

## Golden Horn

The Golden Horn (Turkish: Haliç) is a flooded prehistoric estuary dividing the city of Istanbul. In Greek legend, Byzas the Megarian named it after his mother Keroessa. With the Sea of Marmara, the Golden Horn encloses a peninsula. It forms a deep natural harbor. The Byzantine Empire had its naval headquarters there, and walls were built along the shoreline to protect the city of Constantinople from naval attacks. At the entrance to the Horn, there was a large chain pulled across from Constantinople to the old Tower of Galata (which was known as the Megalos Pyrgos (Great Tower) among the Byzantines) on the northern side, preventing unwanted ships from entering. This tower was largely destroyed by the Latin Crusaders during the Fourth Crusade (1204), but the Genoese built a new tower nearby, the famous Galata Tower (1348) which they called Christea Turris (Tower of Christ). Boats on the Golden Horn There were three notable times when the chain across the Horn was either broken or circumvented. In the 10th century the Vikings (Varangians) dragged their longships out of the Bosphorus, around Galata, and relaunched them in the Horn; the Byzantines defeated them with Greek fire. In 1204, during the Fourth Crusade, Venetian ships were able to break the chain with a ram. In 1453, Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II, having failed in his attempt to copy the Venetians and break the chain with brute force (indeed, heavily damaging his own ships in the process), instead copied the tactics of the Rus', towing his ships across Galata into the estuary over greased logs. After the Fall of Constantinople to Fatih Sultan Mehmet, Greek citizens, the Greek Orthodox Church, Jews, Italian merchants, and other non-Muslims began to live along the Horn in the Phanar (Fener) and Balat districts. Today the Golden Horn is settled on both sides, and there are parks along each shore. The Istanbul Chamber of Commerce is also located along the shore, as is a Muslim cemetery. The Galata Bridge, built in 1836, connects the districts of Galata and Eminönü. Two other bridges, the Atatürk Bridge and the Haliç Bridge, are located further up the Horn. Until the 1980s the Horn was a dumping ground for industrial waste, but has since been cleaned up and is a popular tourist attraction in Istanbul because of its history and beauty.