Among the projects towards amending the growing transportation issues, Eurasia Tunnel (Istanbul Straight Road Crossing Project) which has been one of the biggest undertakings of the recent years, connects Asian side to the European side with a 5 km road tunnel crossing beneath the seabed. Eurasia Tunnel which provides service for Istanbul’s heavy motor vehicle traffic area with Koşuyolu-Kumkapı route and the tunnel’s access roads cover a total of 14.6 km. While the 5.4 km section of the project consists of a twin deck tunnel to be built beneath the seabed with a special technology and the connecting tunnels with different methods, a total 9.2 km route on the European and Asian sides underwent a widening and enhancement scheme. The approach routes between Sarayburnu-Kazlıçeşme and Harem-Göztepe have been widened to give way to build junctions, vehicle underpasses and pedestrian overpasses. The Bosporus Strait tunnel crossing and road enhancement and widening schemes are an integral configuration to relieve Istanbul’s motor vehicle traffic. While the duration of commute time will be reduced drastically it will also be possible to enjoy a safe and luxurious passage. Istanbul’s new icon Eurasia Tunnel will also respect city’s environment and contribute to the reduction of noise pollution. To actualise the Eurasia Tunnel Project’s design, construction and operations, Directorate of Infrastructure Investments of the Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications of Republic of Turkey (MOVIM) has commissioned Eurasia Tunnel Operation Construction and Investment Inc (ATAŞ) which has been established by the collaboration of Yapı Merkezi from Turkey and SK E&C from South Korea in equal partnership. Eurasian Tunnel will be handed over to the public at the end of an approximately 25 years operating period.

Archaeological Excavation Team and Academic participants

Excavations were carried out by a large group, led by the Head Curator of Istanbul Archaeology Museum’s Zeynep S. Kızıltan. Site supervisors were Assistant Museum Curator Rahmi Asal and Museum archaeologists Dr. D. Emre Oncü, Sırrı Çölmuşak and Emir Sen. archaeologists: Cülaşım Aydin, Selma Eksi, Melissa Şiraz, Emeğ Uğurlar, Ozan Yıldırım, Evren Yıldız, Sırrı Yığıt, art historian Ali Masali, restoration archaeologist Murat Akkan and photographer Dilara Şen Turan were also involved in the workings. Istanbul University Faculty of Forestry’s Prof. Dr. Ünal Akkemik and his team have performed dendrochronology studies on the excavated timber.

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Findings

Çatladıkapı

During the excavations that were conducted in the Çatladıkapı Region, scattered remnants belonging to a wooden shipwreck were located on the sea bottom. It has been ascertained that these dismembered shipwreck remnants have reached present day in their dispersed state. The ship which probably belongs to late Ottoman Period had its remains so scattered that it has been impossible to envision the shape of the ship. Besides the shipwreck remnants many articles with different material attributes have been brought out to light. These findings tell the story of the past disposition of Istanbul's coastal line in front of the city walls. Inherent findings like several stone anchors were found during the work conducted on the antique seabed. It has been agreed that the anchors found had belonged generally to small boats. Numerous Byzantine Era perfume bottles and amphoras that have been dated between 5th and 11th century AD have also been procured. Besides these, several terracotta objects such as lamps, pitchers and plates as well as engraved bone objects in a variety of styles, like dagger grips and game pieces have been found that also belong to the Byzantine Era.

Yenikapı

The excavations conducted at Yenikapı have contributed most valuable information to the public and the world of science in regards to Istanbul’s archaeology and urban history. The first stage of the excavations here have revealed 19th century coastal homes that can still be seen at the Yalı Excavation Sites and Their History

Excavations were held in two different regions. The first site was on the Çatladıkapı coast line located on the South of the Marmara city walls. When the city’s antique topography was observed, it was evident that the excavated regions had been filled in during the construction of the coastal road but during the antique times the city walls would have been 100m in front of the walls, in the sea. The excavation site starts from the Boukoleon Palace at Çatladıkapı, stretches to Rumeli and then runs along the shore line from Konstaklion Harbour to Theodosius Harbour. The other excavation site is at the Yenikapı region. Within the radius of the Yenikapı underground pass’s road area construction site which includes a major part of the Eurasia Tunnel Project’s connection roads, excavations were conducted at the Yenikapı old roundabout on the coastal road, at the section where Mustafa Kemal Road intersects the old Yenikapı road junction and on the 3000m² area on the East of Aksaray Yalı District. The excavations on both regions began in 2014 and were concluded in 2017.

Grounds for the Excavations and Research

Excavations and research were led on the European side of the project at the TBM exit of the Çatladıkapı and Yenikapı Highway and the Yenikapı below ground road construction area in accordance with the associated conservation board’s decree and under the supervision of Istanbul Archaeology Museums.

FINDINGS