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# Byzantine Military

Dedicated to the military history and civilization of the Eastern Roman Empire (330 to 1453)

"Time in its irresistible and ceaseless flow carries along on its flood all created things and drowns them in the depths of obscurity."

---- Princess Anna Comnena (1083–1153) - Byzantine historian

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2012

## The Harbor of Theodosius

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### THE EASTERN ROMAN EMPIRE

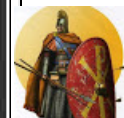


### TRENDING - THE MOST POPULAR STORIES IN THE LAST 7 DAYS BASED ON PAGEVIEWS



#### [The Roman Suppression of Paganism](#)

The Pagans were right about the Christians Once in power the Christians of the Roman Empire did everything possible to prevent freedom...



#### [Battle of Ad Decimum \(Ten Mile Post\)](#)

6th Century Roman infantry officer. The

## A Computer Re-Constructed Portus Theodosiacus of Constantinople.

### The Harbor of Theodosius

- The harbor was built in the late 4th century during the reign of Theodosius I, and was the city's major point of trade in Late Antiquity. The area was later transformed for agricultural use due to the effects of erosion and silting. In Ottoman times, the area was built over.
- In November 2005, workers on the [Bosphorus Tunnel Project](#) discovered the silted-up remains of the harbour. Excavations produced evidence of the 4th-century Port of Theodosius. There, archaeologists uncovered traces of the [city wall of Constantine the Great](#), and the remains of over 35 Byzantine ships from the 7th to 10th centuries, including several Byzantine galleys, remains of which had never before been found.

The **Harbor of Eleutherios** later known as the **Harbor of Theodosius** (Greek: λιμήν Θεοδοσίου, Latin: *Portus Theodosiacus*) was one of the ports of ancient Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, located beneath the modern [Yenikapi](#) neighbourhood of Istanbul, Turkey.

The Harbor of Theodosius in Istanbul dates back to the period of 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. It was unearthed in Yenikapi in Istanbul. Various works of excavation in Yenikapi, Sirkeci and Uskudar count among the splendor remains of archaeology belonging to the periods ranging from Ottoman, Roman, Byzantine, Ancient Greek and Neolithic times.

Istanbul, which happens to be capital of these two empires for several centuries has been successfully preserving its importance in all the periods of history till now. Travelers from the world over have been inspired by the majestic beauty of the districts of Pera and Galata, the Golden Horn, the Virgin's Tower and its grand mosques atop the seven hills. However, as of now, the city is facing the problem of transportation which originated way back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and persists even today. The problem was meant to be solved by the construction of rail link projects namely Marmaray and the Metro.

These two projects by the Department of Transportation will help in making a rail link between Asian and the European continents through a tunnel beneath the Bosphorus.

### Portus Theodosiacus

In the year 2004, the Istanbul Archaeological Museums undertook the work of archaeological excavations around the terminals before proceeding with the digging work for the Marmaray and the Metro construction. These excavations which are being carried out by the efforts of dig teams have unearthed several cultural treasures of historical importance for Istanbul.

The Harbor of Theodosius, which is regarded to be the most prominent harbor of the Byzantine era, is the result of these archaeological excavations. This harbor was unearthed in Yenikapi ('Vlangu' in the Ottoman times). The district of Yenikapi was known

Roman Re-Conquest of North Africa (533 - 534 AD) The Germanic tribe called the Vandals had...



#### The Forum of Constantine

The Column of Çemberlitaş today in what was the Forum of

Constantine. The Column called Çemberlitaş ("the stone with hoops") was commis...



#### The Siege of Constantinople

Artist conception of Arab forces that could have faced Roman troops.

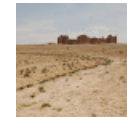
The First Arab Siege of Constantinople (674 - 678) The ...



#### Sex Crimes in Byzantium - Torture and Mutilation

Sex and love were much more open

in a tolerant Greek and Roman world. Byzantine Christians made sex a crime punishable by torture, mu...



#### The Byzantine Fortress of Qasr Bashir

The Roman - Byzantine Fortress of Qasr Bashir in

Jordan. The Limes Arabicus - A chain of forts protecting Roman lands from Arab r...



#### The Hippodrome of Constantinople

The Hippodrome in Constantinople could seat 30,000 or more people.

Like the Colosseum in Rome, the Hippodrome was the social center o...



#### The Battle of Carthage

Barbarian invasions of both halves of the Roman Empire.

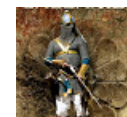
The Vandals took the scenic route through much of Europe before sacking Rome its...



#### The Golden Gate of Constantinople

THE GOLDEN GATE OF

CONSTANTINOPLE A recreation of what the Golden Gate looked like in 1200 A.D. The Golden Gate was the great ceremonia...



#### Battle of Dara (530 AD)

Sassanian Persian Cataphract - Sassanid

Immortal - Elite Cavalry Background to War The wars between the West and the

to be the fruit and vegetable garden of Istanbul. It has also become known by reading the notes of the travelers visiting Istanbul during the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century that the Harbor of Theodosius, built during the 4<sup>th</sup> century and used till 7<sup>th</sup> century was used as a truck garden after it silted up and became a part of the mainland.

### Harbor of Theodosius

#### Excavations undertaken at Yenikapı

Although the location of this harbor of Istanbul, namely, the Theodosius' harbor was known from the maps in the ancient times, however, there was no knowledge about its exact size, position and the layout of this harbor which played an important role in the economy of the Byzantine period.

Founded on the crossroads between the Balkans and Anatolia and the pathway extending from the Aegean right up to the Black Sea, Byzantium's location was a great contributor to the development of the city, so much so that it dominated various commercial routes.



Discovered ship.

To meet the growing needs of the expanding capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, Theodosius I commissioned the construction of the Theodosius Harbor between 379-395 A.D. so, a breakwater extending from east to west along the south way of a natural bay was built for creating this harbor. And **a large tower that stood at the far end for keeping a guard** on the entrance of the harbor was among several

other structures and silos for keeping the grain brought by big ships from Alexandria and neighboring ports that stood around the harbor. Sources claim that the Alexandria silo was the only silo of the city that was in wide use during the 10<sup>th</sup> century when this harbor silted up.

During the archaeological excavation undertaken in the harbor, 34 ships were excavated out of which 21 were in the Metro while 13 were in the Marmaray excavations. Once again, this harbor silted up from the alluvion brought by the waters of the Lycos (Bayrampasa) River which emptied in the natural bay. Apart from the alluvion, the built of enormous silt was also the result of the construction and farming carried out in the city.

Persian Empire ...

#### **LABELS FOR SUBJECTS**

- Africa
- Albania
- Algeria
- Anatolia
- Arabs
- Army
- Balkans
- Buildings - Byzantine Spania
- Buildings - Column of Justinian
- Buildings - Forum of Constantine
- Buildings - Harbor of Theodosius
- Buildings - Hippo Regius in Algeria
- Buildings - Hippodrome of Constantinople
- Buildings - Tebessa in Algeria
- Buildings - Volubilis
- Bulgaria
- Caucasus
- Civil War
- Constantinople
- Croatia
- Crusades
- Culture
- Cyprus
- Economy - Byzantine Southern Provinces
- Economy - Byzantine Trade Goods
- Economy - Silk Industry
- Egypt
- Europe
- Fortifications - Amasya Castle
- Fortifications - Apollonia
- Fortifications - Boreum (Bu Grada)
- Fortifications - Castle of the Angels
- Fortifications - Dara in Mesopotamia
- Fortifications - Fort of Gheriat el-Garbia
- Fortifications - Golden Gate of Constantinople
- Fortifications - Harput Castle
- Fortifications - Maiden's Castle
- Fortifications - Markeli
- Fortifications - Monte Hacho and Ceuta
- Fortifications - Qasr Bashir in Jordan
- Fortifications - Saint Hilarion Castle
- Fortifications - Tureta
- Fortifications - Walls of Thessaloniki
- Fortifications - Zenobia
- Greece
- Israel
- Italy
- Jordan
- Libya



A Computer Re-Constructed Portus Theodosiacus of Constantinople.

- Mesopotamia
- Middle East
- Military Theme - Armeniac
- Military Theme - Dalmatia
- Military Theme - Longobardia
- Morocco
- Navy
- Normans
- Persia
- Religion - Roman Suppression of Paganism
- Spain
- Syria
- Tunisia
- Turks
- War - Arab Sack of Thessaloniki
- War - Arab Siege of Constantinople

From the excavations, it came to the notice that the majority of the shipwrecks in the Theodosius Harbor are at the eastern side nearing the entrance of the harbor. While the harbor was thought to have been silted up from the western end towards the east, the eastern end continued to be in wide use till a natural calamity that took place in the 10<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century rendered extensive damage to the ships there.

The YK 1 ship that carried amphorae from the Marmara Island and was anchored here was claimed by the excavations to have been sunk. The YK 12 was another shipwreck that was found in the excavations in the area of the harbor. Several fragments of amphorae along with 16 intact amphorae were found on this YK 12. Although, at present, the exact cause of the disaster that struck these ships cannot be found, however, the assumption is [some natural disaster or tragedy](#) including tsunami or a storm might be the possible reason behind the cause of the disaster to these ships.



Unearthed pottery

The history of Istanbul has got some very crucial data from the architectural remains recovered to the western side of the Yenikapi excavation area in the work being carried out in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Zone towards the east. A quay consisting of stone blocks of rectangular shape has been found at the western edge within the breakwater.

The excavations in the Metro area uncovered a church building that was believed to be built in the

13<sup>th</sup> century A.D. when large amount of silt was piling up in the harbor. And around this church building were found twenty-three graves. The excavations also unearthed a gold coin belonging to the time of Justinian the Great (527-565 A.D.).

- War - Arab Siege of Nicaea
- War - Battle of Ad Decimum
- War - Battle of Anchialus
- War - Battle of Carthage
- War - Battle of Dara - Romans vs Persians
- War - Battle of Dyrhachium - Normans vs Byzantines
- War - Battle of Klokotnitsa
- War - Battle of Solachon - Romans vs Persians
- War - Battle of Taginae - 552 AD
- War - Battle of the Gates of Trajan
- War - Battle of the Masts
- War - Battle of Volturnus - Romans vs Franks
- War - Byzantine - Genoese War
- War - Roman - Persian War
- War - Sack of Damietta Egypt
- War - Second Battle of Marcellae

**CONSTANTINE THE GREAT**



Founder of Constantinople which would later be the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire for over one thousand years. Proclaimed religious tolerance of all religions throughout the empire. (306 - 337)

**JULIAN THE PHILOSOPHER**





A Computer Re-Constructed Portus Theodosiacus of Constantinople.



Born in the new city of Constantinople. Described himself as "first among equals", participated in debates and made speeches in the Constantinople Senate, fired thousands of bureaucrats, proclaimed that all the religions were equal before the law, author. (361 - 363)

In the Yenikapi excavations being carried out under the Marmaray and Metro Project, **nearly 25,000 artifacts have been unearthed** so far. And the most distinguishing factor or such findings happens to be the vital information provided by them regarding day-to-day life, economy, trade, culture and religious aspects of the period to which they belong. Some of the findings uncovered during the excavations include hawsers of the sunken ships, inscribed image of a ship on an amphora that belongs to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, iron and stone anchors and baked clay tablets with names, place of origin of the owners of the ship inscribed on them. All such findings also provide important information regarding the types of ships and the shipping during the period.

Apart from the above named findings, there are nearly 2,500 items made of wood including combs, different varieties of spoons, bath clogs etc. that have been found by the excavation work. Also, a Christ figure, tools of bone and ivory, a bronze balance, bronze weights, lead tablets and a scale weight in the form of Athena's bust throw light on the lifestyle of the period they belong.

#### Archaeological excavations in Sirkeci

Under the Marmaray Project, the archaeological works being carried out in the eastern and the western shafts and in the south and the north entrance areas of the Rail Station in Sirkeci provide an excellent opportunity for knowing the stratigraphy of the city of Istanbul. In such excavation works, several structural remains that belong to the period ranging from the [Early Byzantine to the Byzantine](#) and even the Late Ottoman times along with a considerable number of small items and pottery have been found. These relate important details about the different aspects of the life of these periods.



#### Archaeological excavations in Uskudar Square

As part of the Marmaray project, a large number of archaeological excavations were undertaken from the year 2004 which continued till the year 2008. These excavations conducted in the Uskudar Square found the remains of the foundation of a bazaar whose existence was although known from a number of other sources but was unable to have been unearthed so far. And to unearth the foundation of this bazaar, the workers involved in the excavation work had to drill up quite deep up to nearly 7 meters.

The archaeological remains was found deep in the fill dirt. In the excavations, there were

#### THEODOSIUS II



Emperor 408 to 450. Known for the Theodosian law code, and the construction of the Theodosian Walls of Constantinople. When Roman Africa fell to the Vandals in 439, both Eastern and Western Emperors sent forces to Sicily, to launch an attack at the Vandals at Carthage, but this project failed.

#### JUSTINIAN THE GREAT AND THEODORA

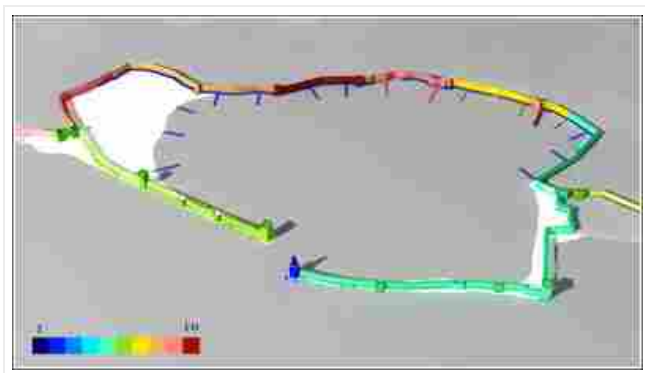


Emperor 527 to 565. Justinian was the last Roman Emperor to speak Latin as a first language. Justinian's reign is marked by the ambitious but only partly realized renovatio imperii,

no traces or archaeological remains belonging to the Roman period or the earlier periods. But, the excavations uncovered a huge amount of pottery, along with coins, oil-lamps, stamp seals that dated back to the different periods ranging from the Roman period to the Late Roman period and the Byzantine period.



A Computer Re-Constructed Portus Theodosiacus of Constantinople.



This rendering shows the port as color coded according to our current level of knowledge. The legend is below.

or "restoration of the Empire". His general Belisarius conquered the Vandal Kingdom in North Africa, extending Roman control to the Atlantic Ocean. Subsequently Belisarius, Narses, and other generals conquered the Ostrogothic Kingdom, restoring Dalmatia, Sicily, Italy, and Rome to the Empire after more than half a century of barbarian control. The prefect Liberius reclaimed most of southern Iberia, establishing the province of Spain. Under his rule there was a uniform rewriting of Roman law, the *Corpus Juris Civilis*, which is still the basis of civil law in many modern states. His reign also marked a blossoming of Byzantine culture, and his building program yielded such masterpieces as the church of Hagia Sophia.

#### HERACLIUS



Emperor 610 to 641. Heraclius' reign was marked by several military campaigns. The year Heraclius came to power the Empire was threatened on multiple frontiers. Heraclius immediately took charge of the ongoing war against the Sassanid Persians. The first battles of the campaign ended in defeat for the Byzantines; the Persian army fought their way to the Bosphorus. However, because Constantinople was protected by impenetrable walls and a strong navy, Heraclius was able to avoid total defeat. Heraclius drove the Persians out of Asia Minor and pushed deep into their territory, defeating them decisively in 627 at the Battle of Nineveh. Soon after his victory he faced a new threat of the Muslim invasions. In 634 the Muslims invaded Roman Syria, defeating Heraclius' brother Theodore. Within a short period of time the Arabs would also conquer Mesopotamia, Armenia, and Egypt.

#### LEO III - THE ISAURIAN

1. Pure Imagination
2. Educated guess based on similar structures
3. Textual evidence
4. Textual and comparative evidence
5. Slight graphical evidence
6. Graphical evidence
7. Some excavation data or base plans available
8. Good photographs or plans available
9. Still existing (or partially existing) with modifications
10. Still existing in original form 100% sure

(Harbour of Eleutherios)      [\(Byzantium 1200\)](#)

[\(sultanahmet1.com\)](#)      [\(Yenikapi-shipwrecks\)](#)

Posted by [Gary](#) at 4:20 PM

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Emperor 717 to 741. Defended the Empire during the Second Siege of Constantinople against an invading Arab army of 80,000 men and a fleet of over 2,500 ships. Leo reformed the laws with the elevation of the serfs into a class of free tenants. Leo began the iconoclast campaign.

#### THEODORA



Empress as the spouse of the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus, and regent of her son, Michael III, from Theophilus' death in 842 to 855. She carried on the government with a firm and judicious hand, and replenished the treasury. The Empress organized the Roman navy and army in multi-front wars against the Arabs and deterred the Bulgarians from an attempt at invasion.

#### BASIL II - THE BULGAR SLAYER



Emperor 976 to 1025. Basil oversaw the stabilization and expansion of the Byzantine Empire's eastern frontier, and above all, the final and complete subjugation of Bulgaria, the Empire's foremost European foe, after a prolonged struggle. For this he was nicknamed by later