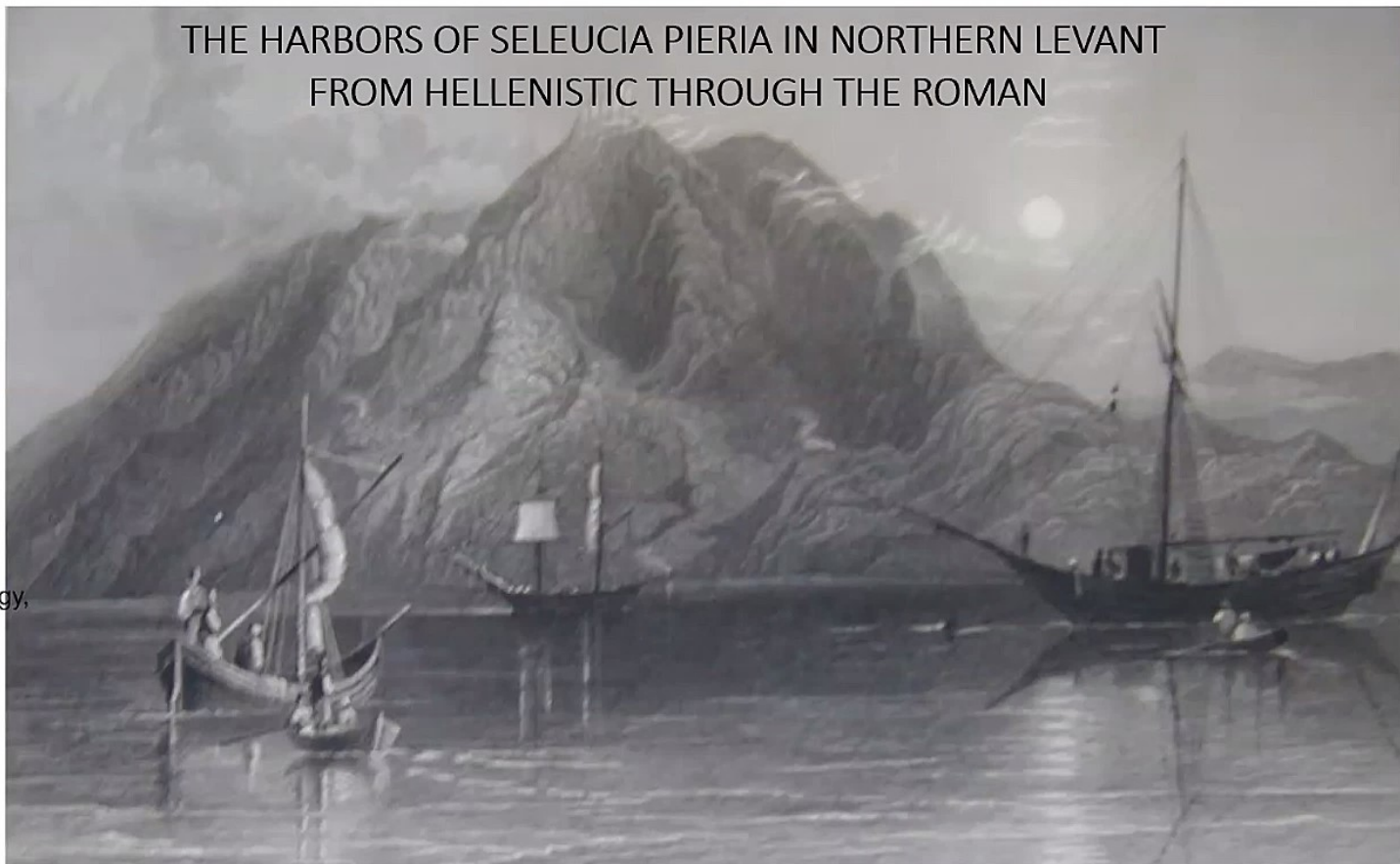




Hatice Pamir
Director of Antioch
Excavations
Department of Archaeology,
Hatay Mustafa Kemal
University, Antakya-
Hatay/Turkey



THE HARBORS OF SELEUCIA PIERIA IN NORTHERN LEVANT FROM HELLENISTIC THROUGH THE ROMAN





Seleucia Pieria from west



The remains of Seleucia Pieria lies on the plain and the slope of Mt. Pieria (Musa Dag) from coast to the 400m altitude. Google Earth map.

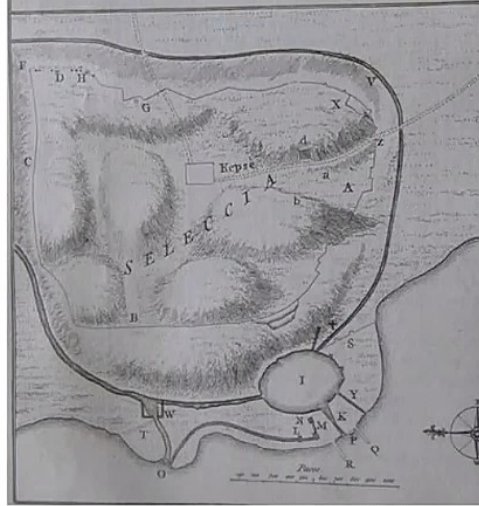


Looking to the delta plain, shoreline and the Mt. Cassius from Upper City of Seleucia Pieria

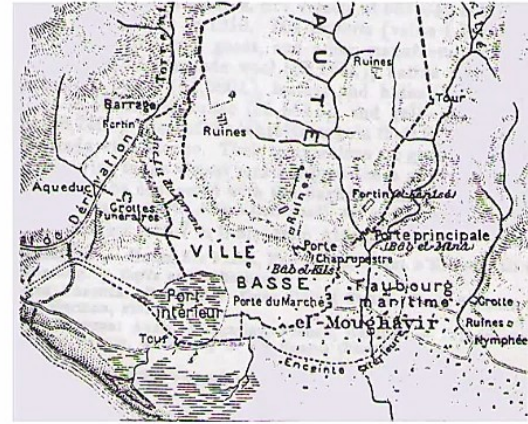


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The sketch plan of Seleuceia Pieria and its harbours
The travellers



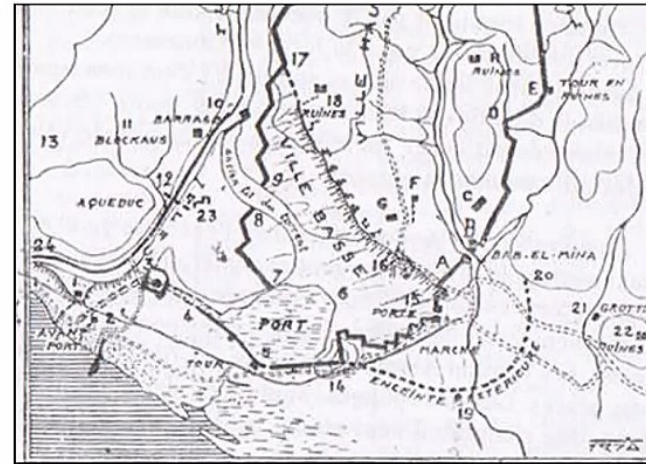
R. Pococke 1745



K. Baedeker 1898



V. Chapot 1906



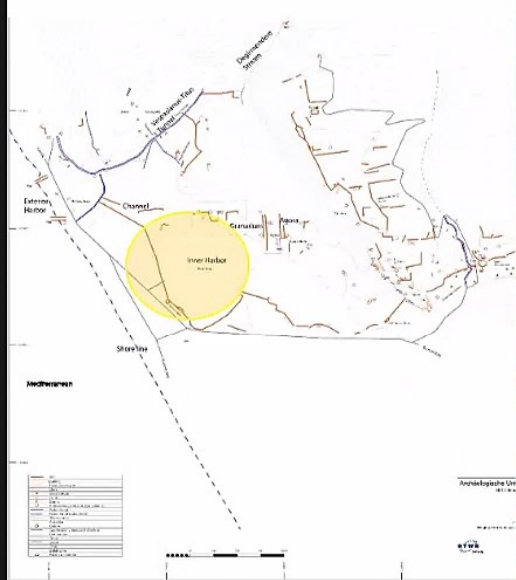
P. Jacquot 1931

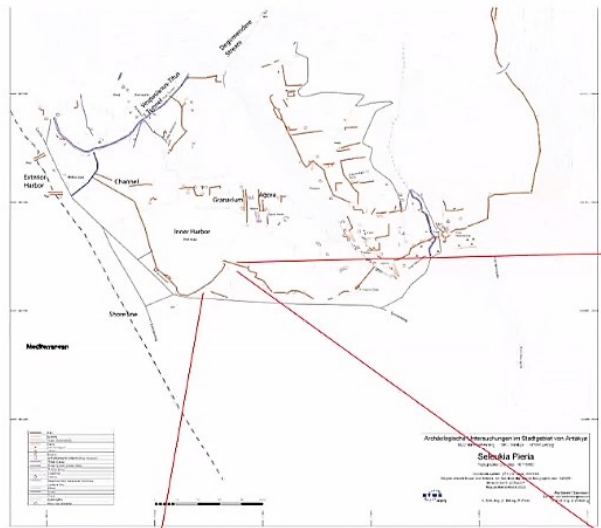


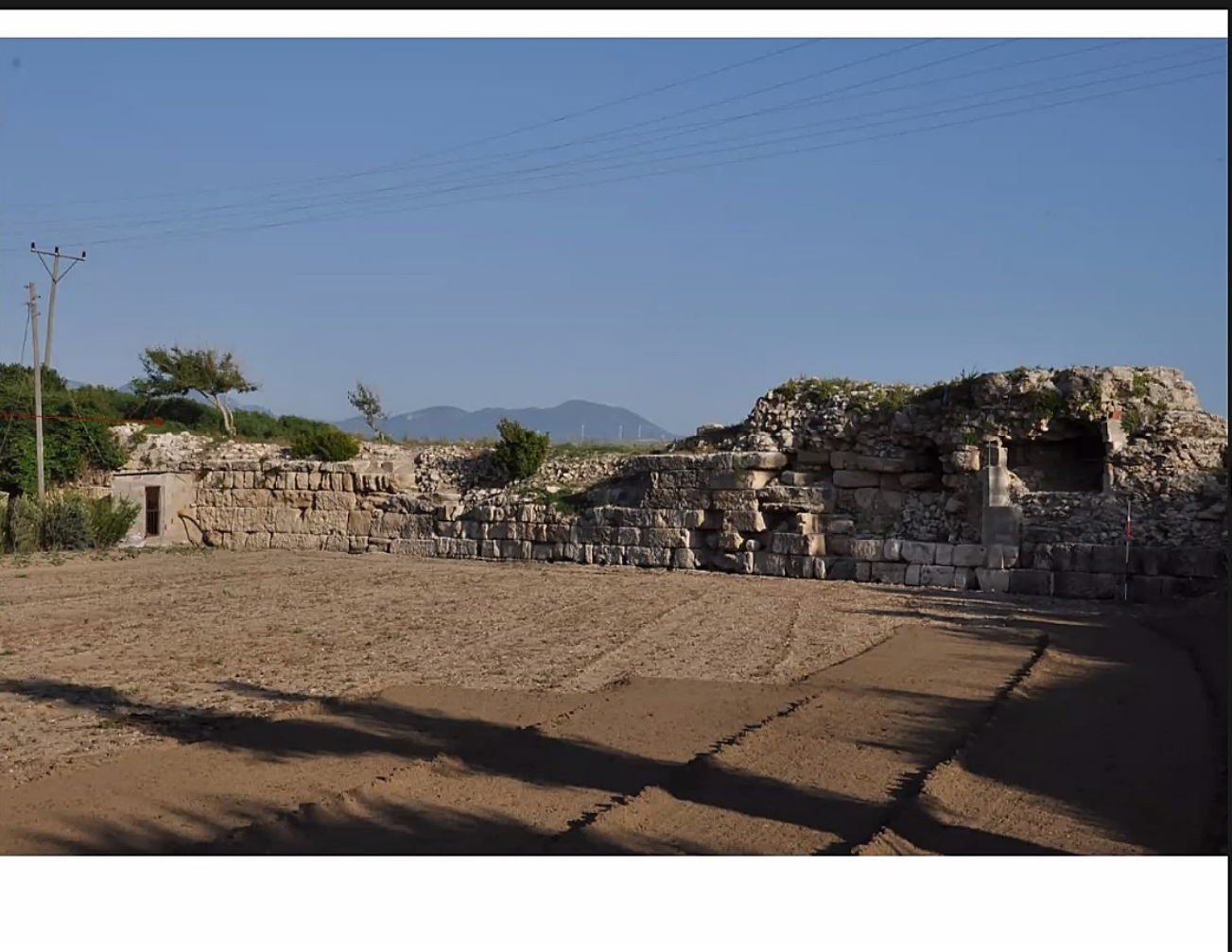
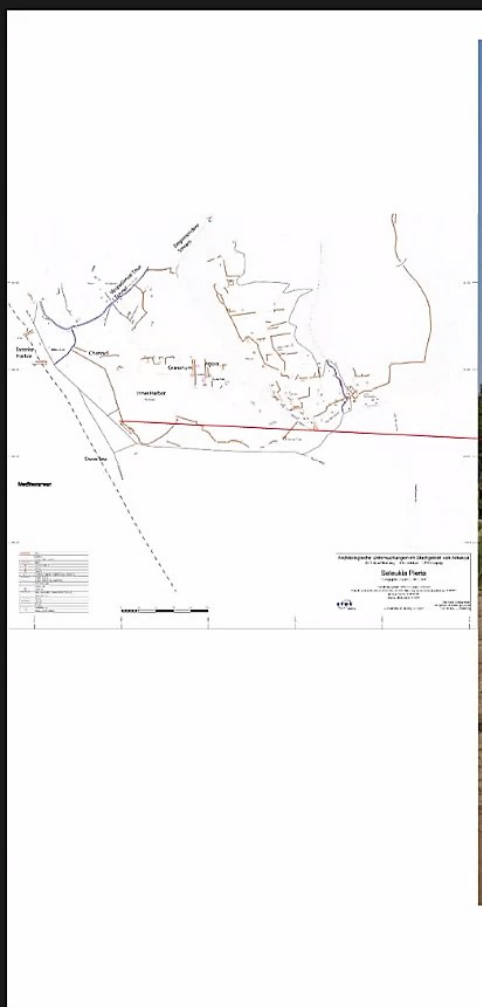
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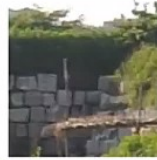
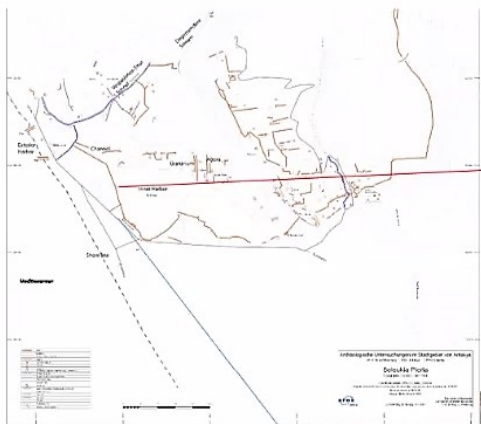


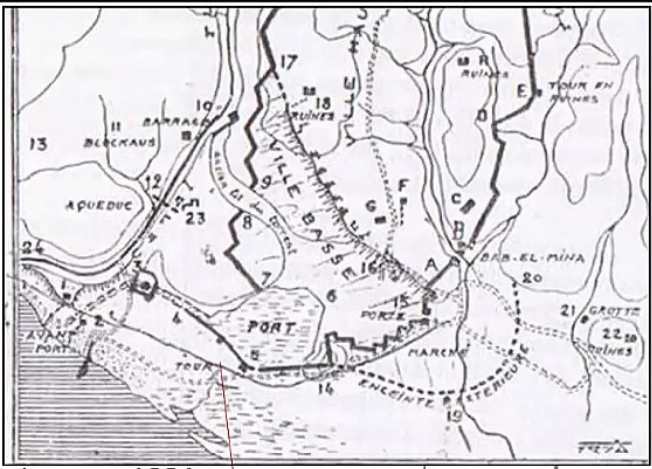
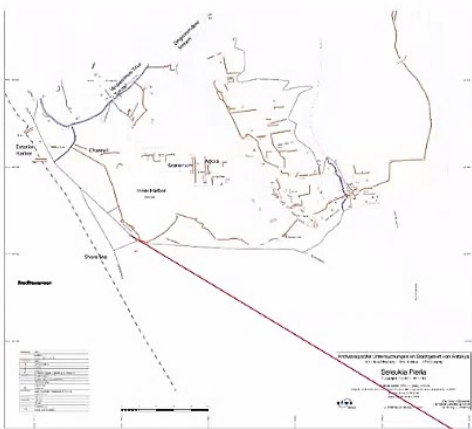
The Inner Harbor







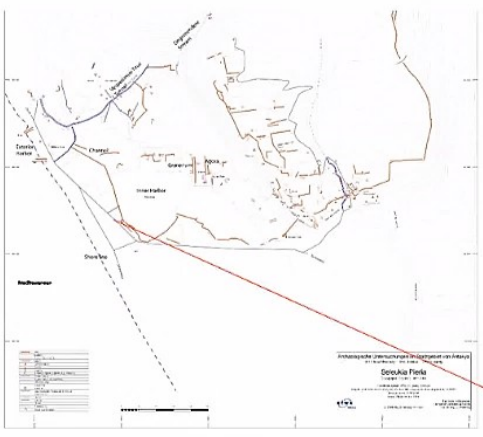


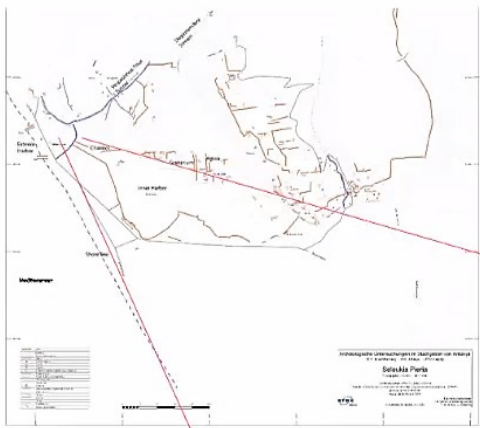


Jacquot 1931

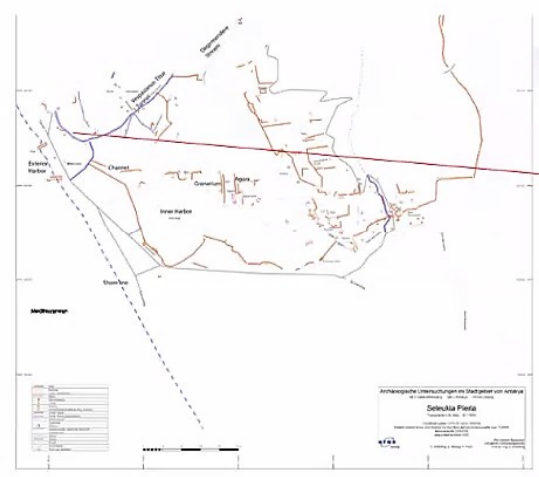


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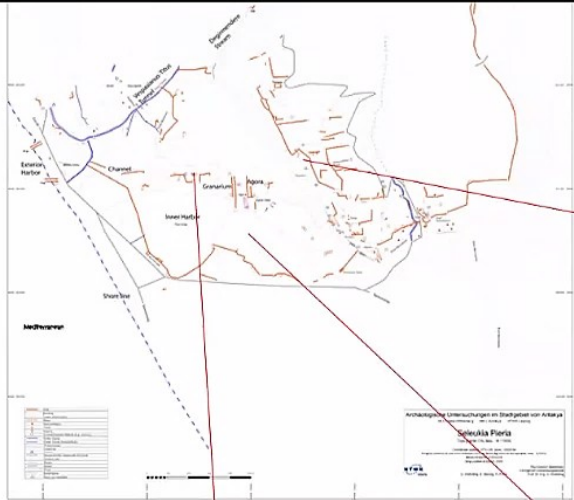
The tower





The southwestern pier of the inner harbour
The moorings





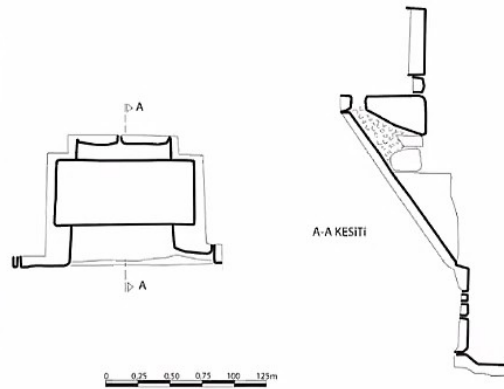
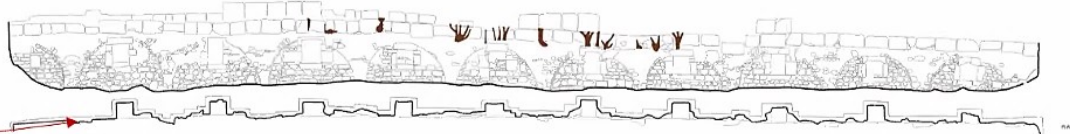
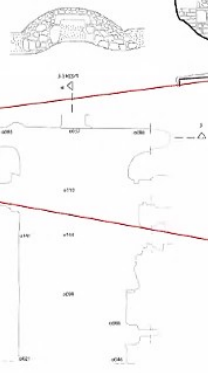
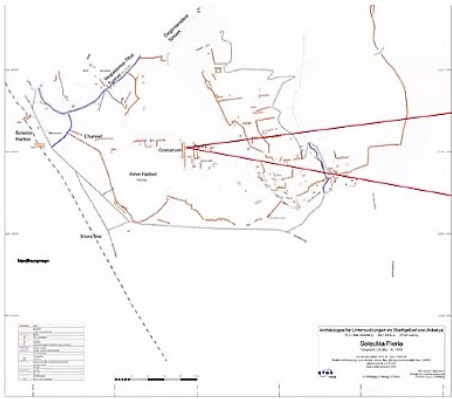
General view of the portals opposite docks 1 & 2," *Archaeologica / Archives*, accessed November 2, 2021, <https://vrc.princeton.edu/archives/items/show/15581>.





The Granarium

GRANARIUM PERA
K. LAMPA
S. MARINUS



SEDAT BIÇER - KAMUKAN ÖNCÜ

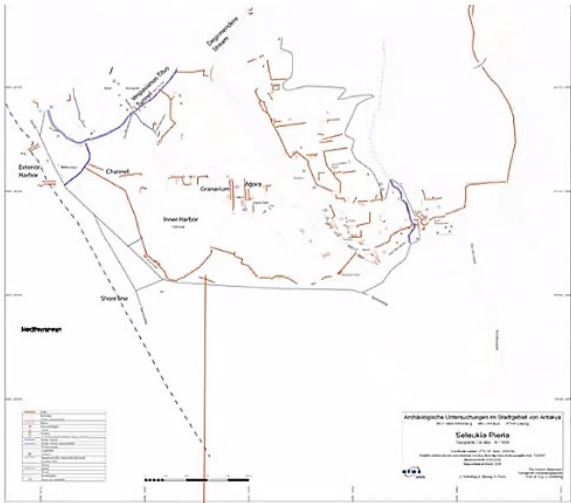


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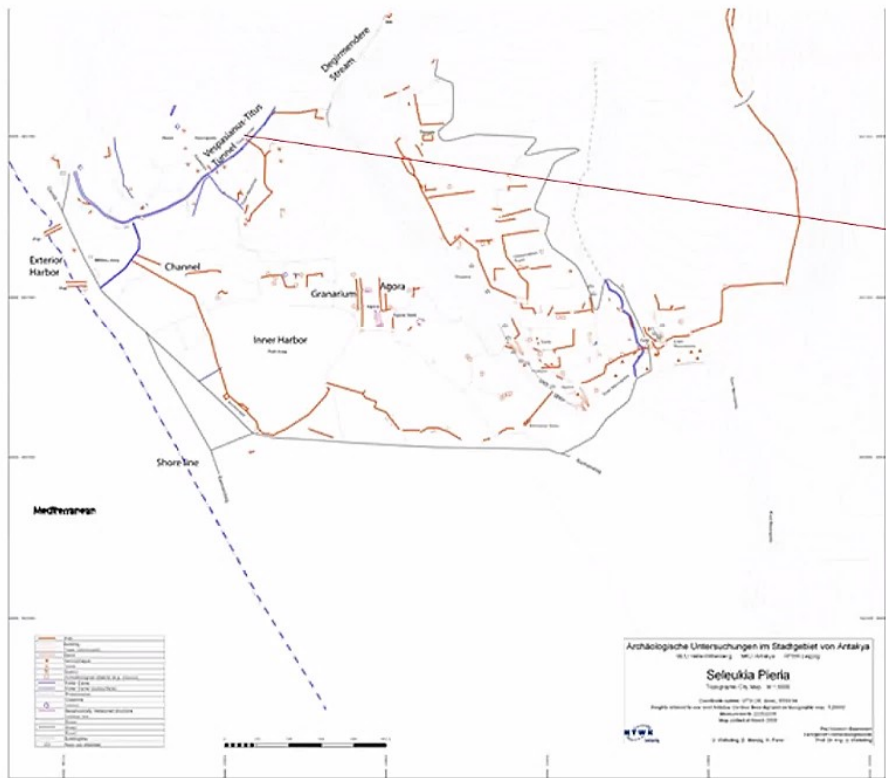


The walls of the inner harbour from hellenistic through the roman times

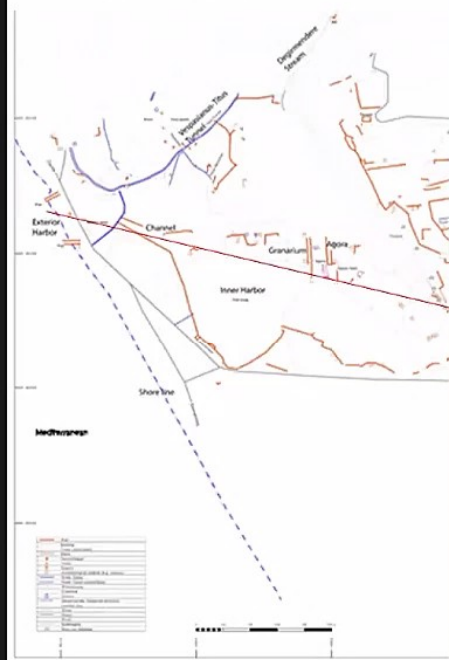




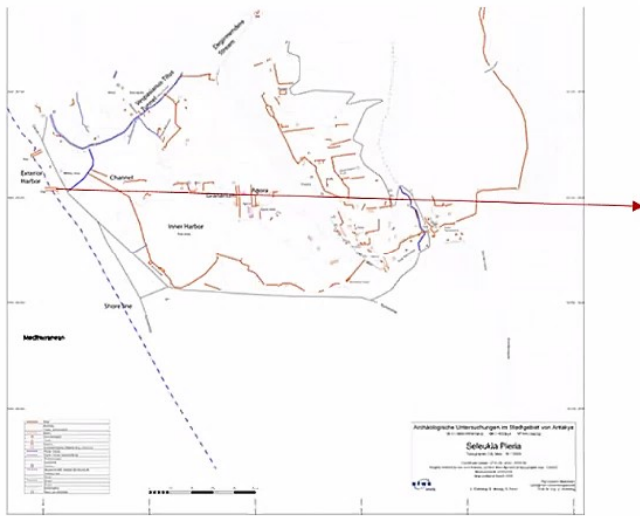
Vespasianus-Titus Tunnel-Dam



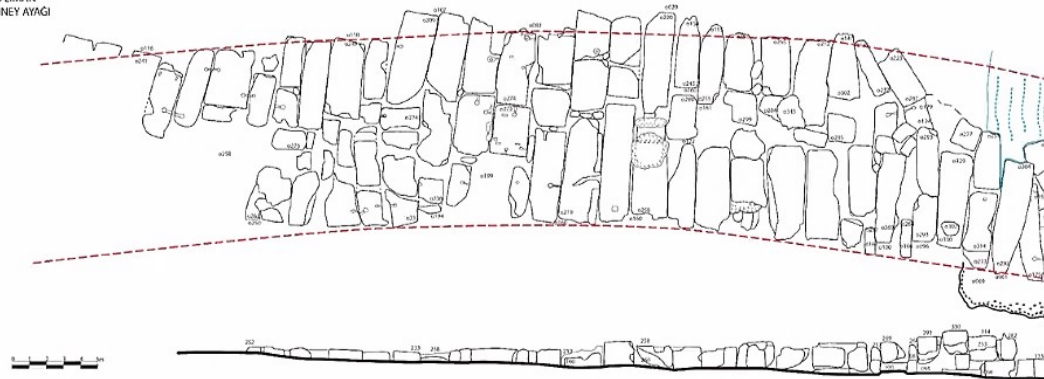
The Exterior Harbour



Southern pier of the Exterior Harbour



SELUCEIA PIERA
DIS LIMAN
GUNEY AYAGI





The northern pier of the exterior harbour



Conclusion

The fact that a natural lagoon facing the sea existed right next to a rocky acropolis must have been one of the biggest advantages Seleucia Pieria. Polybius tells of an *emporion* on flatlands surrounded by strong walls in Seleucia Pieria and of suburbs of the city.

According to Livius, the Seleucid Navy, defeated in a battle near Cyprus, retreated to Seleucia and some ships were taken in for repairs there.

According to Garoub Papyrus (dated to 246/5 B.C.) the capacity of the harbor 5 ships end to end could be docked which, considering the area the harbor occupied, shows that not all of the harbor was used as docks.



- Silting brought by Dēgirmendere/Kapısuyu River to the inner harbor. This river must have caused floods and damaged the harbor from time to time.
- Erosion of the slopes in the East and North of the lagoon and subsequent accumulation of silt in the lagoon.
- Coastal changes in Asi Delta due to tectonic movements. The first tectonic movement which took place approximately 2500 years ago BC raised the coast 1.7m whereas the second movement 1400 years ago raised it 0.7m - 0.8m. That means the shoreline rose approximately 2.5m between just before the founding of Seleucia Pieria and the loss of its significance.
- Moreover, tsunami waves caused by the great earthquake of 526 AD are said to have put the harbor out of commission.



Shoaling of harbour was one of the most significant problems ancient harbour engineering faced. Engineers came up with various solutions to this problem. In harbors with single entrances people tried to clean silt by using pressurized water. This method involves the stopping of water flow of a stream with dams. The water is accumulated until it is capable of creating a strong wave. Then dam shutters are opened at certain intervals and the sudden force of water cleans the harbor.

Seleucia Pieria can be regarded as the best example of this method. The Vespasianus-Titus Tunnel which was quite complex for its time, must have been made capable of carrying pressurized water into the harbor through the use of pools and a channel opening to the northwest of the inner harbor. At the same time, a second entrance to the harbor must have been created with the channel here. According to archaeological evidences the construction continued in the 2nd century AD



The Diocletian era (284-305 AD) document reveals that despite all the efforts, shoaling could not be prevented and the harbor was effected by the same problem and rectification attempts continued.

Under the command of Eugenius, a military unit consisting of 500 retired soldiers worked on deepening the entrance to the harbor of Seleucia. But the work could not be completed because of the the rebellion in 303 AD.

Sedimentary bulk mixed artifacts on t on the side of the Hellenistic wall to the southeast of the inner harbor shows that the efforts for deepening the harbor entrance took place here. Therefore, we can say that at least the entrance in the west of the harbor was still open in A.D. 303 and the channel in the north was used as a second entrance to clean the harbor of slime with dams, water reservoirs and pressurized water.



For the Roman hegemony policy in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Harbor of Seleucia played an important role in Rome's financial and military activities in the east.

27 days away from Rome by sea, the Harbor of Seleucia Pieria became an important Roman commerce and military base in the Eastern Mediterranean along with Alexandria.

To protect maritime transportation, a coast guard force/imperial guard fleet called *Classis Syriaca* was put together. According to inscriptions on 6 grave steles and 22 marble stele from Seleucia Pieria necropolis, belongs to the mariners of *Classis Syriaca* from Ravenna and Missena. These epitaphs which date back to 129-212 AD, explain that Missene navy stayed in Seleucia for a short while.



In the 4th century A.D., the almost inoperable state of the Inner Harbor can be explained with the construction of a new one. In A.D. 346 when Emperor Constantius visited Seleucia, he saw the new harbor constructed in the seaside and said that this harbor would be very helpful in terms of commerce and military.



Seleucia Pieria was the harbor city of Antioch which was growing and enriched by Roman times and it connected Antioch to Rome and Mediterranean world.

Only after the cease of trade activities due to devastation of Antioch and Seleucia by the great earthquake of 6th century A.D did the harbor of Seleucia lost its importance.

The fact that small vessels still docked at the exterior harbor of Seleucia in the mid-19th century and surveys by R. Chesney who visited the region in order to research ways to improve this harbor show that the Harbor of Seleucia is still usable at that time.

