



Summary :

Alexandria Troas (mod. Dalayanköy) was situated on the west coast of Troad, opposite the island of Tenedos. It was founded in the late 4th c. BC by Antigonus I Monophthalmos. Its strategic position helped commerce to boost. The city had an important mint.

Other Names

Antigoneia, Colonia Iulia (Alexandria) Troas, Colonia Augusta Troadensis, Dalayanköy

Geographical Location

north coast of Turkey, opposite Tenedos island

Historical Region

west coast of Troad

1. Anthropogeography

Alexandria Troas (mod. Dalayanköy) was situated on the west coast of the [Troad](#), opposite Tenedos Island. To the north it bordered with [Troy](#), to the east with the [chora](#) of [Skepsis](#) and the plain of the river Scamander and to the south with [Assos](#). Inscriptions of the 4th c. BC provide evidence that a quite large part of the population was of Aeolian origin. The city was renamed Alexandria in 301 BC by [Lysimachus](#) (c. 355-281 BC), who wanted in that way to show his respect for [Alexander the Great](#) (356-323 BC).¹ However, at first it was named Antigoneia after its founder [Antigonus I Monophthalmos](#) (c. 382-301 BC).

While a [Roman colony](#), the city was named Colonia Iulia (Alexandria) Troas and later Colonia Augusta Troadensis. Philological sources and coins report that in the 3rd c. AD there were various traditions about the foundation of the city, one of which suggests Alexander the Great as its founder.

2. History

2.1. Hellenistic Period

During the [second War of the Diadochoi](#) Antigonus I Monophthalmos captured the Asian possessions of Alexander the Great (319 BC). In 306 BC he built Antigoneia at a strategic geographical position after proclaiming himself king. He must have founded the city by joining seven villages (Kolonos, Kebrene, Larissa, Amaxitos, Chryssa, [Neandria](#) and Skepsis) in a position called Sigia.² This area may have been previously inhabited, although it is possible that the coast belonged to the sphere of influence of the island of Tenedos. The strategic position of the new city must have played an important role in Antigonus' plans to dominate the Aegean Sea.

After Antigonus died in the [battle of Ipsus](#) (301 BC) Lysimachus dominated over the Asia Minor possessions of his opponent. In the same year he actually refounded the city and changed its name to Alexandria. However, the inhabitants of Skepsis, who had joined the city, wanted to return to their village, which was finally allowed by Lysimachus.³ In this way the latter may have wanted to protect the Troad against possible invasions through the mountain range of Ida, therefore positioning at that spot the walled city of Skepsis.

From Lysimachus' defeat in 281 BC until 227 BC Alexandria was controlled by the [Seleucids](#). Numismatic evidence indicates the prosperity of the city in that period.

The conflicts between the developing Kingdom of [Pergamon](#) and the Seleucids started after the mid-3rd c. BC. The victory of [Attalus I](#) (241-197 BC) over [Antiochus Hierax](#) (241-226 BC) in 227/226 BC gave Alexandria its autonomy until 129 BC, when the Roman [province of Asia](#) was formed. During those almost a hundred years of autonomy the city adopted a friendly attitude towards



the Kingdom of Pergamon and resisted the Seleucid imperialism.

In 223/222 BC Achaeus, the formerly loyal general of [Antiochus III](#) (223-187 BC), defected and proclaimed himself king. He managed to assume control over Asia Minor, previously under [Attalid](#) domination, except for [Lampsacus](#), Ilium and Alexandria, which supported the Attalids.⁴ In 218 BC Attalus I regained control over Asia Minor and the region of the [Hellespont](#) came once again in the sphere of the Attalid influence.

The [Galatian](#) mercenaries Attalus had used against Achaeus plundered cities of the Hellespont and besieged Ilium in 217 BC. It was then that Alexandria sent 4000 soldiers, who chased the Galatians out of the region of the Troad. The fact that the city achieved unaided such a thing proves its power.

In 197/196 BC Antiochus III attempted to regain control over Asia Minor; Alexandria Troas must have come under his jurisdiction along with Lampsacus and [Smyrna](#). Probably it was these three cities that caused the Antiochian War when they appealed to Rome for help against Antiochus. In 192 BC, while Antiochus was ready to get to Europe in order to gain a footing and dominate, the three cities delayed and troubled him. After the Roman intervention he had to liberate those cities and was compelled to pay them half of the money they had spent on the war.

Through the [Peace of Apamea](#) (188 BC) Alexandria became autonomous again and was included in the province of Hellenistic [Phrygia](#), which was under the command of a general from Pergamon.⁵ In the 2nd c. BC the city managed to extend its control over almost the entire west coast of the Troad.

Inscriptions from the period of autonomous Alexandria provide information about the friendly relations with other Greek cities as well as about the citizens honoured by various cities of the Greek world. The Roman province of Asia was established in 129 BC and Alexandria was included without being deprived of the title of the free city. According to philological and epigraphic evidence, the city was involved in the [third Mithridatic War](#) (73/72 BC).

2.2. Roman Period

Between 40 and 31 BC Alexandria was a Roman colony, possibly under the name Colonia Iulia (Alexandria) Troas.⁶ This must have been [Julius Caesar](#)'s plan, which was finally fulfilled after his death, probably by [Mark Antony](#). The most important era for the city was the Early Imperial period. Between 27 and 12 BC [Octavian Augustus](#) actually refounded the Roman colony. He changed its name to Colonia Augusta Troadensis and brought more colonists. In 12 BC Octavian exempted the city from all import and export taxes. He must have awarded the city Ius Italicum, according to which the colony was at the same level of autonomy and tax exemptions as the colonies in Italy. During [Hadrian](#)'s years (117-138 AD) Alexandria must have prospered, as evidenced by a votive inscription reporting Hadrian as the restorer of the colony (restitutor coloniae nostrae). It was then that the great irrigation works were carried out, funded with four million drachmae by the personal property of Herodes Atticus.

3. Economy

In the years of Antigonus I Monophthalmos Antigoneia was the only big city in the region. It was at a strategic point for sea communications, it had two artificial harbours and quite a lot of arable land. After its foundation Antigonus must have introduced decisive measures for the economic development of the area. Right from the start the city had a very important mint. In the years of Antigonus and Lysimachus [coins were minted carrying the name of Alexander the Great](#). According to A. Bellinger, who studied the city's coins, Alexandria was the economic capital of the state during Lysimachus' reign. Moreover, Antiochus I (281-261 BC) and [Antiochus II](#) (261-246 BC) minted coins there. The city probably served as the central [mint of the Seleucids](#) in the years of King Antiochus Hierax. Apart from their names, the coins of the Seleucids carried Alexander's name, unlike those minted by Lysimachus. Although the mint must have suspended its operations for some time, it started again in 175 BC.

More specifically, in the Imperial period the city prospered and the mint continued its non-stop production. Thanks to the two



harbours and its strategic geographical position Alexandria Troas became the commercial hub of the region. As a commercial centre and Roman colony it attracted several Roman citizens, who appear very frequently in inscriptions and must have contributed actively in the economic life of the city. [Apostle Paul](#) visited Alexandria twice.

In the Roman period there were shipyards in the area. At Tragases, near Amaxitos, there were salt lakes, whose economic importance Lysimachus knew well. The water of the area had therapeutic properties, while there were also loadstone and granite mines.⁷ Moreover, a type of tar as well as a kind of laurel found on Mt. Ida came from the area of Alexandria.

4. Institutions – System of Government

According to inscriptions, Antigoneia had a democratic regime with a boule, ecclesia and eponymous archon. During the reign of its founder, Antigonos, the city must have followed its policy. It belonged to the Ilian League, founded by Antigonos and based at [Athena](#)'s sanctuary in Ilium, and was one of the cities that participated in the restoration of Thebes, which had been destroyed in 335 BC by Alexander the Great.

As a Roman colony Alexandria was governed by a Roman constitution and institutions, as evidenced by several inscriptions.

5. Religion

It is worth mentioning a very important sanctuary of the area dedicated to [Apollo Smintheus](#). The sanctuary, already from [Homer](#)'s years (possibly 8th c. BC), operated until the Roman period outside Alexandria. Although it is doubted whether it belonged to the city, it is possible that the sanctuary was gradually included in the sphere of influence of Alexandria, probably in the 2nd c. BC, due to the fact that there were lots of votive and honorary inscriptions erected for citizens of Alexandria in the Hellenistic period as well as that the sanctuary of Smintheus appears on the verso of Alexandrian coins.

6. City Plan – Buildings

Alexandria must have been quite powerful during the reign of Lysimachus, who was killed in the battle of Corupedium in 281 BC. It is possible that in that period the city was enclosed with a wall 7.5 km long, surrounding an area of about 1000 hectares and the two harbours. Lysimachus also built a temple in Alexandria, which must have been traced with geophysical methods by German scientists.

Geophysical research carried out recently in Alexandria revealed the plan of the city, which was built on islets in the Imperial period. The [agora](#), the odeum, the [gymnasium](#), the [nymphaeum](#) as well as a temple at the centre of the agora, possibly dedicated to [Augustus' cult](#), evidenced by inscriptions of that period, have been traced.

The ruins of the Roman city were visible in the 14th century and at least until the 17th century, when the site of the ancient city was not inhabited. Early European travellers identified the ruins with ancient Troy. Part of the ancient gymnasium was known as "the castle" or "Priamus' palace". In the 19th century epigraphic evidence and excavations in Troy contributed to the correct identification of the area with Alexandria Troas.

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1. Strabo, 13.1.26.
 2. Strabo, 13.1.26, 13.1.47.
 3. Strabo, 13.1.33.
 4. Polybius, 5.78, 6.



5. Diod. S., 29.7; Liv., *Ab urb. cond.* 35.42.2.
6. Strabo, 13.1.26.
7. Plin., *HN* 36.128=36.25; Cod. Theod. 11.9, 11.11.

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	Alexandria Troas, Coins http://www.asiaminorcoins.com/gallery/thumbnails.php?album=72



Glossary :



chora, the

The agricultural land (including villages and land-plots) belonging to a polis. It was bounded with the polis on an administrative and economic basis.

Sources

Strabo, *Geographica*, 13.1.26, 33, 47

Polyb., *Historiae*, 5.78.6

Diod. Sic., *Bibliotheca Historica*, Σ.29.7

Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, 35.42.2

Codex Theodosianus 11.9, 11.11