

Subway work unearths ancient road in Greece

June 26 2012, by COSTAS KANTOURIS



Workers of Metro's construction company are seen at the ancient ruins in the northern Greek port city of Thessaloniki on Monday, June 25, 2012. Archaeologists in Greece's second largest city have uncovered a 70-meter (230-foot) section of an ancient road built by the Romans that was city's main travel artery nearly 2,000 years ago. The marble-paved road was unearthed during excavations for the city's new subway system that is due to be completed in four years, and will be raised to be put on permanent display for passengers when the metro opens. (AP Photo/Nikolas Giakoumidis)

(AP) — Archaeologists in Greece's second-largest city have uncovered a 70-meter (230-foot) section of an ancient road built by the Romans that was city's main travel artery nearly 2,000 years ago.

The marble-paved road was unearthed during excavations for Thessaloniki's new subway system, which is due to be completed in four years. The road in the northern port city will be raised to be put on permanent display when the metro opens in 2016.

The excavation site was shown to the public on Monday, when details of the permanent display project were also announced. Several of the large marble paving stones were etched with children's board games, while others were marked by horse-drawn cart wheels.

Also discovered at the site were remains of tools and lamps, as well as the bases of marble columns.



Archaeologists and employees of Metro's construction company present to the media and public the ancient ruins in the northern Greek port city of Thessaloniki on Monday, June 25, 2012. Archaeologists in Greece's second largest city have uncovered a 70-meter (230-foot) section of an ancient road built by the Romans that was city's main travel artery nearly 2,000 years ago. The marble-paved road was unearthed during excavations for the city's new subway system that is due to be completed in four years, and will be raised to be put on permanent display for passengers when the metro opens. (AP Photo/Nikolas Giakoumidis)

Viki Tzanakouli, an archaeologist working on the project, told The Associated Press the Roman road was about 1,800 years old, while remains of an older road built by the ancient Greeks 500 years earlier were found underneath it.

"We have found roads on top of each other, revealing the city's history over the centuries," Tzanakouli said. "The ancient road, and side roads perpendicular to it appear to closely follow modern roads in the city today."



A worker of Metro's construction company holds a fragment of old pottery in the northern Greek port city of Thessaloniki on Monday, June 25, 2012. Archaeologists in Greece's second largest city have uncovered a 70-meter (230-foot) section of an ancient road built by the Romans that was city's main travel artery nearly 2,000 years ago. The marble-paved road was unearthed during excavations for the city's new subway system that is due to be completed in four years, and will be raised to be put on permanent display for passengers when the metro opens. (AP Photo/Nikolas Giakoumidis)

About 7 meters (23 feet) below ground in the center of the city, the ancient road follows in roughly the same direction as the city's modern Egnatia Avenue.

The subway works, started in 2006, present a rare opportunity for archaeologists to explore under the densely populated [city](#) — but have also caused years of delays for the project.



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In 2008, workers on the Thessaloniki metro discovered more than 1,000 graves, some filled with treasure. The graves were of different shapes and sizes, and some contained jewelry, coins or other pieces of art.

A massive excavation project also took place during the 1990s in the capital, Athens, before the city's new metro system opened in 2000.



(AP Photo/Nikolas Giakoumidis)

Thessaloniki's new subway is already four years behind schedule, due to the excavation work as well as Greece's financial crisis. Thirteen stations will operate initially, before a 10-station extension is added later.

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