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Archaeologists Discover Rare Roman Coin in Veliky Novgorod

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The she-wolf, or Lupa, is one of the symbols of the city of Rome. Legend goes that the wolf-like animal suckled the twins, saving them from starvation.

A rare Roman coin dating back to the fourth century AD has been found at an excavation site in Russia's Veliky Novgorod, a news report said.

The copper coin, which was discovered Friday, "bears the image of a she-wolf with Romulus and Remus — the founders of Rome — on one side, and the image of a Roman goddess on the other side," Oleg Oleinikov, head of the excavation expedition, told Agence France-Presse on Monday.

The coin, which dates back to the time of Roman Emperor Constantin I, is so far the oldest of about 4000 artifacts discovered in the city following an excavation organized by the Archeology Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Constantine I, otherwise known as Constantine the Great, is venerated as a saint by the Eastern Orthodox and Byzantine churches, and it is thought that the coin's owner wore it as

a Christian relic, ITAR-Tass reported Monday, citing Oleinikov.

The discovery marks "a new page in the history of ties between Constantinople and Russia of those times," Oleinikov was quoted as saying by AFP.

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