

**Üsküdar excavations** Üsküdar is another important station on the Asian side of the Marmaray Project that is to connect Asia and Europe and a location that has always been a crossing point between Asia and Europe. Various sources state that there has been a settlement in this vicinity since antiquity. The data obtained from excavations at various points and in Üsküdar Square confirm the information from these ancient sources. Finds extending from the Archaic Period through the Hellenistic and Roman periods as well as Byzantine and Ottoman times present the uninterrupted flow of history. The excavations conducted both at the harbor and the square of Üsküdar that was called Khrysopolis meaning "city of gold," in ancient times and Scutari during the Roman Period displayed this flow to the Istanbulis through the finds.



**Sirkeci excavations** The third archaeological excavation site of Istanbul's Marmaray project was located here, in Sirkeci, one of the most important locations of the Historic Peninsula. The archaeological excavations of the Sirkeci area were conducted at four different points. Sirkeci has not only been an important area since Antiquity, but it is also the most congested pedestrian and vehicle traffic area in modern Istanbul. With more businesses than residences and at the center of the tourism district, Sirkeci has been a harbor since the 7th century. The whole of the Sirkeci excavation area is located along the Proshporianos Harbor considered to have been located east of the present day train station and south of the Sepetçiler Pavilion.



# Underground Revolution



an exhibition based  
on the rich finds  
of the Istanbul  
Metro-Marmaray excavations  
on 5 October 2010 – 5 March 2011

Istanbul Centre in Brussels



**Istanbul**, an ancient city connecting two even more ancient continents. The child of the Bosphorus connecting the Black Sea on her north with the Sea of Marmara on the south; a waterborne city, whose layers of cultures were created by that water. The Historic Peninsula, cradled by the Sea of Marmara and the Golden Horn, where these layers fold over one another. For millennia, this small peninsula was born again and again and, with each change, created a new ambiance suitable to its new life styles. Istanbul's topography has also undergone numerous changes from prehistoric times when the Sea of Marmara is believed to have been a lake and the Bosphorus a watercourse the size of a river. This special topography has an uninterrupted history of millennia.

**Therefore**, the construction of an extensive transportation network in what has become a giant metropolis cannot be compared to projects in any other city in the world. This metropolis is a giant due not only to its size but also to its long past. When the first Marmaray excavations for a mass transportation project to carry thousands of people across the city began in what is one of the busiest hubs of the city, Istanbul showed its other face, in other words its historical face. Hence, in 2004, this giant urban project also launched one of the most important archaeological excavations in the country's history.

**The** Marmaray Project is a railway network of about 76 km that will cross the northern shore of the Marmara Sea in an east-west direction, will contain 40 stations, and will connect the Asian and European sides by an underwater tube crossing. The architectural and small finds that came up during the excavations in the Historic Peninsula, Yenikapı and Sirkeci on the European side and Üsküdar, a harbor city on the Asian side, prompted the Istanbul Archaeological Museums and archaeological excavations were started under the responsibility of the museum experts.

**For** a long time Istanbul residents watched the most important areas of these three most important and busiest neighborhoods of the city enclosed by metal walls. Finds from the excavations at these three important stations started to give away the hidden secrets of the city.

**The** surprises continued as the excavations proceeded! In the end, archaeologists with brushes and small trowels, ignoring the waiting machinery of construction, dug all the way down to remains from the Neolithic Period. It was these efforts that brought to light the 8000-year history of Istanbul. The "8000 Years of Istanbul brought to the light of day" Exhibition that opened on 25 June, 2007, at the Istanbul Archaeological Museums and the book prepared by the archaeologists from the museum largely justified the inconveniences suffered by Istanbul residents, and gave them a chance to meet the heritage left by their earliest fellow townsmen.



**Yenikapı excavations** The Yenikapı neighborhood is the largest excavation area since this is the place where the Marmaray and Metro excavations converge. This 58,000-square-meter archaeological site has yielded dazzling historical finds, including 34 shipwrecks of the Port of Theodosius, city walls dated to the reign of Constantine I, and remains from the Neolithic Period. Called the Langa Vegetable Gardens in the past, this area was once the most important port along the Marmara shore of Istanbul during the Byzantine Period. Excavations unveiled some very important results related to the history of the harbor and its place in the city. 34 shipwrecks, most of which were dated to the 10th century and were buried in sand for an unknown reason, provided unprecedented information on the ship building techniques of Antiquity. Digs conducted to the west of the excavation site, in the area referred to as "Plot 100", unearthed

architectural remains and additional work led to formulate that this ruin formed part of the Constantinian Wall, built during the reign of Emperor Maximus I (324-337). A museum project that will allow Metro and Marmaray passengers to see the finds from the excavations and understand the course of Istanbul's history was added to the main project as a cultural unit to be considered with the stations that will be built after the excavation area is closed. The Regional Protection Board has declared this area "an area to be preserved and used as an archeological park".

