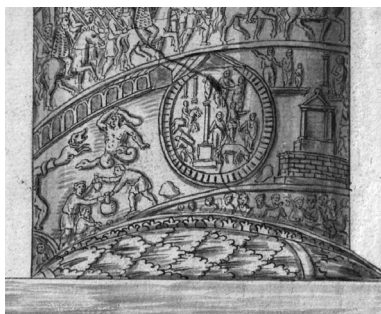
“[when the rulers leave the Great Church], they go out again and kiss the patriarch and move away with their own religious procession and go up as far as the great Porphyry Column in the Forum of Constantine, the rulers stand on the flight of steps of the great Porphyry Column and the magistroi and proconsuls and patricians and the rest of the senators stand in the [R29] sections to the right in front of the rulers' position” (57).

As suggested here, the Column, rather than the gateway of the Forum for example, was the destination point in the tenth century. As counted by Baldovin, *De Ceremoniis* listed sixty-eight processions that were held during the liturgical year (1986, 19). Therefore it seems that, each forum became a station for particular events during particular times of day. In such a highly complex ritual composition, the participants and objects seen by the participants became parts of the same visual network. The exchange between spectators and those walking along the procession created ritual-specific or procession-specific ways of seeing. In this composition, all colossal columns located in each forum marked a station, and through the verticality of the marker, the participants established visual connections.

A further venue for the Column's visibility has symbolic dimensions. According to many written sources, pagan and Christian objects were legendarily combined under the Column. These legends about the Palladium of Rome and pieces of the True Cross brought from Jerusalem, and many other objects of religious and secular importance, further deepened the place of the Column in the city's urban memory. If we accept the possibility of a hidden chamber inside or under the porphyry base, as impossible as it may look, then the Column of Constantine functioned not only as a monumental display device mapping multiple geographies of the Empire, but an augmented monument recording and archiving the city's history. An illusion of interior was played out here and visible or not, those highly charged objects were believed to have been stored inside the Column; thus, they brought a symbolic visibility to the architectural envelope, in which they were bound.

## IMAGING THE COLUMN

Two pictorial representations dramatically exemplify the contemporary visibility of the Column: one from the historiated column of Arcadius in Constantinople erected in 401-402 and the other from the *Tabula Peutingeriana* dating back to the early fifth century AD (58). The former image is a part of the spiral relief wrapped around the monumental column situated 2.4km west of the Forum of Constantine. It shows a circular open space with a central column (**Figure 14**). Although the statue at the top of the column does not have any of the features attributed to the statue of Constantine (no radiating crown or nudity), the circular form, and the presence of a monumental column in the center have prompted scholars to identify the depiction as the Forum of Constantine. Seen in this light, doubling the periphery line and the hatching inside might represent the colonnades around the Forum. There is only one entrance connected to the arcades reaching the Forum. This colonnaded and double-roofed structure is identified as the part of the Mese between the Milion and the Forum of Constantine. A couple walking on the route aligned with the Mese points



**Figure 14.** The relief showing the Forum of Constantine, found on the eastern side of the Column of Arcadius, image from *Freshfield Album* drawings, Trinity College Library, Cambridge. <http://www.trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk>, last accessed (12.25.2015).

59. Procop. Gaz., *Pan.*, 1.

out the Forum and/or the Column to their child, a remarkable gesture found in the contemporary panegyrics as well. When the imperial statue of Anastasius was received in Gaza in the fifth century, Procopius of Gaza explained the ceremony as:

“Our city, having received her benefactor himself by [receiving] his image, like some eager lover, is raised up by the sight and arouses her citizens by young and old; the father points out [the emperor] to his son, the old man to the young, and they rejoice together at the sight” (59).

In this passage, the act of looking up at the imperial statue was part of the honorary rituals during the arrival ceremonies. Also, all citizens joined together in lines of sights that all converged on the object placed at the top of the column, or on the column itself. Hence I would argue that a similar perception might have conceived in Constantinople as well. In that sense, the Column of Constantine was meant to be highly visible within the new capital.

Besides its local representation, the porphyry column of Constantine was well-known due to its appearance in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, a medieval copy of a Roman original itinerary of an ancient Roman map dating to the late fourth or early fifth century (Figure 15). Recently argued as built in one of the *tricennalia* of Constantine in 336 in the Great Palace (Barnes, 2011, 378), it is a very schematic, geographically distorted map that basically shows many Roman settlements and the roads connecting them. Three metropolises, Rome, Antioch, and Constantinople were highlighted among other cities - all represented as an enthroned Tyche figure. Rome was depicted with roads leading to all sides of the Empire, along with its port and the Basilica of Old St. Peter's. Antioch was represented through the Temple of Apollo at Daphne, the personification of the river Orontes and a huge aqueduct. The map's image of Constantinople, however, has curiously different features. There, the Tyche of Constantinople was standing in her throne and notably pointed to a monumental column on her left that was topped by a statue of an emperor in the figure of Apollo Helios. The image divorced the Column from its specific local context for which it was created but the specificity of the Column's representation—such as the lines representing the drums and the purple coloring in the parchment roll—were highly remarkable (Bardill, 2011, 107). It distinctly supports the visual dominance of the Column as the most recognizable feature of the fourth century city. As such, the *Tabula* rendered the monument as a crucial actor claiming an identity imitable for the New Rome. Beyond doubt, the column embodies layers of meanings and touches multiple geographies within the Byzantine heritage of the city. It became literally and symbolically visible from the scale of the

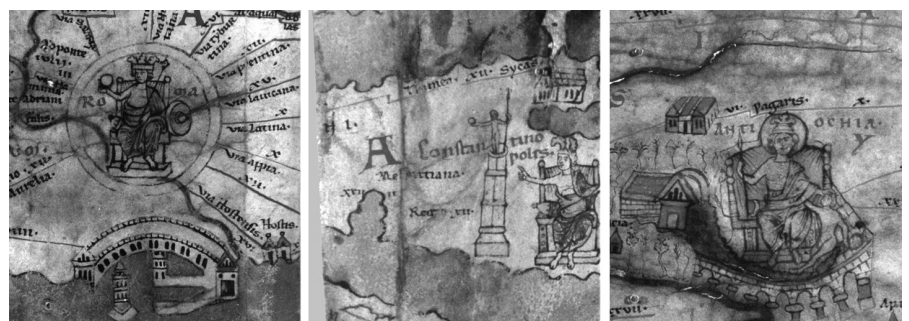


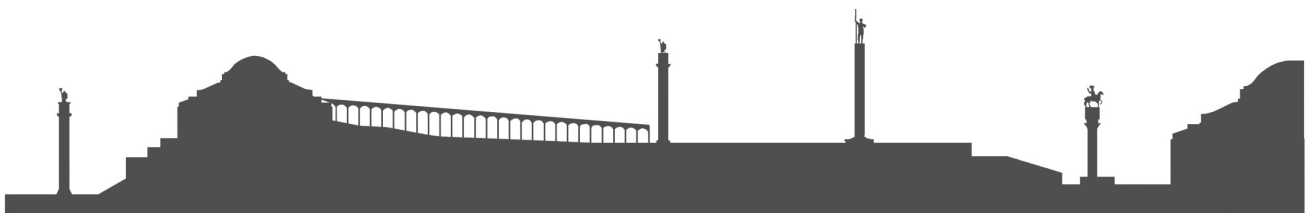
Figure 15. *Tabula Peutingeriana*, showing Constantinople, Antioch and Rome. Vienna National Library, MS, Vindobon, 324. From [http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost03/Tabula/tab\\_pe00.html](http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost03/Tabula/tab_pe00.html), last accessed (12.25.2015).

immediate surroundings, through the wider scales of city and empire. Unquestionably, Constantine recast the Tetrarchic freestanding column - a major architectural element - into a symbol, indeed, into a fourth century icon. More remarkably, since the Column of Constantine was not the only large column in the city, this effect was repeated in the first two hundred years by emperors Theodosius, Arcadius, and Justinian the Great. This columnar landscape, in turn, gradually shaped the city's early skyline.

The urban skyline is one of Spiro Kostof's five elements of urban form viewed from a historical perspective. To him, the form of the skyline, or "the line where the earth and the sky meet," bears meaning both for residents as a familiar image and for visitors as the city front they encounter first (1991, 279). Today Istanbul has one of the most recognizable skylines of the modern world. But this situation was different in the early Byzantine times. As suggested by my hypothetical reconstruction (**Figure 16**), there were a few distinctive skyline feature: the domes of the Great Churches of Hagia Sophia and Holy Apostles, the latter of which occupied the highest hill of the city; the magnificent Valens Aqueduct, which was over 250km long, had a maximum height of about 29m, and was 63m above sea level, spanning the valley between the third and fourth hills; and the land and sea walls, which had heights ranging 12 to 20m. Two obelisks were in the Hippodrome; yet they occupied low circus grounds and thus did not have much effect on the skyline. Besides these, however, there were the almost 50 m tall Column of Constantine and other colossal columns with similar heights. These monuments were widely spaced along the Mese - not all precisely equidistant but clearly followed a certain pattern with respect to the topography and hence held the whole composition together as visually distinguishing urban components. The columns became literally and symbolically visible from the scale of the immediate surroundings, through the wider scales of the city and empire. This late antique/early Byzantine "urban signature", in Kostof's terms (1991, 279), could have had a long-lasting effect on visitors, as did the Alexandrian skyline on Aphthonius.

It is obviously possible that Constantine meant his city to be as glorious as possible with buildings superior than the ones in Rome. But equally, he might have been interested in the aesthetic values of the monuments. Building a column in an enormous scale out of an ideologically charged material might be an act of personal choice in the pursuit of memorability and even fame. In that sense, the Column of Constantine recorded the remembrance of the founding ruler literally embedded in the city's topography and ceremonially inscribed in the city's future by looming in the sky. The monument commemorates not just one particular important occasion in the foundation of the New Rome, but in doing so determined its entire urban character and the skyline that reciprocally presupposed the singularity of Constantinople not only back in the fourth century but also today.

**Figure 16.** Schematic reconstruction of Constantinople's sixth-century skyline (drawn by the author).





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#### TOWARDS A NEW HONORIFIC COLUMN: THE COLUMN OF CONSTANTINE IN EARLY BYZANTINE URBAN LANDSCAPE

The first and the most important honorary column in early Byzantine Constantinople, the Column of Constantine, *Çemberlitaş Sütunu* in Turkish, still stands upright at its original location today but remained virtually hidden behind the distinct silhouettes of multiple Ottoman minarets and domes. Completed in 330 AD, during the inauguration of the new capital, this colossal column was the architectural manifestation of Constantine the Great's transfer of imperial administration to the New or the Second Rome. In literature, this monument has been either considered as a city ornament emulating the ones in Rome, or taken up as a monumental post that merely contributed to the iconographic readings of Constantine's statue at its summit. No in-depth investigation was placed on the possible relation to its precedents and successors. The present paper argues that this rather



neglected monument occupied a significant place within Constantine's urban reprogramming efforts to build a new capital. The colossal column was an idiosyncratic combination of two Tetrarchic column monuments, Diocletian's victory column in Alexandria and the Five-column monument in Rome. It was not unusual but differentiated from their contemporaries in terms of its subordinating scale, visual dominance and ritual dimension. As such, Constantine's column gained multivalent urban meanings both within the history of freestanding columns and early Byzantine urbanism. Its formidable presence elicited such awe and wonder that the column figured prominently in the late fourth or early fifth century *Tabula Peutingeriana* as an undeniable urban icon for Constantinople, along with Old St. Peter's Basilica representing Rome and the Temple of Apollo at Daphne representing Antioch. More directly than any other work of architecture, this Column provided both an image and an identity to the New Rome.

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### YENİ BİR ANIT SÜTUNA DOĞRU: ERKEN BİZANS KENT PEYZAJINDA KONSTANTİN (ÇEMBERLİTAŞ) SÜTUNU

Üzerine heykel yerleştirilmiş müstakil anıt sütun, Roma sanat ve mimarisi içerisinde nispeten sınırlı bir yapı türüdür. Başlıca işlevleri, kazanılmış bir zaferi ve bu zaferi kazanan yöneticileri övmek veya kişisel başarılarından dolayı bir devlet görevlisini onurlandırmak olarak tanımlanabilir. En iyi bilinen örnekleri İmparatorluk döneminde Roma'da yapılmış olsa da, bu tür sütunlar erken Bizans dönemi İstanbul'unda da çokça kullanılmıştır. Bu örneklerden ilki ve en önemlisi, Çemberlitaş Sütunu olarak da bilinen Konstantin anıt sütunudur. MS 330 yılında tamamlanan bu devasa sütun, yeni başkent kurulduğunun habercisi olmakla birlikte, imparatorluk yönetiminin eski Roma'dan, o zamanki adıyla yeni veya ikinci Roma'ya, yani Konstantinopolis'e, transfer edildiğinin de mimari simgesidir. Anıt, zamanının en değerli ve en emperyal malzemesi olan porfirden, daha önce hiç görülmemiş bir ölçekte yapılmıştır. Yapıldığı dönemde kent imajını oluşturan en önemli öğelerden biri olan Konstantin sütunu, günümüzde ise Osmanlı döneminin simgesi minarelerin ve kubbelerin, ve modern dönemin anıtları olan gökdelenlerin şekillendirdiği İstanbul silüetinde gözden kaybolmuştur.

Konstantin sütunu Bizans literatüründe, ya Roma'daki örneklerini taklit eden bir şehir süsü olarak kabul edilmiş ya da üzerine Konstantin tarafından yerleştirilen heykelin ikonografik okumalarına katkıda bulunan anıtsal bir kaide olarak ele alınmıştır. Sütunun benzersiz tasarım özelliklerine ve erken Bizans kent planı içerisindeki rolüne ise şu ana kadar pek değinilmemiştir. Halbuki, bir mimari obje olarak bu sütun, diğer anıt sütunlar içinde özellikli bir yere sahiptir. Bu çalışmada, Konstantin anıt sütunu, İskenderiye'deki Diocletianus zafer sütunu ile Roma'daki Beş Sütunlu Anıt olarak bilinen yapının özgün bir yeniden yorumlanması olarak ele alınmıştır. Mimari özellikleri ve kentsel kurgudaki yeri incelendiğinde, Konstantin döneminin yaratıcılığına ve bu dönemin inovasyona olan ilgisine işaret ettiği belirtilmiş ve yeni bir başkent inşa etmek isteyen Konstantin'in kentsel yeniden programlama çabaları içinde önemli bir yer işgal ettiği öne sürülmüştür. Bu anıt yapıldığı dönemde o kadar çok ilgi uyandırmış olmalıdır ki, geç dördüncü veya erken beşinci yüzyıla tarihlenen Peutinger haritasında, Roma'yı Eski Aziz Petrus Bazilikası ve Antakya'yı da Apollon Tapınağı temsil edenken, Konstantinopolis'i de Çemberlitaş Sütunu temsil etmiştir. Dolayısıyla, yeni

Roma'nın, bu sütun sayesinde daha görünür ve imgelenebilir kıldığı sonucu vurgulanacaktır.

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