



The roman port of *Berytus*

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- Situated on a rocky headland with a wide coastal plain
- Northern coast afforded natural shelter from dominant southwesterly winds
- Western and southwestern coastlines less protected, characterized by sand dunes

A Brief History of Roman Beirut

Pompey annexes Syria in 64 BCE

Augustus establishes *Berytus* as Roman colony circa 15 BC; city is granted large extension of land in the Lebanon mountains and Bekaa

Legions V and VIII settled in *Colonia Berytus*, presumably including large tracts of land in Bekaa



Legions V Macedonia and VIII Gallica (University of Warwick 2017)



Bath complex in the Beirut Central District

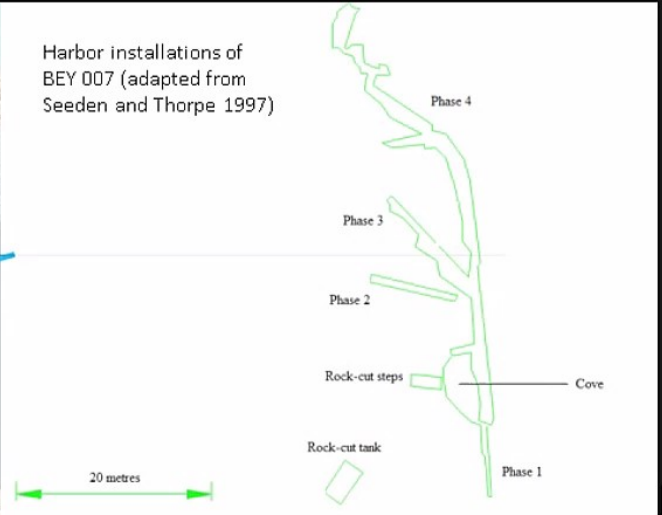


Entre Mares



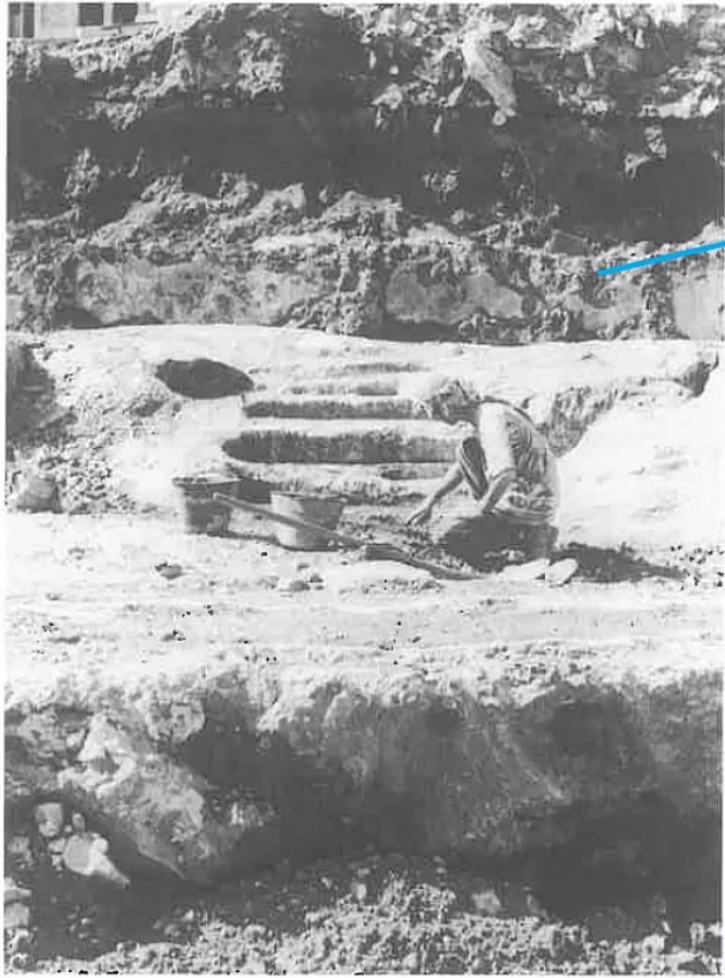


Harbor installations of BEY 007 (adapted from Seeden and Thorpe 1997)



Excavations in the site of BEY 007 revealed Roman to Ottoman period harbor installations composed of a quay, rock-cut steps leading to a cove, and several rock-cut tanks
In the above figure, Phase 1 is the only phase attributed to the Roman period





SEA



?Fish Tank



Entre Mares



BEY 039 was excavated rapidly due to external pressure, and unfortunately only a sounding was conducted

Results indicate the presence of a quay with several phases of construction, the first of which dates to the Iron Age and the latest of which likely dates to the Roman period



BEY 039

Three phases of a quay have been differentiated by excavators:

- Phase 1: Iron Age/early Hellenistic Phase
 - Likely associated with the late Iron Age/early Hellenistic period based on diagnostic finds, composed of 60cm X 50cm X 100cm rectangular ashlar blocks laid
 - Some stones joined together with lead-enforced dovetail joints, possibly those most exposed
 - The feature was constructed by overlapping the stones



Various phases of the ancient quay (after Elayi 2010)



BEY 039

Three phases of a quay have been differentiated by excavators:

- Phase 3: Late Hellenistic and Roman Phase
 - Likely associated with the late Hellenistic and Roman periods, composed smaller ashlar blocks comparable to those found in BEY 007
 - Mortar used as a binding agent
 - A single mooring stone observed, with gaps observed roughly every 4.3m in the quay, presumably the location of other mooring stones



Various phases of the ancient quay (after Elayi 2010)



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A mooring post with grooves for tying rope to secure a boat (after Elayi and Sayegh 1998)

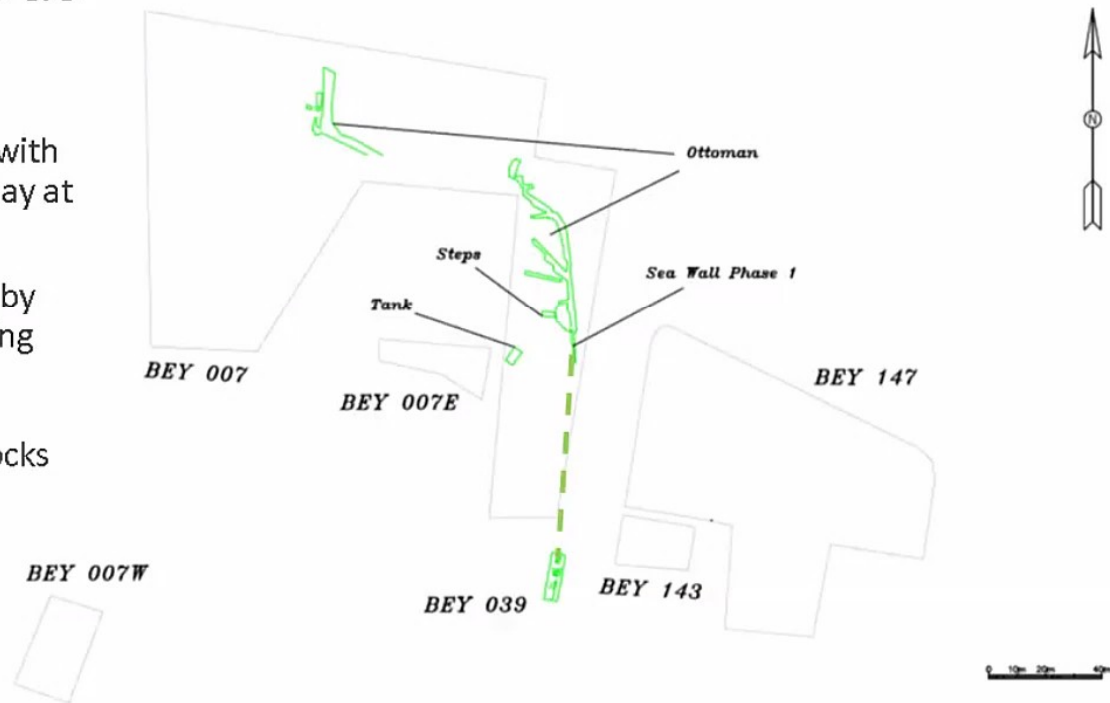


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One Continuous Quay?

The association of BEY 007 with BEY 039 would suggest a quay at least 100m in length

Both phases are associated by the use of mortar as a binding agent, as well as the size, placement and rough orientation of the ashlar blocks





Rapid soundings were taken from BEY 143 and 147, revealing what appear to be harbor sequences; earliest material uncovered seems to be late Hellenistic at the latest

Lack of material from the 2nd century AD to 5th century AD, potentially due to dredging activity

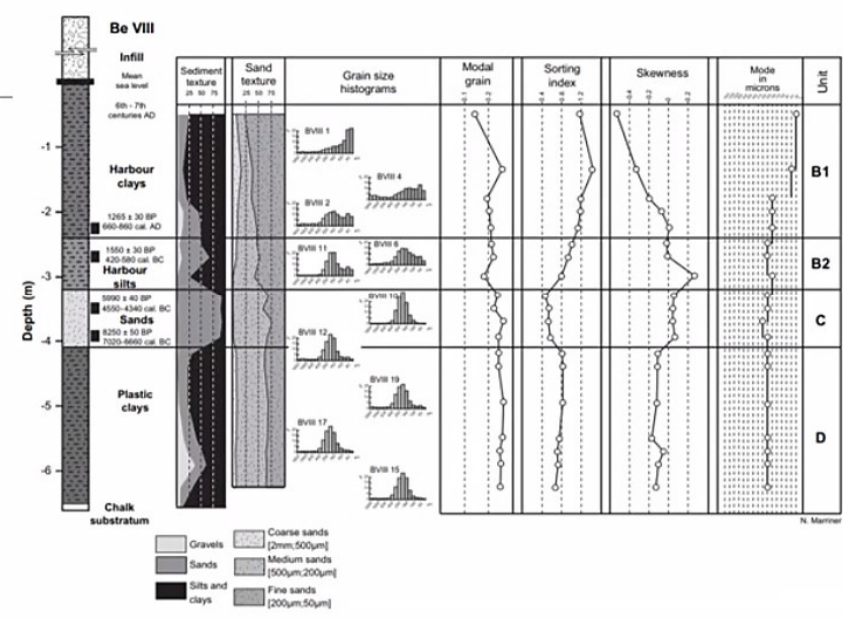


Sedimentary Cores

Harbor basin went from a high-energy environment to a low-energy environment, most probably associated with a closed harbor

Harbor was likely dredged throughout the Roman period until the early Byzantine period

Depth of around 2-3m



Sedimentary analysis of core Be VIII in the western basin (after Marriner et al. 2008: 2504, Fig. 13)



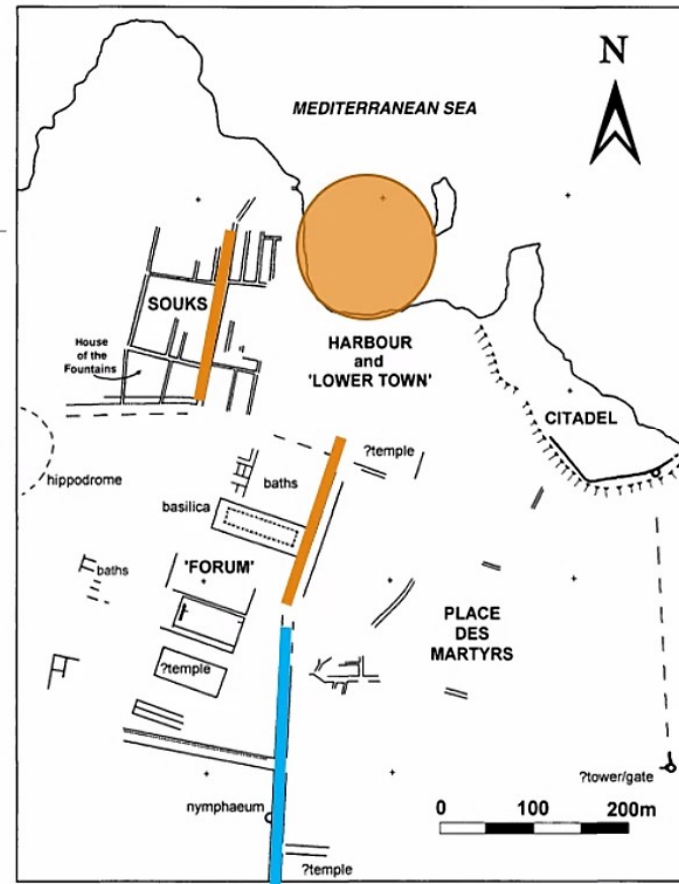
The Urban Grid

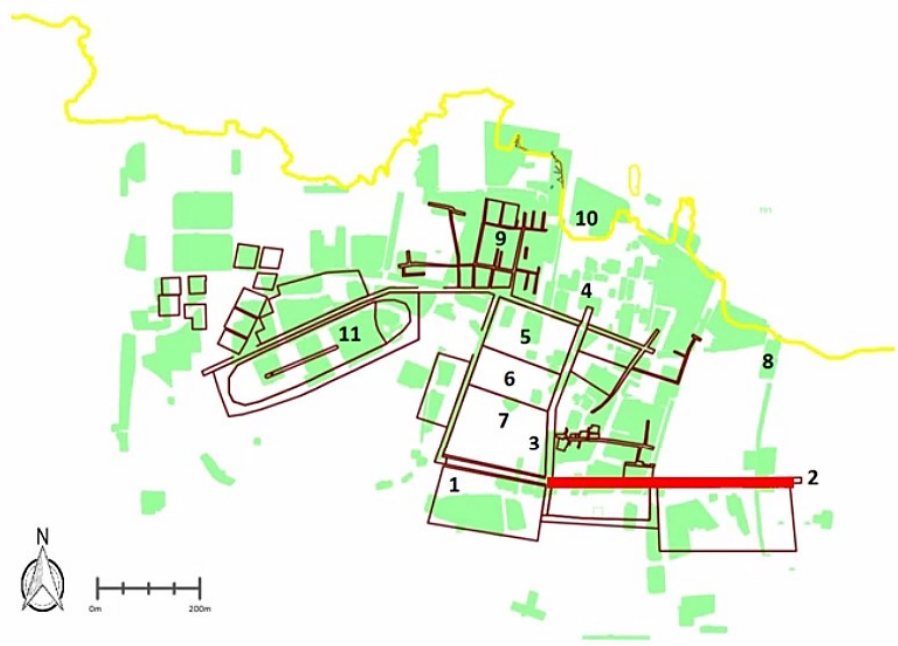
The Hellenistic city centered around the harbor

The new Roman colony adopted certain aspects of the Hellenistic urban grid, particularly around the harbor basin

Other parts of the city were replanned on top of the previous Hellenistic grid, depicted by a change in orientation

The Hellenistic and Roman city center (after Perring et al. 2003: Fig. 2)





Decumanus Maximus East overlaying Hellenistic structures (after Saghieh-Beydoun 2005: 168, Fig. 33)



Roman street grid of Beirut based on BCD excavations; Decumanus Maximus West (1) and East (2), Cardo Maximus South (3) and North (4); Imperial Thermae, BEY 045 (5); Central Forum, BEY 009 (6); Temple and large, domestic dwellings, BEY 004 (7); Roman amphora kilns, BEY 015 (8); Souks area (9); Harbour basin (10); Hippodrome (11) (data provided by Hans Curvers)

This is particularly apparent in a main road in the eastern portion of the city, identified by some archaeologists as the Decumanus Maximus East, that overlays previous Hellenistic structures

Conclusion

Harbor is currently landlocked due to coastal progradation

Although evidence is largely fragmentary, all signs point to the construction of the quay in the Iron Age and the continued use and refurbishment of the harbor throughout the Roman period

Upkeep halted in the Byzantine period, whereby we see stagnation throughout the city

Based on estimated depth and spacing of mooring stones, it appears that Beirut was probably able to receive small to mid-sized Roman merchant vessels

