Elements in the History of Constantinople
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THE HIPPODROME OF CONSTANTINOPLE

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The Hippodrome of Constantinople

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Abstract: The Hippodrome of Constantinople was constructed in the fourth century AD, by the Roman Emperor Constantine I, in his new capital. Throughout Byzantine history, the Hippodrome served as a ceremonial, sportive, and recreational centre of the city; in the early period, it was used mainly as an arena for very popular, competitive, and occasionally violent chariot races, while the Middle Ages witnessed the imperial ceremonies coming to the fore gradually, although the races continued. The ceremonial and recreational role of the Hippodrome somehow continued during the Ottoman period. Being the oldest structure in the city, the Hippodrome has witnessed exciting chariot races, ceremonies glorifying victorious emperors as well as the charioteers, and the riots that shook the imperial authority. Today, looking to the remnants of the Hippodrome, one can imagine the glorious past of the site.

Keywords: Byzantium/Byzantine, ceremonies, chariot, Constantinople, Hippodrome

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# Contents

1 Introduction 1

2 History of the Hippodrome 4

3 The Architecture of the Hippodrome 13

4 Monuments and Sculptures 22

5 The Hippodrome as the Ceremonial Setting of the City 40

6 Circus Factions and Chariot Races 48

7 The Church’s Opposition to the Chariot Races 59

8 The Hippodrome During the Ottoman Period 61

9 Archaeological Research and Excavations Conducted in the Hippodrome and Vicinity 65

Bibliography 69