

Animals in food consumption during the Byzantine Period in the light of the Yenikapı Metro and Marmaray Excavations, Istanbul

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During the work for the Marmaray Project which has been started in 2004 at Yenikapı Istanbul, The Theodosius Harbour, one of the biggest harbours of Constantinople at Marmara Sea shore was excavated. The Theodosius Harbour not only showed us its importance in ancient days by revealing specific findings, but also reached us valuable information about the history of Istanbul (Constantinople). Information and details about the daily life, technology, religion, economy, trade and also food consumption and nutrition of Constantinople as a harbour city has been revealed.

Thousands of archaeological findings excavated in area over 58.000 m² enabled us to understand more the Byzantine animals and their role in nutrition. The revealed animal skeletal remains were evaluated and their relation to Byzantine period food consumption were analysed. Until now, the evaluation results of 65535 (NISP=65535) remains were analysed. In the excavation area, cattle, sheep, goat and pig remains were the mostly found ones relating food consumption. Dromedaries, deer, tuna fish, dolphins and many others were the following leading species. Majority of the remains in the Theodosius Harbour were (66.20%) domestic ruminants. Most of the skeletal remains are having butchering traces on indicating that they were used for food consumption.