

WHAT HAPPENED IN SOLI-POMPEIOPOLIS WITHIN THE LAST TWO CENTURIES?

SON İKİ YÜZYILDA SOLİ-POMPEİOPOLİS'TE NELER OLDU?

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ABSTRACT: Soli-Pompeiiopolis, once a glorious harbor city of Roman Empire, have not been settled after its destruction due to an earthquake in 525 AD until the modern times of the city of Mersin. During the time of their visits to Soli-Pompeiiopolis, the 19th century European travelers have presented their observations on the ancient city in their notes. Most of the archaeological remains mentioned in travelers' notes are not present currently in the site. The main question arises as what has happened to the ancient city within the last two centuries so that archaeological remains had disappeared. The aim of this article is to explore settlement history of Soli-Pompeiiopolis ancient site and its vicinity in order to determine factors resulted in loss of archaeological remains. The article intends to conduct historical analysis to detect settlement history and comparative analysis to understand the severity and reason of the damage given to the site.

Key Words: Soli-Pompeiiopolis, settlement history, archaeology, 19th century travelogues.

ÖZ: Bir zamanlar Roma İmparatorluğu'nun görkemli bir liman kenti olan Soli-Pompeiiopolis, MS 525 yılında büyük bir deprem sonrası yıkılmış ve modern Mersin kendinin kurulmasına kadar geçen sürede bir daha yerleşilmemiştir. 19. Yüzyılda Avrupalı gezginler Soli-Pompeiiopolis'i ziyaretleri sırasında antik kentle ilgili gözlemlerini derledikleri gezi günlüklerinde sunmuşlardır. Gezinlerin notlarında bahsedilen arkeolojik kalıntıların çoğu şu anda mevcut değildir. Çalışmanın temel sorusu, antik kentte son iki yüzyılda ne olduğu ve sonucunda arkeolojik kalıntıların neden ortadan kalktığıdır. Makalenin amacı, arkeolojik kalıntıların yok olmasına neden olan faktörleri belirlemek ve Soli-Pompeiiopolis antik kenti ile çevresinin yerleşim tarihini araştırmaktır. Yerleşim tarihini tespit etmek için tarihsel analiz ve arkeolojik eserlere verilen hasarın ciddiyetini ve nedenini anlamak için karşılaştırmalı analiz yapmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Soli-Pompeiiopolis, yerleşme tarihi, arkeoloji, 19. Yüzyıl gezi günlükleri.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The curious nature of human stimulate him/herself to take long journeys to discover the unknown. The 19th century was a century when most of the European travelers had wondered about the orientalist world in the East – especially Asia Minor. Many European travelers had visited the Asia Minor as “a result of the strong effect of ‘Orientalism’ on the cultural life, arts, and literature of the time”.¹

During their journeys, travelers had recorded personal observations and experiences as travel notes, occasionally by supporting their oral explanations with illustrations. They had explained different aspects of the society they were interacting with – including information about daily life, political, economic and social relations, as well as the ancient and existing settlements at that time. By and large published as books, these travel notes are considered as important historical and literature references - called as travelogue. The history of travelogues goes back to ancient times – the most famous of which is Strabo’s “The Geography” book; yet, the nature and content have changed over centuries.

One of the main motivations of the 19th century travelers was to discover the archaeological richness of the Asia Minor.² Even though it is debatable to recognize traveler notes as academic reference,³ it is a common acceptance that they help researchers to have a different point of view to understand the period and to trace physical changes in settlements from those times to present day. Notes taken by these travelers, along with visual materials, are considered as important documents to learn about the appearance of ancient settlements more than a century ago. Moreover, tracing and comparing notes taken by different travelers in different periods is an expedient resource to gather information about archaeological remains which had disappeared or else had been partially and even totally destroyed.

Unlike main provinces of Asia Minor, a very limited number of travelers have visited Cilicia during the 19th century.⁴ Soli-Pompeiopolis⁵ was one of the ancient

¹ Emel Erten, “19th Century Travellers and Soli-Pompeiopolis”, *The Proceedings of Mersin, the Mediterranean, and Modernity Colloquium*, Mersin University, Mersin, 2002, p.117.

² Emanuela Borgia, “Archaeology in Cilicia in the Ancient Travellers’ Notes”, *OLBA VII – Special Edition*, (ed. Serra Durugönül and Murat Durukan), Mersin University Publications of the Research Center of Cilician Archaeology, Mersin 2003, p.46.

³ Özgür Yılmaz, “Osmanlı Şehir Tarihleri Açısından Yabancı Seyahatnamelerin Kaynak Değeri”, *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*, XXVIII/2, 2003, p.587-614.

⁴ Erten, “19th Century Travellers”. Borgia, “Archaeology in Cilicia”.

⁵ Soli-Pompeiopolis ancient city is located in Viranşehir Neighborhood in Mezitli District in Mersin Province at present. The archaeological site includes on soil, under soil and under water remains from Roman and Byzantium times, as well as the Soli Mound presents a multi-layer character including different layers of settlements from Hittite Period till Byzantium times. For details about scientific excavations and findings on continuity of settlement systems, see Remzi Yağcı and Davut Yiğitpaşa, “2015 Soli Pompeiopolis Kazıları/Excavations at Soli Pompeiopolis 2015”, *ANMED*, 14, 2016, p. 148-

cities in the region attracting travelers who had visited Cilicia. Travelers mostly from England and France either described in detail or mentioned briefly Soli-Pompeiopolis in their travelogues (Fig. 1). They also provided illustrations as drawings, etchings, maps and photographs of the ruins of Soli-Pompeiopolis. The first group includes Beaufort and Cockerell as early travelers. The second group includes the majority who have visited Soli-Pompeiopolis in the midst of the 19th century. The last group visited by the beginning of the 20th century right before the World War I and the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

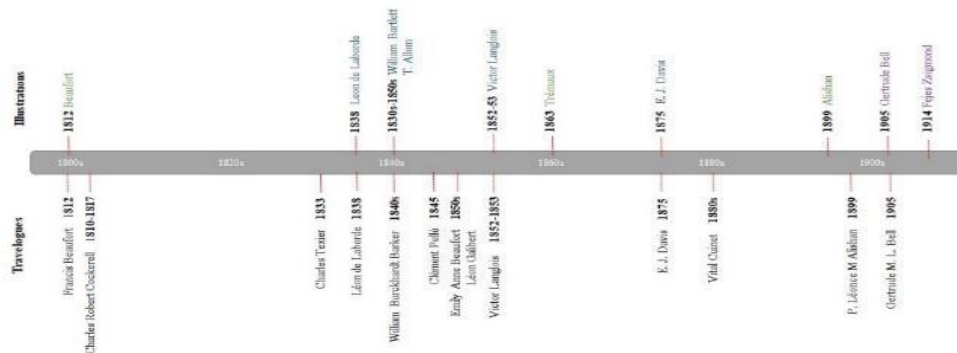


Figure 1. The 19th century travelers whose travelogues / illustrations mentioned through the article

“Descriptions of the 19th century travelers make it possible to consider an overall view of Soli Pompeiopolis during that time and compare these with the present day situation.”⁶ Researches focused on comparative analysis of archaeological remains in Soli-Pompeiopolis ancient city clearly reveal the loss of archaeological remains from that time to present day.⁷ The article claims that urbanization process in the city of Mersin within the last two centuries is one of the major reasons of the loss of archaeological remains. Within two centuries from the time Beaufort first visited Soli-Pompeiopolis in 1812 to the present day, the city of Mersin has gone through radical changes with regards to urbanization, and this

154. Remzi Yağcı and Davut Yiğitpaşa, “2015 Soli Pompeiopolis Kazıları”, 38. *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*, 2. Cilt, (ed. Adil Özme), Ankara, 2017, p. 509-518. Remzi Yağcı and Davut Yiğitpaşa, “Excavations at Soli Pompeiopolis in 2016”, *ANMED*, 15, 2017, p.108-118. Remzi Yağcı and Davut Yiğitpaşa, “Soli Pompeiopolis 2016 Kazıları”, 39. *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*, 3. Cilt, (ed. Adil Özme), Ankara, 2018, p. 377-388. Remzi Yağcı and Davut Yiğitpaşa, “Excavations at Soli Pompeiopolis in 2017”, *ANMED*, 16, 2018, p.123-131. Remzi Yağcı and Davut Yiğitpaşa, “Soli Pompeiopolis Kazıları 2017”, 40. *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*, 3. Cilt, (ed. Adil Özme), Ankara, 2019, p. 265-274.

⁶ Erten, “19th Century Travellers”, p.122-3.

⁷ See for example Erten, “19th Century Travellers”; Borgia, “Archaeology in Cilicia”; Özge Başağaç, *Soli-Pompeiopolis through Illustrated Documents: Traveller Books, Coins and Maps*, Unpublished report, Soli-Pompeiopolis Archaeological Site Excavation Office, Mersin, 2002.

urbanization process has given direct or indirect damage to the ancient city. The article intends to evaluate the impact of urbanization process on Soli-Pompeiopolis ancient city. Aiming this, the article implements cross examination of the settlement history from the 19th century to present day and the visible remains that had been observed during the 19th century and still remaining present day. The study is mainly based on exploring travelogues, old photographs, and newspaper articles and official records as primary sources.

The article is composed of four parts, organized in a chronological order to describe the urbanization process; the first part explains Cilicia region and the role of Soli-Pompeiopolis during ancient times, second part focuses on Soli-Pompeiopolis in the 19th century, the third part evaluates the relation of the city of Mersin and Soli-Pompeiopolis during early 20th century, and the last part focuses on present day by examining recent urban development in the vicinity of Soli-Pompeiopolis. As to conclude, a historic timeline through which the relation of the settlement history and the loss of archaeological remains in Soli-Pompeiopolis is discussed. Besides, the effectiveness of using travelogues, old photographs, newspaper articles and official records for such an historical analysis is evaluated.

2. RISE AND FALL OF SOLI-POMPEIOPOLIS

In ancient times, Cilicia was a commonly used name for the southeastern coastal region of the Anatolian peninsula.⁸ Settlements in Cilicia had gained importance in different periods as being strategically a bridge between the West and the East both for military reasons and for mercenary purposes.⁹ Moreover, including multiple harbors leading to the Mediterranean Sea,¹⁰ Cilicia had given the possibility to big states established in Anatolia, Syria and Mesopotamia to move westwards.¹¹ Soli-Pompeiopolis ancient city, first named as *Soloi* and then *Pompeiopolis*, was one of the important harbor towns having remarkable connections with central Anatolia, Cyprus and the east Greek world¹², located as a border between Rough Cilicia and Plain Cilicia (Fig. 2).¹³

⁸ "Cilicia", *Encyclopædia Britannica*, (ed. Huger Chisholm), Cambridge University Press, 1911, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911_Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica/Cilicia, (26.06.2021)

⁹ Mehmet Kurt, "M.Ö. VI.-V. Yüzyıllarda Kilikya Bölgesi: Küresel Güçler ve Syennesis Krallığı", *Tarih Peşinde*, 13, 2015, p.305-6.

¹⁰ Christopher Brandon, et al. "Geology, Materials, and the Design of the Roman Harbour of Soli-Pompeiopolis, Turkey: The Romacons field campaign of August 2009", *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 39(2), 2010, p.390.

¹¹ Murat Durukan, "Antik Dönemde Mersin Coğrafyasının Jeostratejik ve Politik Önemi", *The Proceedings of Tarih İçinde Mersin: Kollokum II*, Selim Ofset, Mersin 2005, p.6.

¹² Remzi Yağcı, "Problematising Greek Colonization in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Seventh and Sixth Centuries BC: the case of Soli", *Rough Cilicia New Historical and Archaeological Approaches*, (ed. Michael C. Hoff and Rhys F. Townsend), Oxbow Books, Oxford, 2013, p.7.

¹³ Strabo, *The Geography*, XIV.5.1, XIV.5.8.

Strabo indicated the foundation of Soli-Pompeiopolis ancient city dated back to the period of by Achaeans and Rhodians from Lindus colonization in the Eastern Mediterranean during the early 1st millennium BC.¹⁴ Following the colonization period, the city of Soloi had gone under the control of Egyptians between years 261 - 246 BC, and then invaded by Seleucids in 197 BC. The glorious times of the city of Soloi was under the regime of Nikator, the commander of Alexander the Great. Poet and playwright Philemon, didactic poet Aratus and stoic philosopher Chrysippus had lived in the city of Soloi during this period, and coins had been struck in their names.¹⁵

When Armenia king Tigranes the Great had occupied the city of Soloi in the 70s BC,¹⁶ the city was mostly destroyed, and many of its citizens were transferred to the new capital city named Tigranocerta.¹⁷ Soloi had left deserted then during which a vast amount of pirates invaded the whole of the Mediterranean Sea. Following the successful campaign of Pompey the Great against Cilician pirates in 67 BC, the triumph commander has re-built the city, and some of the survivors have been settled down in the city of Soloi. The city has been then called as Pompeiopolis.¹⁸

Based on discovered findings during scientific excavations, Remzi Yağcı suggests that Soli was the border between Pirindus and Hume during Neo-Babylonian period and between Kizzuwatna and Tarhuntassa during Hittite period. For details, see Remzi Yağcı, "Problematizing Greek Colonization in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Seventh and Sixth Centuries BC: the case of Soli", p.7.

¹⁴ Strabo, *The Geography*, XIV.5.8.

Excavation team suggests an earlier date for the ancient settlement based on the results of scientific excavation between years 2003-2008 carried on the Soli Mound. Even though the name of the ancient city during the Hittite Imperial Period is still not clear, archaeological remains reveal that Soli-Pompeiopolis was an important harbor town in Kizzuwatna during the 2nd millennium BC. For details, see Remzi Yağcı, "Soli/Pompeiopolis Antik Liman Kenti Kazıları 2003", 26. *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*, 1. Cilt, (ed. Koray Olşen, Haydar Dönmez and Adil Özme), Ankara, 2005, p.415-420. Remzi Yağcı, "The Importance of Soli in the Archaeology of Cilicia in the Second Millennium B.C.", *La Cilicie: espaces et pouvoirs locaux (IIe millénaire av. J.-C. – IVe siècle ap. J.-C.)*, Actes de la Table Ronde d'Istanbul, 2-5 Novembre 1999, Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes-Georges Dumézil, Istanbul, 2001, p.159-165. For the names of the city during the 2nd millennium BC see Massimo Forlanini, "How to Infer Ancient Roads and Itineraries from Heterogeneous Hittite Texts: The Case of Cilician (Kizzuwatnean) Road System", *KASKAL*, 10, 2013, p.1-34.

¹⁵ Strabo, *The Geography*, XIV.5.8. Erendiz Özbayoğlu, "Soli (Cilicia) ve "Soloecismus"", *OLBA II / I – Special Edition: Proceedings of International Cilician Archaeology Symposium*, (ed. S. Durugönül and M. Durukan), Mersin University Publications of the Research Center of Cilician Archaeology, Mersin, 2003, p.212.

¹⁶ Aline Abaecherli Boyce, "The Harbor of Pompeiopolis", *American Journal of Archaeology*, 62(1), 1958, p.67.

¹⁷ William Burckhardt Barker, *Lares and Penates or Cilicia and its Governors*, Ingram, Cooke, and Co, London, 1853, p.26.

¹⁸ Strabo, *The Geography*, XIV.5.8. Robert Lindley Vann, *Survey of Ancient Harbors in Turkey: The 1993 Season Breakwaters of the Harbor at Pompeiopolis*, Unpublished survey report, Mersin Museum,

Under the regime of Roman Empire, Pompeiopolis has turned into an important harbor town (Fig. 2) including aqueducts, city walls surrounding the city with fortification towers, necropolis, theatre, harbor, monumental buildings, and the colonnaded street leading from the harbor to the main city gate on the northern section of the city walls.¹⁹ During Byzantine period, the city has continued its importance with addition of new structures and active use of the Colonnaded Street,²⁰ and the city has been given episcopacy.²¹

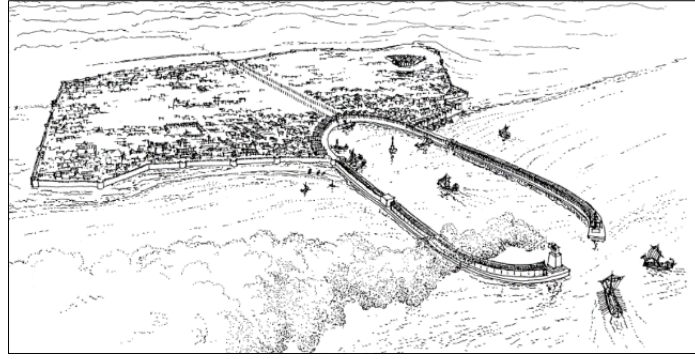


Figure 2. Sketch impression of the 2nd century AD harbor of Soli-Pompeiopolis, illustrated by Brandon

Source: Christopher Brandon, et al. “Geology, Materials, and the Design of the Roman Harbour of Soli-Pompeiopolis, Turkey: The Romacons field campaign of August 2009”, *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 39(2), 2010, p.392.

The city had been destroyed by a wave of big earthquakes in 525 AD.²² Despite the efforts to rebuild the city, citizens had left this location and moved to mountains due to continuous attacks of Sassanians and Arabians.²³ Soli-Pompeiopolis has not been resettled until the modern times of the city of Mersin as

Mersin 1993, p.1. Mustafa Ergün, “Soli-Pompeiopolis Sikkeleri”, (Master Thesis, Selçuk University, 2004), p.57.

¹⁹ Borgia, “Archaeology in Cilicia”.

²⁰ Remzi Yağcı, “Soli/Pompeiopolis 2005 Yılı Kazıları”, 28. *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*, 2. Cilt, (ed. Birnur Koral, Haydar Dönmez and Mahmut Akpınar), Ankara, 2007, p.175-184. Remzi Yağcı, “Soli/Pompeiopolis 2006 Yılı Kazıları”, 29. *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*, 3. Cilt, (ed. Birnur Koral, Haydar Dönmez and Adil Özme), Ankara, 2008, p.149-166.

²¹ Ahmet Ünal and Serdar K. Girginer, *Kilikya – Çukurova: İlk Çağlardan Osmanlı Dönemi'ne Kadar Kilikya'da Tarihi Coğrafya, Tarih ve Arkeoloji*, Homer Kitapevi ve Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2007, p.516.

²² The scientific excavations revealed that the damage given to the Colonnaded Street and structures has been caused by earthquake. For details see Ergün, *Soli-Pompeiopolis Sikkeleri*, p.54. Remzi Yağcı, “Soli/Pompeiopolis 2006 Yılı Kazıları”, p.149. Remzi Yağcı and Davut Yiğitpaşa, “Excavations at Soli Pompeiopolis in 2016”, p.108. Remzi Yağcı and Davut Yiğitpaşa, “Soli Pompeiopolis 2016 Kazıları”, p. 382. Remzi Yağcı and Davut Yiğitpaşa, “Excavations at Soli Pompeiopolis in 2017”, p.54. Remzi Yağcı and Davut Yiğitpaşa, “Soli Pompeiopolis Kazıları 2017”, p. 270.

²³ Ünal and Girginer, *Kilikya – Çukurova*, p.516.

displayed by the 19th century travelers during their visit to newly establishing port town, Mersin, as a part of their journeys to Asia Minor.

3. REDISCOVERY OF SOLI-POMPEIOPOLIS BY THE 19TH CENTURY EUROPEAN TRAVELERS

By the first half of the 19th century, all the coast of Cilicia, formerly the seat of the high civilization, was almost deserted, and between the shore and the mountains was a vast expanse of lowland where horses and camels have grazed.²⁴ Captain Beaufort had difficulty even in ascertaining the modern name of Soli-Pompeiopolis as there were no inhabitants within the city walls.²⁵ The ancient city was under dense vegetation. Barker reported that Soli-Pompeiopolis, which has been in delightful situation once, was deserted.²⁶ Six decades later, in 1905, Gertrude Bell mentioned that “the whole place was deeply overgrown with corn and yellow daisies”²⁷

Despite this deserted situation and wild vegetation that covers whole area, travelers could recognize important archaeological remains still standing in the site at that time. Cockerell was fascinated with the ruins of Soli-Pompeiopolis, as “seen from the sea they presented a truly startling grandeur. The plan of the city is noble in the extreme - one single colonnade passes right through it from the port to the gate leading out into the country.”²⁸ Texier, on the other hand, was disappointed with the state of ruins that they had offered no interest in relation to art.²⁹ Maps drawn by Beaufort, Trémaux and Alishan (Fig. 3) demonstrated the city plan very clearly with city walls, harbor, colonnaded street, theatre and remains of ancient buildings.³⁰

²⁴ Clément Pellé and Léon Galibert, *Voyage en Syrie et dans l'Asie mineure*, Fisher, Paris, 1845, p.54.

²⁵ Francis Beaufort, *Karamania or a Brief Description of the South Coast of Asia Minor*, R. Hunter, London, 1818, p.264.

²⁶ Barker, *Lares and Penates*, p.130-1.

²⁷ Gertrude Bell, “Dairy Notes dated on 26.04.1905”, *The Gertrude Bell Project Online*, http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/diary_details.php?diary_id=472, (26.06.2021).

²⁸ Charles Robert Cockerell, *Travels in Southern Europe and the Levant, 1810-1817: The Journal of C.R. Cockerell*, (ed. Samuel Pepys Cockerell), Longmans, Green, and Co., London, 1903, p.189.

²⁹ Charles Texier, *Asie Mineure: Description Géographique, Historique et Archéologique des Provinces et des Villes de la Chersonnèse d'Asie*, Imprimeurs de l'Institut de France, Paris, 1863, p.726.

³⁰ For Soli-Pompeiopolis ancient city maps drawn by European travelers in the 19th century, see Beaufort, *Karamania*, p.249; Trémaux, *Exploration Archéologique*, pl. Pompeiopolis_T_1; Alishan, *Sissouan*, p.417.



Figure 3. Maps of Soli-Pompeiopolis illustrated by Beaufort in 1812 (left), Trémaux in 1863 (middle), Alishan in 1899 (right)

Sources: Beaufort, *Karamania*, p.263. Pierre Trémaux, *Exploration Archéologique en Asie Mineure*, Librairie de L. Hachette, Paris, 1863, pl. Pompeiopolis T_1. P. Léonce M Alishan, *Sissouan, ou L'Arméno-Cilicie: description géographique et historique, avec cartes et illustrations / traduit du texte arménien*, S. Lazare, Venice, 1899, p.417.

City walls were surrounding the ancient city with towers - 10 towers on the north, 11 on the western and 5 on the eastern side. There were two city gates. The first gate, considered as the principle gate of the city by Beaufort, was located on the northern part of the city walls. The other gate was located in the western side.³¹ Despite the clear representation of walls and towers on maps, Beaufort noted that only the foundations of these walls remained in 1812.³² Texier could also follow the traces of city walls, as well as main gates.³³ During the visit of Emily Beaufort in the 1850s, ancient city walls were still traceable along with tombs or mausoleums scattered around.³⁴ According to Davis, the best and most expensive construction appeared to had been the city wall of which some few foundation stones remained well wrought and of very large size.³⁵

One of the most visible structure aroused a great interest on the part of many of the travelers was the ancient harbor, which had been carefully drawn in the maps in elliptic shape. Travelers provided detailed information about ancient harbor and its construction techniques. Beaufort indicated that “the first thing that represented itself on landing, was a beautiful harbor or a basin, with parallel sides and circular ends”, yet “the pier heads are overthrown, and the inner part of the harbor is raised above the level of the sea by the accumulation of sand”.³⁶ Even in its ruins, Davis considered it as a magnificent work by providing details about construction techniques: “It is entirely artificial in shape an ellipse with flattened sides and formed

³¹ Beaufort, *Karamania*, p.249. Trémaux, *Exploration Archéologique*. Borgia, “Archaeology in Cilicia”, p.55.

³² Beaufort, *Karamania*, p.263.

³³ Texier, *Asie Mineure*, p.726.

³⁴ Emily Anne Beaufort, *Egyptian Sepulchres and Syrian Shrines Including Some Stay in the Lebanon, at Palmyra, and in Western Turkey*, Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, London, 1862, p.320.

³⁵ Edwin John Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, Edward Stanford, London, 1879, p.21-2.

³⁶ Beaufort, *Karamania*, p.259-60.

by very solid walls of rubble once faced with blocks of yellow limestone secured by iron clamps”.³⁷ Likewise Emily Beaufort described “the port enclosed by two fine jetties with circular ends of large stones secured by iron clamps filled in with rubble much of these still remain”.³⁸

“Opposite to the entrance of the harbour, a portico rises from the surrounding quay, and opens up to a double row of two hundred columns”.³⁹ The colonnaded street has been another focal structure aroused a great attention – as it was mentioned nearly in all travelogues being the most significant ruin during the 19th century. It was subjected to drawings of the 19th century artists and photographs of early 20th century travelers (Fig. 4, Fig. 5).

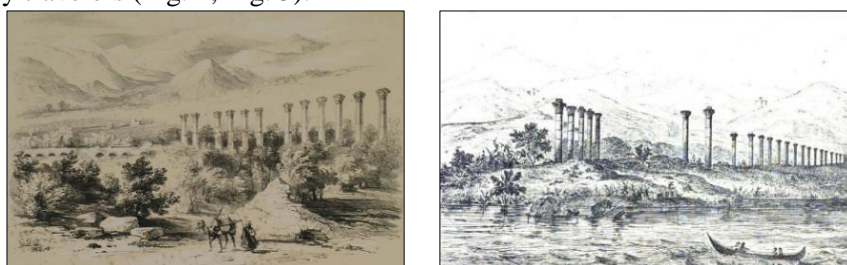


Figure 4. The colonnaded street, drawings by Laborde in 1838 (left) and by Langlois in 1853 (right)

Sources: (left) Léon de Laborde, *Voyage de l'Asie Mineure*, Firmin-Didot, Paris, 1838. (right) Victor Langlois, *Voyage dans la Cilicie et dans les Montagnes du Taurus 1852 – 1853*, Imp. W. Remquet, Paris, 1861, pl. XVII.



Figure 5. The colonnaded street, photographs by Bell in 1905 (left) and by Zsigmond in 1914 (right)

Sources: (left) Gertrude Bell, “Photo Album C.”, *The Gertrude Bell Project Online*, pl. C_212. (right) Fejes Zsigmond, “Album, Konstantinápoly és Kisászsia tanulmányút”, *Hungarian National Digital Archive*.

According to Beaufort, two rows of columns were once connected by arches, forming a paved street connecting harbor to the principle gate of the city. Beaufort

³⁷ Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, p.22.

³⁸ Beaufort, *Egyptian Sepulchres and Syrian Shrines*, p.319.

³⁹ Beaufort, *Karamania*, p.260.

stated that with avenue, portico and the harbor, as a whole, should have formed a noble spectacle during the ancient times that “even in its state of present state of wreck, the effect of the whole was so imposing, that the most illiterate seaman in the ship could not behold it without emotions”.⁴⁰ Pellé and Galibert were also of the same opinion that the most remarkable indicator of the ancient splendor of Soli-Pompeïopolis was the colonnaded street.⁴¹

It was 1812 when Beaufort had observed no more than forty-four were standing out of two hundred columns and “the remainder lie on the spot where they fell, intermixed with a vast assemblage of other ruined buildings”.⁴² Cockerell who had visited the ancient city in the same period with Captain Beaufort recorded forty columns standing out of two hundred.⁴³ Emily Beaufort tracked “forty of these columns [were] still standing on one side and four on the other and the ground [was] strewn with their fallen drums at the southern end some stones yet remain above the columns enough to show that it was once vaulted over so as to form a covered way”.⁴⁴ There were forty-three columns standing when Langlois had visited Soli-Pompeïopolis in 1853.⁴⁵ Similarly, Trémaux marked forty-three columns in his drawing, 6 shafts in the western row and 37 in the eastern row in 1863⁴⁶ – different numbers in each row than provided by Emily Beaufort. Cuinet indicated that forty-three of 200 columns were still standing during his visit to later in 1880s.⁴⁷ When Davis had visited Soli-Pompeïopolis in 1875, there were only forty-one columns left.⁴⁸ Despite incoherencies in numbers and dates, travelogues still reveal that the number of standing columns has continued to decrease in the following years - yet, according to Alishan, this fact neither increases nor diminishes the merit of their antiquity.⁴⁹

Passing through the principle gate of the city, the colonnaded street was continuing on the northern direction outside the principle gate as paved road reaching to a bridge on a small river. Beaufort traced an outer wall and an aqueduct.⁵⁰

Travelogues commonly mention about the ancient theater, which, accordingly, should have leaned against an artificial hill which could be clearly seen

⁴⁰ Beaufort, *Karamania*, p.261.

⁴¹ Pellé and Galibert, *Voyage en Syrie*, p.54.

⁴² Beaufort, *Karamania*, p.262.

⁴³ Cockerell, *Travels in Southern Europe*, p.189.

⁴⁴ Beaufort, *Egyptian Sepulchres and Syrian Shrines*, p.320.

⁴⁵ Langlois, *Voyage dans la Cilicie*, p.249.

⁴⁶ Trémaux, *Exploration Archéologique*, pl. Pompeïopolis_T_1.

⁴⁷ Vital Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie, Géographie Administrative: statistique, descriptive et raisonnée de chaque province de l'Asie Mineure*, Ernest Leroux, Paris, 1891, p.53.

⁴⁸ Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, p.22.

⁴⁹ Alishan, *Sissouan*, p.418.

⁵⁰ Beaufort, *Karamania*, p.262.

in Bartlett's drawing (Fig. 6). Both Beaufort and Trémaux had located the ancient theatre on the western slope of the hill in the eastern side of the ancient city. However, even during the early 1800s, the theatre was complete state of degradation, only the foundations of the tiers remained (Fig. 6) and "neither the precise dimensions, nor the number of seats could be ascertained" as Langlois reported.⁵¹ Davis also stated that "[theatre's] materials have been entirely removed not one of its rows of seats remain".⁵² The only portion of the theatre preserved during Davis' visit was the archway, a passage from outside to diazoma.⁵³ Langlois could identify a stone seat of ancient theatre, on which there was an inscription in Greek.⁵⁴ Similar to Barker,⁵⁵ Emily Beaufort also claimed that most of the parts of the theatre which had been built from white marble, have been laid under soil.⁵⁶ According to Borgia, "[theater's] horse-shoe shape and its building technique, partly using the natural ground as foundation but with the two aisles of the cavea made by opus caementicium, can clearly be inferred by the careful plan realized by Trémaux".⁵⁷



Figure 6. (left) The hill where ancient theatre is located in the eastern (right hand) side, illustrated by Bartlett, and (right) the seats of ancient theatre, illustrated by Trémaux

Source: (left) Pellé and Galibert, *Voyage en Syrie*, between pages 55-56. (right) Trémaux, *Exploration Archéologique*, pl. Pompeiopolis_T_2.

Travelogues also include information about other remains of ancient structures and findings. Beaufort made mention of "detached ruins, tombs and sarcophagi" scattered around in the ancient city.⁵⁸ Langlois told about the remains of a monumental tomb within the city walls, which should have belonged to the poet Aratus of Pompeiopolis (Figure 7). Langlois was surprised that this tomb had not

⁵¹ Langlois, *Voyage dans la Cilicie*, p.249.

⁵² Beaufort, *Karamania*, p.262.

⁵³ Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, p.24-5.

⁵⁴ Langlois, *Voyage dans la Cilicie*, p.249.

⁵⁵ Barker, *Lares and Penates*, p.131.

⁵⁶ Beaufort, *Egyptian Sepulchres and Syrian Shrines*, p.320.

⁵⁷ Borgia, "Archaeology in Cilicia", p.55.

⁵⁸ Beaufort, *Karamania*, p.259.

been mentioned by previous travelers.⁵⁹ Another monumental tomb, described by Alishan⁶⁰ was a marble tomb with a Greek inscription, the tomb of Dionysius and his wife Ammia, which, according to Erten,⁶¹ is possibly the tomb illustrated by Davis in 1875⁶² (Fig. 7).

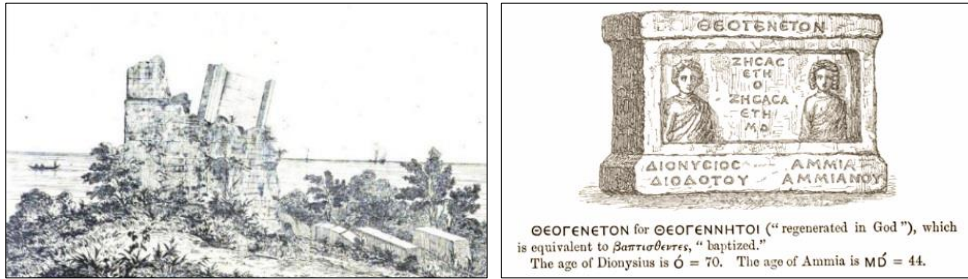


Figure 7. (left) The tomb of Aratus, illustrated by Langlois in 1852-53, and (right) the tomb of Dionysius and Ammia, illustrated by Davis in 1875

Sources: (left) Langlois, *Voyage dans la Cilicie*, pl.XVI. (right) Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, p.28.

Davis suggested a location for an agora at the north end of the west row of the colonnaded street "where lying fragments of very large wreathed columns, with ornate Corinthian capitals, and in the middle of the row yet erect there seems to have been a large open space, in which are pedestals."⁶³ Yet, none of the travelers had mentioned the place of agora in their travelogues.

During the 19th century, there were ancient remains scattered along the city. When Beaufort had excavated the accumulated sand within the ancient harbor basin, he reported about "tiles, broken pottery, and bits of semi-transparent glass".⁶⁴ Langlois notes that on a fairly large expanse of land the two banks of the stream were strewn with debris of pottery and bricks. By clearing the ground, could find broken vase, silver medal, as well as head of a woman statue seen from the front with pendants of ears and a necklace wearing a helmet.⁶⁵ Two other travelers, Barker⁶⁶ and Emily Beaufort,⁶⁷ also reported a full size Venus statue in marble in the theatre,

⁵⁹ Langlois, *Voyage dans la Cilicie*, pl. XVI, 243.

⁶⁰ Alishan, *Sissouan*, p.418.

⁶¹ Erten, "19th Century Travellers", p.119.

⁶² Davis notes that he has seen "...a funereal monument that had been brought from Pompeiopolis... see a funereal monument that had been brought from Pompeiopolis [which] is of limestone and on it are carved two busts husband and wife set in a kind of frame" when he visited the warehouse of Mr. Mavromati in Mersin; see Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, p.27.

⁶³ Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, p.24.

⁶⁴ Beaufort, *Karamania*, p.259-260.

⁶⁵ Langlois, *Voyage dans la Cilicie*, p.242.

⁶⁶ Barker, *Lares and Penates*, p.131.

⁶⁷ Beaufort, *Egyptian Sepulchres and Syrian Shrines*, p.320.

which, according to Erten⁶⁸, should be the statue mentioned by Langlois. There were great quantities of debris, fragments of pottery on the surface within the city walls, as Davis reported during his visit in 1875.⁶⁹

The 19th century travelogues articulate that there were archaeological remains all over the area – even not in intact condition, the city walls and towers, the theatre, the harbor, remains of structures and aqueduct were traceable, and also statues, tombs and sarcophagi were scattered within the city walls and on the outside to some distance from the city walls (Fig. 8).

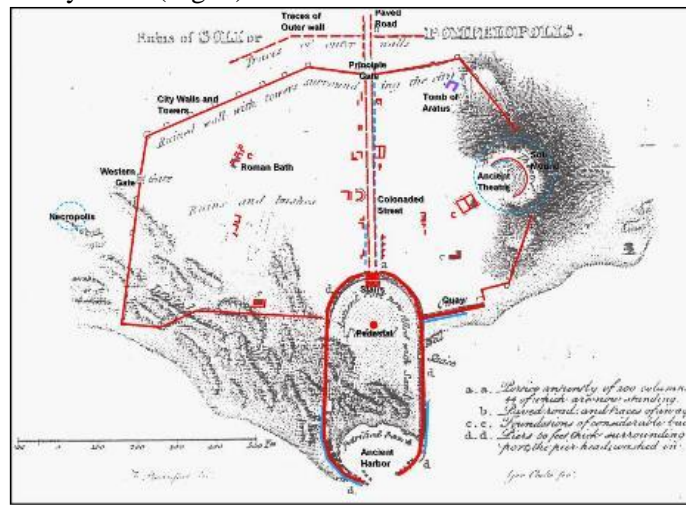


Figure 8. Remains observed by 19th century travelers in Soli-Pompeiopolis

Note: Superimposition of maps of Beaufort, Trémaux and Alishan, including notes of other travelers as well. Beaufort's map dated in 1812 is used as the base map.⁷⁰

4. THE LOSS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS OVER ONE CENTURY

The times European travelers visited Cilicia and Soli-Pompeiopolis were the times when the city of Mersin has gone through rapid urbanization process after being occupied by İbrahim Pasha in 1832. İbrahim Pasha populated people from Egypt and Syria who were good at farming in order to provide logistic support for

⁶⁸ Erten, "19th Century Travellers", p.118.

⁶⁹ Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, p.24.

⁷⁰ Superimposition of maps is used only to understand the possible location and presence of ancient remains mentioned by the 19th century travelers, not to draw the ancient city plan of Soli-Pompeiopolis. It is revealed by recent researches that the early maps of Soli-Pompeiopolis drawn by the 19th century travelers were not accurate in terms of dimensions, layout or construction techniques, such as the plan of the ancient harbor. For more information about the Roman harbor of Soli-Pompeiopolis see Hakan Özin, "Harbour of Soli-Pompeiopolis: Recent Underwater Archaeological Research", *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 47/2, 2018, p. 337-342.

the army and to maintain the security within the region.⁷¹ Besides, İbrahim Pasha made remarkable improvements by encouraging agricultural production and improving the transportation system.⁷² Thereafter, Mersin, including “nothing but a few huts on the shore”⁷³ in 1812, became important as the new port of Çukurova⁷⁴ region by the second half of the 19th century.⁷⁵

Appearing officially in the 1870 Adana Provincial Yearbook,⁷⁶ Mersin attained to the status of village in 1852.⁷⁷ Yet, the real turning point for Mersin arrived by the end of the 19th century. Due to the American Civil War, America lost its efficiency as being the main cotton supplier of Europe. The search of European countries for new markets gave tremendous boost to cotton production in Çukurova, much of the production of which was exported from Mersin. By the 1870s, Mersin turned into a major regional port, and transformed into an urban center.⁷⁸ “This place, which in Captain Beaufort's time (1812) consisted of a few wretched huts... is now a large and flourishing Scala, at which most of the produce of Cilicia is exported.”⁷⁹

The existence of the port, diversity of agricultural products from fertile lands of Çukurova, rapid increase in trade and commerce, construction of Mersin – Tarsus road in 1873, railroad connection of Mersin to Adana and so to the inner parts of Anatolia in 1886 altogether had considerable impact on changing the settlement

⁷¹ Ehud R. Toledano, “Where have all the Egyptian Fallahin Gone to?”, *The Proceedings of Mersin, the Mediterranean, and Modernity Colloquium*, Mersin University, Mersin, 2002, p.21.

⁷² Meltem Toksöz, “An Eastern Mediterranean Port-Town in the Nineteenth Century”, *The Proceedings of Mersin, the Mediterranean, and Modernity Colloquium*, Mersin University, Mersin, 2002, p.15-20.

⁷³ Beaufort, *Karamania*, p.265-6.

⁷⁴ Çukurova is the modern name for Plain Cilicia. The region forms parts of the modern provinces of Adana, Osmaniye and Mersin.

⁷⁵ Nuri Adıyeke, “Osmanlı Döneminde İçel'in Merkez Kaymaları, Etki Alanı Değişimleri ve Mersin Kentinin Doğuşu”, *The Proceedings of Mersin, the Mediterranean, and Modernity Colloquium*, Mersin University, Mersin, 2002, p.85.

⁷⁶ Yearbooks (in original *Salname*) refers to official records about different events, such as military, economical, agricultural, historical, scientific and cultural, taken yearly during Ottoman Empire Period started by the year. For more details about yearbooks, see: Hadiye Yılmaz, “The First Yearbook of the Republican Era: Millî Nevsal [The National Yearbook]”, *International Journal of Turcologia* 11(22), 2016, p.35-54; P. Brummett, “Reviewed Work(s): Ottoman Yearbooks (Salname and Nevsal) by Hasan Duman”, *MELA Notes*, 32, 1984, p.17-20.

⁷⁷ There are different opinions about the year in which Mersin has attained to the status of village. For example, Toledano argues that Mersin had its village status under the regime of İbrahim Pasha based on the 1841 Adana Provincial Yearbook. However, in his more detailed study about establishment of the city of Mersin, Oğuz underlines the difficulties in determining the year Mersin has become a village. For more details, see: Toledano, “Where have all the Egyptian Fallahin Gone”, p.22. İbrahim Oğuz, *Tarsus Şer'iyeye Sicillerine Göre Mersin Kentinin Kuruluş Öyküsü*, Mersin Sanayi ve Ticaret Odası, Mersin, 2006, p.20.

⁷⁸ Toksöz, “An Eastern Mediterranean Port-Town”, p.16.

⁷⁹ Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, p.12.

pattern of Mersin.⁸⁰ During the 1890s, Mersin became the gate of Çukurova to the Mediterranean Sea, having connections to Egypt, Syria and Cyprus through the port. Increase in trade in parallel to port activities has attracted migrants from different parts of the country. International trade companies, branches of international banks, and consulates have located around the port of Mersin.⁸¹

During the 19th century, neither the ancient city of Soli-Pompeiopolis nor its vicinity was settled. It was such deserted that even Beaufort complains not being able to find someone to ask and learn the modern name of the site, “as there are no inhabitants within the walls of Pompeiopolis.”⁸² Despite the fact that there were no inhabitants or buildings that could harm archaeological remains, they have not been well preserved as stated by travelers. Within approximately one century, from the year 1812 when Captain Beaufort had first visited Soli-Pompeiopolis until Gertrude Bell’s visit in 1905, most of the archaeological remains in Soli-Pompeiopolis have almost disappeared.⁸³ Except the Colonnaded Street and a part of the ancient harbor, other monuments mentioned in the 19th century travelogues and represented in maps of Beaufort, Trémaux and Alishan (Fig. 3), “such as the theatre, the harbour, the so-called Aratus’ tomb, the huge remains of the city walls and the necropolis ... were continuously robbed and pillaged.”⁸⁴ Both Erten and Borgia state the reason of poor preservation as spoliation by removing stones of the ancient city to be used in the construction of contemporary buildings in the city of Mersin.⁸⁵ This statement is also verified by the 19th century European travelers. During her visit to Soli-Pompeiopolis, Emily Beaufort noted that she had seen a boat loaded with the stones removed from the ancient harbor to be carried to the city of Mersin.⁸⁶ According to Davis, the whole city of Mersin had been built up by stones carried from Soli-Pompeiopolis. Davis noted that “[ancient theatre’s] materials have been entirely removed, not one of its rows of seats remain ... and so great is the destruction of the place owing to the proximity of Mersine that in a few years the whole city will have disappeared.”⁸⁷

⁸⁰ For in depth studies about urbanization history of the city of Mersin at the beginning of the 20th century, see for example Toksöz, “An Eastern Mediterranean Port-Town”; Toledano, “Where have all the Egyptian Fallahin Gone”; Oğuz, *Tarsus Şer’iyye Sicillerine Göre Mersin*; Adıyeke, “Osmanlı Döneminde İçel’in Merkez Kaymaları”.

⁸¹ Melike Kara, “Cumhuriyetin İlk Yıllarında Mersin Limanı’nın Gelişimi”, *The Proceedings of Tarih İçinde Merin: Kollokyum II*, Selim Ofset, Mersin, 2005, p.130. Oğuz, *Tarsus Şer’iyye Sicillerine Göre Mersin*.

⁸² Beaufort, *Karamania*, p.264-5.

⁸³ Bell, “Dairy Notes”.

⁸⁴ Borgia, “Archaeology in Cilicia”, p.54.

⁸⁵ Erten, “19th Century Travellers”; Borgia, “Archaeology in Cilicia”.

⁸⁶ Beaufort, *Egyptian Sepulchres and Syrian Shrines*, p.319.

⁸⁷ Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, p.25.

Until the year 1905, most of the remains of Soli-Pompeiopolis ancient city were continuously robbed and pillaged, and relocated via spoliation that Gertrude Bell could only report “the great columns of the colonnaded street remained”.⁸⁸ Bell had the same feeling with Davis by telling that “Mersina has been entirely built of stones brought from Pompeiopolis”.⁸⁹ Having seen the situation in Soli-Pompeiopolis in 1905, Bell also thought that “nearly all stones have been taken away to build Mersina.”⁹⁰

The official letter sent by Adana Governor Ziya Pasha in the year 1854 states the same fact. Although the main subject of this letter was about the increase in foreign population and landownership in Mersin, it has also pointed out that new buildings of Mersin were being constructed by stones carried from two hours’ distant ancient city, Soli-Pompeiopolis. The letter has underlined that undoubtedly being the property of State, carrying stones from ancient city has been strictly prohibited. However, Oğuz argues that this prohibition did not intend to protect the ancient remains, but aimed to have ancient remains into state property in order to be used by the State, not by people. Oğuz grounds his argument on another official letter, sent by Ziya Pasha nine months later, which was allowing the stones of ancient city to be used for the construction works of both a wharf in the port and Mersin-Tarsus road.⁹¹

At the beginning of the 20th century, the rate of spoliation has decreased, presumably because nothing has left to carry. Another reason of the decrease in spoliation could be the guardhouse located on the “castle mound ... to protect what remains of the ruins.”⁹² Most probably, after the first letter of Ziya Pasha, the guardhouse mentioned in Gertrude Bell’s dairy notes has been constructed on top of the hill in order to prevent removing stones from Soli-Pompeiopolis.⁹³

According to Greenhalgh, destruction of ancient buildings in Turkey via spoliation during the 19th and the 20th centuries has appeared as a necessity for constructing new buildings as growing cities needed immense quantities of building stone.⁹⁴ Within this context, it was not surprising that the stones from Soli-

⁸⁸ Borgia, “Archaeology in Cilicia”.

⁸⁹ Bell, “Dairy Notes”.

⁹⁰ Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, p 25.

⁹¹ Oğuz, *Tarsus Şer’iyye Sicillerine Göre Mersin*, p.46-7.

⁹² Bell, “Dairy Notes”.

⁹³ Presumably, the hill mentioned by Gertrude Bell is the Soli Mound, on which the gendarme house is still present with contemporary additional buildings constructed during the 1980s, being currently used as excavation office and depots. For sure the Soli mound and the ancient theater has been given damage during the construction of the guardhouse, even some of the ancient stones have been used in the construction, yet the presence of the guardhouse also helped the preservation of the ancient remains in the following years.

⁹⁴ Michael Greenhalgh, “Spolia in Fortifications: Turkey, Syria and North Africa”, *Ideologie e Pratiche del Reimpiego nell’Alto Medioevo*, 46(1), 1998, p.785-935.

Pompeiopolis have been carried to Mersin both by people and by the State. This situation has given direct damage to archaeological remains of Soli-Pompeiopolis during the 19th century, even the site and its vicinity was not inhabited. But spoliation was not the only reason of the damage. The most severe has not come yet.

5. SOLI-POMPEIOPOLIS UNDER THE PRESSURE OF URBAN EXPANSION

Due to I. World War all over the European Continent and then Turkish Independence War between years 1919-1922 in Anatolia, visits from Europe to Cilicia have nearly come to an end. Yet, Soli-Pompeiopolis ancient city was silently standing, mostly buried under wild vegetation, but visible with still standing columns. By the development and widely use of photography technology in the early 1900s, ancient columns have become scene for different groups (Fig. 9).



Figure 9. Visitors of Soli-Pompeiopolis during the early 20th century

Sources: (left) “Nuns and pupils of the St Joseph Catholic School of Mersin at the Soli (Pompeiopolis) Greco-Roman ruins by sea coast, about 10 km to the west of the city”, *Levantine Heritage*. (right) Zsigmond, “Album, Konstantinápoly és Kisázsia tanulmányút”.

Soli-Pompeiopolis became nationwide visible by the visit of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of Turkish Republic, on 21 May, 1938 during his domestic travel to Mersin (Fig. 10).⁹⁵ The visit by Atatürk had a broad repercussion in press that one of the newspapers of the period, *Posta Gazette* on May 23, 1938 had published an article introducing Soli-Pompeiopolis ancient city.⁹⁶ The content of

⁹⁵ “Atatürk dün Mersini şereflendirdiler”, *Akşam Gazette* on May 21, 1938. <https://www.gastearsivi.com/gazete/aksam/1938-05-21/1>, (29.06.2021).

⁹⁶ “İçel’in Tarihçesi”, *Vatan Gazette*, Mersin Supplement on January 9, 1952. <http://wowturkey.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=4885958&sid=745f8fad93559a2f562b53dbf319e82a#4885958/>, (29.06.2021). “İsmini Yetiştirdiği Yeşil Mersinden Alan Şehir Mersin”, *Yeni İstanbul*

newspaper article has been providing detailed information about the history of Mersin and Soli-Pompeiopolis by referring to some of the 19th century travelers. Later in 1950 and 1952, the colonaded street was still the image of newspaper articles about the history of Mersin-(Fig. 11).



Figure 10. Atatürk during his visit to Soli-Pompeiopolis

Source: “Atatürk Ankarada Çoşkun Sevinç Tezahürleriyle Karşılandılar”, *Ulus Gazete* on May 26, 1938.



Figure 11. The colonnaded street in the newsletter articles in 1950 and 1952

Sources: (Left) “İçel’in Tarihçesi”, *Vatan Gazete*, Mersin Supplement on January 9, 1952. (Right) “İsmi Yetiştirdiği Yeşil Mersinden Alan Şehir Mersin”, *Yeni İstanbul Gazete* on July 20, 1950.

Soli-Pompeiopolis was also a destination for foreign visitors who have come to Mersin during the 1950s. Marie Nöle Kelly, who was the wife of a Scandinavian ambassador, reflected her observations after visiting Soli-Pompeiopolis in 1951.⁹⁷

Gazette on July 20, 1950. https://www.gastearsivi.com/gazete/yeni_istanbul/1950-07-20/4/, (29.06.2021).

⁹⁷ Marie Nöle Kelly, *Turkish Delights*, Country Life Limited, London, 1951, p.101.

Kelly was fascinated with the colonnaded street. She noted that 17 columns were standing in 1951. Later in 1954, Mary Gough reported that there were 19 columns standing (Fig. 12).^{98, 99}



Figure 12. Mary and Michael Gough in Soli-Pompeiopolis in 1954

Source: Gough, *Travel into Yesterday*, p.190.

Newspaper articles, visitor photographs and even the visit of Atatürk himself in 1938 reveals that the ancient city was known between the 1930s and 1950s, yet all the visual materials from this period reflect that the vicinity of Soli-Pompeiopolis was not inhabited, even Viranşehir Plaj Yolu was in the form of a footpath, not suitable for vehicles (Fig. 13). However, 10 kilometers away on the eastern side, the city of Mersin has continued its importance with a considerable increase especially in international commerce and trade during the early Republican Period.



Figure 13. Viranşehir Plaj Yolu as a footpath in the east side of the Colonnaded Street, early 1950s

Source: “Colonnaded Street, early 1950s”, *WowTurkey Forum*, post by Ömer Atman.

Having strengthened its importance within the region by the construction of the modern port in 1961, the prosperity period for the city of Mersin started. “The

⁹⁸ Mary Gough, *Travel into Yesterday*, Doubleday, New York, 1954, p.169-173.

⁹⁹ The number of standing columns have increased later in the 1960s when the gendarme commander has ordered to put the fallen pieces of columns on top of each other without any scientific intention but only to erect columns that had fallen down probably during the earthquake in 525 AD.

new agricultural products to be exported, the external dynamics, such as the destruction of Beirut during the Iran – Iraq War, made Mersin a focus of trade activities in the Middle East”.¹⁰⁰ Besides, the newly established modern port and related commercial activities located around, and establishment of big scale industries constructed between years 1972 and 1975 generated new job opportunities. Moreover, establishment of the Free Trade Zone fostered the commercial activities during the 1980s. Main sources of wealth of the prosperity period were trade, agriculture and construction. Increase in economic activities attracted people from different regions to migrate the city of Mersin, especially from Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia Regions.¹⁰¹

Mezitli, where Soli-Pompeiopolis ancient site is located at present, was an agricultural village at the beginning of this prosperity period including small rural settlements mostly located on the northern part far away from the seaside. Being away from urban center, the only connection to Mersin city center was through Mersin-Silifke Asfaltı (known as GMK Boulevard today) on the northern part of Soli-Pompeiopolis. The ancient city and its vicinity was not yet settled, but included few rural residential buildings, and Viranşehir Plaj Yolu has been graveled and became partly suitable for vehicular traffic by the end of 1950s (Fig. 14, Fig. 15).



Figure 14. Viranşehir Plaj Yolu as gravel path in the east (left hand side) of the colonnaded street by the end of 1950s.

Source: “Personal photos taken around historic city walls”, *SALT Research Archive*, rights holder Söylemezoğlu Family.

¹⁰⁰ Ayda Eraydın, “A Gateway Region that Looks for New Opportunities in Economic Development: The Assets and Problems of the Region and the City of Mersin”, *The Proceedings of the 31st Annual IUFA Conference: The Problems of Urban Growth: Preserving while Developing*, Mersin University Press, Mersin, 2002, p.16.

¹⁰¹ Eraydın, “A Gateway Region”.



Figure 15. Initial rural residential units by the midst of the 1950s

Sources: (Left) “Rural house at the end (northern part) of the Colonnaded Street, 1952”, *WowTurkey Forum*, post by Ömer Atman. (Right) “Personal photos taken around historic city walls”, *SALT Research Archive*, rights holder Söylemezoğlu Family.

After attaining the status of district in 1968, the center of Mezitli started to shift towards the southern direction to Mersin-Silifke Asfaltı, while the city of Mersin started to extend towards the western direction by the beginning of the 1970s. Along Mersin-Silifke Asfaltı, there were 1-2 story buildings, first floor of which is used for commercial purposes such as service depots, groceries and bakeries, and the second floor for residential purposes. Yet, the surrounding of Soli-Pompeipolis ancient city was displaying rural settlement characteristics. Main street, connecting Soli-Pompeipolis to Mersin-Silifke Asfaltı was Viranşehir Plaj Yolu, which was paved for vehicular traffic in the early 1970s (Fig. 16).

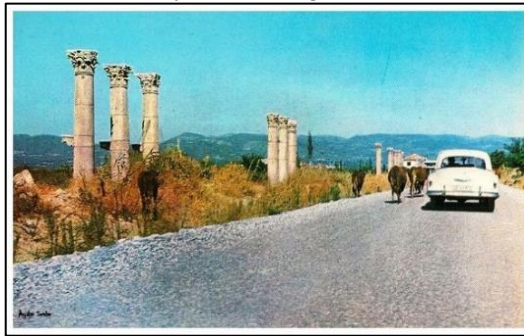


Figure 16. Viranşehir Plaj Yolu as paved vehicular road in the east (right hand side) of the colonnaded street in the early 1970s

Source: “#Mersin - #Mezitli - #Soli #Pompeipolis 1970ler”, *Pinterest*, pin by Ömer Atman.

Extensive cadastral parcels, both on and around the ancient city, were used for agricultural purposes, consisting mainly citrus plantation which has been supported by governmental policies since the 1940s in Mersin Province.¹⁰² Along cadastral

¹⁰² “Mersin Portakalcılığı. Her Sene Bahçelere 50 bin Portakal Fidanı Dikiliyor”, *Ulus Gazette* on April 4, 1938. <https://www.gastearsivi.com/gazete/ulus/1938-04-04/6/>, (29.06.2021).

roads, there were 1-2 story rural residential buildings within agricultural lands or citrus gardens. Beaches located on both side of the ancient harbor were used actively by day-trippers and short-term campers (Fig. 17). On the coastline, at the end of Viranşehir Plaj Yolu, there were cafes, restaurants and a motel giving service to domestic tourist during summer months, some of which were located on the ancient harbor of Soli-Pompeipolis (Fig. 18). As narrated by İlhan Karaçay, the founder and former manager of Karaçay Motel formerly located on the ancient harbor, thousands of people during weekends and holidays were visiting the motel, camping area and the restaurant. There were public buses between Mersin city center and the Motel operated by the municipality.¹⁰³



Figure 17. Beach use on the western bank of the ancient harbor during 1980s

Source: “Summer time in Soli-Pompeipolis during 1970s”, *WowTurkey Forum*, post by Ömer Atman.



Figure 18. Karaçay Motel; Camping, Restaurant and Music Hall in 1970s and 1980s - which was active between years 1962 and 1984, then turned into a café and beach in the 1990s and demolished in 2013

Source: Video frames from “Pompeipolis”, *YouTube*, video by Ruşen Karaçay.

Soli-Pompeipolis Archaeological Site was first identified and designated in 1978 by governmental officials, and initial conservation activities continued during the 1980s, as a result of which Soli-Pompeipolis was designated as 1st degree archaeological conservation area.¹⁰⁴ It is supposed that not only the maps of the 19th

¹⁰³ For more details about Motel Karaçay, see İlhan Karaçay, “Mersinliler’e 50 Yıl Hizmet Vermiş Olan Pompeipolis-Karaçay Tesislerinin Hazin Hikâyesi”, <https://www.ilhankaracay.com/mersinlilere-50-yil-hizmet-vermis-olan-pompeipolis-karacay-tesislerinin-hazin-hikayesi/>, (29.06.2021).

¹⁰⁴ By the call of Atatürk, archaeological studies all over the Anatolia have boosted right after the declaration of Republic. However, the country was in a recovery stage after the Independence War. The

century travelers, but also notes were effective and influential in determining the boundaries of the conservation area. The initial boundary included a larger area also including remains outside the city wall.

The 1980s was also important for the vicinity of Soli-Pompeipolis in transforming into an urban settlement. The effects of rapid urban development in the city of Mersin became clearly apparent once the urban development expanded through Mezitli District by the beginning of 1980s. Conservation decisions acted as a barrier against construction activities spread into the archaeological site. However, the settlement pattern outside the conservation area started to transform. Despite the dominancy of agricultural land-use characteristics within the archaeological site, outside the conservation area, mostly on the northern side and partly on the south-western side, individual parcels created by allotment applications built up by the beginning of the 1980s as summer houses. Active seaside use, recreational facilities along the beach and on ancient harbor since the 1960s were influential for the site selection of summer houses.¹⁰⁵

In addition to residential buildings, Anatolia Glass Industry Personnel Motel in 1984 and Ministry of Internal Affairs Personnel Motel in 1986 were constructed, which could be considered as supportive tourism activities. İçel Anatolia High School, which was constructed in 1983, could be considered as a sign of tendency in increasing spatial associations of Mezitli District with Mersin city center. The northern part of the archaeological site has already had strong relations with the city center due to the GMK Boulevard (formerly Mersin-Silifke Asfaltı). This relation was strengthened by the construction of Mezitli Municipality building on GMK Boulevard at the end of Viranşehir Street (formerly Viranşehir Plaj Yolu). Mezitli Municipality public houses and additional buildings of Taşkırın Café and Beach (former Karaçay Motel) in the southern side of the conservation area, and

administrative system for modern conservation studies could start only after 1950s, and till that time, conservation studies were conducted within the planning legislations. After the formation of conservation council in 1951 as a central governmental authority in preservation issues, modern conservation studies have started. The initial identification and registration studies were concentrated basically in İstanbul due to limited technical staff and financial sources. Right after the enforcement of the first conservation law of Turkish Republic in 1973 – which was structured under the influence of Venice Charter, the conservation council has identified and registered conservation areas within more than 30 provinces –one of which was Soli-Pompeipolis. For more details, see Yasemin Sarıkaya Levent, “Historical Evaluation of the Turkish Legislative System Considering the Integration of Archaeological Sites into the Planning Process”, *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites*, 21, 2019, p.256-279.

¹⁰⁵ For more details, see Yasemin Sarıkaya Levent, “Conservation of Archaeological Sites in Urban Areas in Turkey: Soli-Pompeipolis as a Case Study”, (PhD dissertation, Middle East Technical University, 2008).

Gendarmerie guardhouse on the Soli Mound were constructed also during this period.

Increase in population and demand for new constructions resulted in Mezitli Municipality to prepare spatial plan to direct urban development in the district. Following the approval of 1/1.000 scale implementation plan dated on 1986, construction activities rapidly increased. The main land use characteristics in the vicinity of Soli-Pompeipolis have changed into permanent residential buildings from agricultural lands and summer houses.

Changes in political and economic structures in the Middle East arisen by the Gulf War in 1991 and the loss of European citrus fruit markets due to decrease in quality of products in Çukurova had adverse effects on the city of Mersin.¹⁰⁶ Consequently, agricultural production within Çukurova and commercial activities within the city of Mersin have decreased. The main source for wealth creation was left to construction activities, so that a rapid and speculative increase observed in housing provision.¹⁰⁷ The main reasons of increase in housing provision were to supply residential buildings to dispel the housing shortage of the 1980s and to provide residential units for middle and high income groups, who had the tendency to move towards the west, to the new residential areas in Mezitli District.¹⁰⁸ This movement of middle and high-income groups redefined the settlement pattern of Mezitli District. Thereafter, the vicinity of the ancient city, which was actively used during summer months in the 1980s, has articulated into the main urban system by the beginning of the 1990s.

When there was a rapid increase in construction activities outside the boundaries of archaeological site, the conservation status of Soli-Pompeipolis archaeological site was altered in 1989. Approximately one-third of the conservation area was changed into 3rd degree archaeological conservation area – on which buildings could be constructed by certain limitations and under certain conditions. Buildings constructed especially within the western part of the conservation area had been effective in this alteration. By this alteration, the boundary of the 1st degree archaeological conservation area was limited with the ancient city wall traces. In 1992, 1/1.000 scale conservation plan of Soli-Pompeipolis Archaeological Site was

¹⁰⁶ Eraydın, “A Gateway Region”, p.19.

¹⁰⁷ Ali Türel, “Housing and Housing Industry in Mersin”, *The Proceedings of the 31st Annual IUFA Conference: The Problems of Urban Growth: Preserving while Developing*, Mersin University Press, Mersin, 2002, p.4-7.

¹⁰⁸ Middle and higher income groups have moved towards western sides of the city most probably due to the dense migrant population around the city center during 1980s, as well as due to the increase in urban quality in the western side of the city. For more details, see Jason Byrne (Rapporteur), “Working Group II – Strategies of Housing and Urban Renewal: From Gecekondü to Coastal Condos”, *The Proceedings of the 31st Annual IUFA Conference: The Problems of Urban Growth: Preserving while Developing*, Mersin University Press, Mersin, 2002, p.110-111.

approved which determines the development rights and conditions for new constructions in the 3rd degree archaeological conservation area (Fig. 19).



Figure 19. Archaeological remains observed in the 19th century in relation with current settlement pattern and current conservation area borders

Note: Superimposition of Beaufort's map with contemporary conservation areas. Base image © 2021 GoogleEarth.

Within three decades, from 1978 to 2021, the village of the 1960s has turned into one of the densest districts within the boundaries of the Greater Municipality of Mersin (Fig. 20). The vicinity of the archaeological site has been completely built up by the beginning of the 21st century (Fig. 21). High-rise apartment blocks have surrounded the ancient city in such a way that even identifying the colonnaded street became problematic – which was once the most remarkable and visible element of the ancient site since the 19th century till the 1950s. While the ancient city was surrounded by apartment blocks, the conservation area has not experienced this rapid urbanization process by the help of conservation provisions enacted in an early state between years 1978 and 1989. The archaeological site is still continuing its agricultural function even today, as it has been during the 1970s.

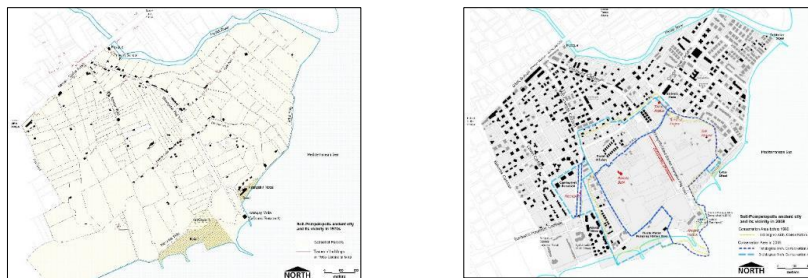


Figure 20. Soli-Pompeipolis and its vicinity from 1970s to the present day

Note: Readjustment of studies conducted in Yasemin Sarkaya Levent, “Conservation of Archaeological Sites in Urban Areas in Turkey”.



Figure 21. Soli-Pompeipolis under the pressure of urban development

Note: Modified by the author on video frame from “Soli Pompeipolis Antik Limanı - Mersin”, Youtube, video by Erhan Ufuk Özaydın.

6. CONCLUSION

With its side effects such as rapid urbanization, increase in population and changes in land use systems, urban development has always been one of the underlying factors that could have negative impacts on archaeological sites.¹⁰⁹ Being located close or near to urban built environment increases the risk for archaeological sites to be affected negatively from urban development, which is clearly demonstrated through examination of urbanization process in the vicinity of Soli-Pompeipolis. However, exploring the 19th century travelogues revealed that the damage given to Soli-Pompeipolis has started before urbanization process in its vicinity. Based on the historical analysis (Fig. 22), it is evident that there are two clear stages to define the physical characteristics and urbanization in Soli-Pompeipolis and its vicinity after the 19th century; first, the area was deserted and inhabited since the 1950s, and then urbanized after the 1950s in a continuous transformation. The second stage has sub stages as initial rural development, recreational use, modern urban development, and sub regions as inside and outside the conservation area border.

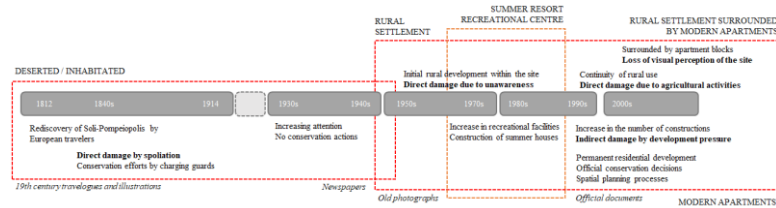


Figure 22. The diagram representing the settlement history of Soli-Pompeipolis and its vicinity from the 19th century to present day

¹⁰⁹ Gaetano Palumbo, “Threats and Challenges to the Archaeological Heritage in Mediterranean”, *Management Planning for Archaeological Sites*, (ed. Jeanne Marie Teutonice and Gaetano Palumbo), Getty Institute, Los Angeles, 2002, p.3-12.

During ancient times, Soli-Pompeiopolis had its most glorious times. Yet after the earthquake and continuous attacks, the city could not survive and deserted. For a very long time, as approximately 1,200 years, the settlement was deserted, or at least it is not known what had happened. The 19th century was the period of rediscovery of the ancient city, but also the period when it was looted by its own citizens. This period from the midst of the 19th century until the beginning of the 20th century could be named as the first stage of damage, during which archaeological remains of Soli-Pompeiopolis have been given damage via ‘spoliation’, as relocating stones of archaeological remains and using them for constructing contemporary buildings in the city of Mersin, yet by erasing visible traces of the ancient settlement. In this sense, damage given to Soli-Pompeiopolis was a direct one, and most of the archaeological remains, such as ancient theater, harbor, city walls have partially or completely disappeared during this first stage.

After the 1970s, the ancient city became popular once again, attracted people, started to be protected with legal instruments; however, these could not help the ancient city being surrounded by modern development. This period started by the end of the 1970s and continuing present day could be named as the second stage of damage during which archaeological remains of Soli-Pompeiopolis have been given damage under the pressure of urban expansion. The severity and the form of negative impacts of urban development in the second phase were different from the effects observed during the first stage. Rapid increase in population and consequently rapid urban development process experienced in the city of Mersin at the end of the 20th century has caused urban expansion around Soli-Pompeiopolis ancient city. Urban expansion of the city of Mersin has reached to Mezitli District, at the end of which Mezitli District was articulated into the main urban system. From then on, Soli-Pompeiopolis has started to be surrounded by modern buildings and be threatened by the pressure of urban expansion, which has given damage to archaeological remains directly by replacing them with contemporary buildings or indirectly by affecting physical, visual, architectural features and relations negatively. Nevertheless, legal protection executions in the beginning of the second stage which have prohibited urban development within the conservation area mostly resulted in protection of the archaeological remains. Scientific surveys and excavations being conducted since 1999 also helped to understand the history of the region and glorious times of Soli-Pompeiopolis. The discovery of Aratus Tomb is the remarkable example to indicate the effectiveness of implementation of legal tools in an early stage to diminish negative impacts of urban development on archaeological remains (Fig. 23).



Figure 23. Aratus Tomb before excavations (left) and after excavations (right)

Source: (left) “Astrolog, matematikçi, bilim adamı Aratos’un anıt mezarının yeri bulundu”, *Sözcü Gazete* on September 20, 2019. (right) “Aratos'un anıt mezarının bölgede benzersiz olduğu ortaya çıktı”, *Haberler.com* on September 30, 2021.

The study intended to evaluate the relation between urbanization processes and loss of archaeological remains in Soli-Pompeiopolis over two centuries. Studying the recent settlement history of Soli-Pompeiopolis from different sources, including the 19th century travelogues, visual materials provided by the 19th century artists, newspaper articles, old city photographs and official records, facilitated to understand the urbanization processes ancient city has passed through, as well as the severity and reasons of the loss of remains during this process. The study also revealed that using secondary sources may be problematic in terms of accuracy. Firstly, they are mostly subjective and include the perspective and observations of the writer rather than having reflected scientific information, which should require verification of information from other sources. Secondly, they may include misleading information due to certain technological limitations, as seen in newspaper articles, or there might be contradictory information, as seen in details provided by travelers’ notes or maps – which should be kept in mind and considered during evaluations. Despite the problems, the study revealed that using secondary sources in settlement history and archaeology studies could be beneficial to understand both the authentic situation before altered by urbanization and changes occurred within archaeological sites in time.

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