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[Template:Timeline of Constantinople](/wiki/Template:Timeline_of_Constantinople) **Constantinople** ([Template:Lang-el](/wiki/Template:Lang-el); [Template:Lang-la](/wiki/Template:Lang-la); [Template:Lang-ota](/wiki/Template:Lang-ota)) was the [capital city](/wiki/Capital_city) of the [Roman](/wiki/Roman_Empire)/[Byzantine Empire](/wiki/Byzantine_Empire) (330–1204 and 1261–1453), and also of the brief [Latin](/wiki/Latin_Empire) (1204–1261), and the later [Ottoman](/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) (1453–1924) empires. It was reinaugurated in 324 AD at ancient [Byzantium](/wiki/Byzantium), as the new capital of the [Roman Empire](/wiki/Roman_Empire) by Emperor [Constantine the Great](/wiki/Constantine_the_Great), after whom it was named, and dedicated on 11 May 330.[[1]](#cite_note-1) From its foundation in the 4th century to the early 13th century, Constantinople was the largest and wealthiest city in Europe[[2]](#cite_note-2) and it was instrumental in the advancement of [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity) during Roman and Byzantine times as the home of the [Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople](/wiki/Ecumenical_Patriarch_of_Constantinople) and as the guardian of Christendom's holiest relics such as the [Crown of Thorns](/wiki/Crown_of_thorns) and the [True Cross](/wiki/True_Cross). After the final loss of its provinces in the early 15th century, the [Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire](/wiki/Byzantine_Empire) was reduced to just Constantinople and its environs, along with [Morea](/wiki/Morea) in Greece, and the city eventually [fell](/wiki/Fall_of_Constantinople) to the [Ottomans](/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) after a month-long siege in 1453.

[thumb|300px|Aerial view of Byzantine Constantinople and the Propontis (Sea of Marmara)](/wiki/File:Bizansist_touchup.jpg)

Constantinople was famed for its massive and complex defences. Although besieged on numerous occasions by various peoples, the defences of Constantinople proved invulnerable for nearly nine hundred years before the city was taken by foreign forces in 1204 by the Crusader armies of the [Fourth Crusade](/wiki/Fourth_Crusade), and after it was liberated in 1261 by the Byzantine Emperor [Michael VIII Palaiologos](/wiki/Michael_VIII_Palaiologos), a second and final time in 1453 when it was conquered by the [Ottoman Sultan](/wiki/Sultan) [Mehmed II](/wiki/Mehmed_II). The first wall of the city was erected by [Constantine I](/wiki/Constantine_I), and surrounded the city on both land and sea fronts. Later, in the 5th century, the [Praetorian Prefect](/wiki/Praetorian_prefect) [Anthemius](/wiki/Anthemius_(praetorian_prefect)) under the child emperor [Theodosius II](/wiki/Theodosius_II) undertook the construction of the [Theodosian Walls](/wiki/Theodosian_Walls), which consisted of a double wall lying about [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) to the west of the first wall and a moat with palisades in front.[[3]](#cite_note-3) This formidable complex of defences was one of the most sophisticated of [Antiquity](/wiki/Classical_antiquity) and the city was built intentionally on seven hills as well as juxtaposed between the [Golden Horn](/wiki/Golden_Horn) and the [Sea of Marmara](/wiki/Sea_of_Marmara) and thus presented an impregnable fortress enclosing magnificent palaces, domes, and towers, necessitated from being the gateway between two [continents](/wiki/Continent) (Europe and Asia) and two seas (the Mediterranean and the Black Seas).

The city was also famed for its architectural masterpieces, such as the [Greek Orthodox](/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Church) cathedral of [Hagia Sophia](/wiki/Hagia_Sophia) which served as the seat of the [Ecumenical Patriarchate](/wiki/Ecumenical_Patriarchate_of_Constantinople), the sacred [Imperial Palace](/wiki/Great_Palace_of_Constantinople) where the Emperors lived, the [Galata Tower](/wiki/Galata_Tower), the [Hippodrome](/wiki/Hippodrome_of_Constantinople), the [Golden Gate](/wiki/Golden_Gate_(Constantinople)) of the Land Walls, and the opulent aristocratic palaces lining the arcaded avenues and squares. Constantinople had a fifth-century university ([University of Constantinople](/wiki/University_of_Constantinople)) which contained numerous artistic and literary treasures before it was sacked in 1204 and 1453,[[4]](#cite_note-4) including its vast [Imperial Library](/wiki/Imperial_Library_of_Constantinople) which contained the remnants of the [Library at Alexandria](/wiki/Library_of_Alexandria) and had over 100,000 volumes of ancient text.[[5]](#cite_note-5) Constantinople never truly recovered from the devastation of the Fourth Crusade and the decades of misrule by the Latins. Although the city partially recovered in the early years after the restoration under the [Palaiologos dynasty](/wiki/Palaiologos), the advent of the [Ottomans](/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) and the subsequent loss of the Imperial territories until Constantinople became an enclave inside the fledging Ottoman Empire rendered the city severely depopulated when it fell to the Ottoman Turks,[[6]](#cite_note-6) whereafter it replaced [Edirne](/wiki/Edirne) (Adrianople) as the new capital of the Ottoman Empire.[[7]](#cite_note-7)

## Names[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

### Before Constantinople[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

According to [Pliny the Elder](/wiki/Pliny_the_Elder) in his [*Natural History*](/wiki/Natural_History_(Pliny)), the first known name of a settlement on the site of Constantinople was *Lygos,*[[8]](#cite_note-8) a settlement of likely Thracian origin founded between the 13th to 11th century BC.[[9]](#cite_note-9) The site, according to the founding myth of the city, was abandoned by the time Greek settlers from the city-state of [Megara](/wiki/Megara) founded *Byzantium* ([Template:Lang-el](/wiki/Template:Lang-el), *Byzántion*) in around 657 BC,[[10]](#cite_note-10) across from the town of [Chalcedon](/wiki/Chalcedon) on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus.

The origins of the name of *Byzantion*, more commonly known by the later Latin *Byzantium,* are not entirely clear, though some suggest it is of Thraco-Illyrian origin.[[11]](#cite_note-11)[[12]](#cite_note-12) The founding myth of the city has it told that the settlement was named after the leader of the Megaran colonists, Byzas. The later Byzantines of Constantinople themselves would maintain that the city was named in honour of two men, Byzas and Antes, though this was more likely just a play on the word Byzantion.[[13]](#cite_note-13) The city was briefly renamed *Augusta Antonina* in the early 3rd century by the Emperor [Septimius Severus](/wiki/Septimius_Severus) (193-211), having razed the city to the ground in 196 AD for supporting a [rival contender](/wiki/Pescennius_Niger) in the [civil war](/wiki/Year_of_the_Five_Emperors) and rebuilt, in honour of his son Antoninus, the later Emperor [Caracalla](/wiki/Caracalla).[[14]](#cite_note-14)[[15]](#cite_note-15) The name appears to have been quickly forgotten and abandoned, and the city reverted to Byzantium/Byzantion after either the assassination of Caracalla in 217 or, at the latest, the fall of the [Severan dynasty](/wiki/Severan_dynasty) in 235.

### Names of Constantinople[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

Byzantium took on the name of *Konstantinoupolis* ("city of Constantine", *Constantinople*) after its re-foundation under Roman emperor [Constantine I](/wiki/Constantine_I), who transferred the imperial capital from its historic base, [Rome](/wiki/Rome), to Byzantium in 330 AD and designated his new capital officially as [*Nova Roma*](/wiki/New_Rome) *(Νέα Ῥώμη)* or "New Rome." During this time, the city was also called by 'Second Rome', 'Eastern Rome', and *Roma Constantinopolitana.*[[16]](#cite_note-16)