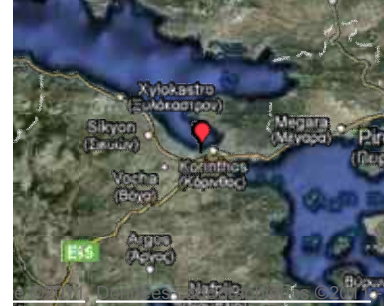


## Corinth - Lechaeon

Lechaeon was the western harbour of Corinth while Kenchreea was the eastern one. The two harbours were serving the navigation of the fertile Corinthian plateau and the wider area of Peloponnesus to the western Mediterranean and central Greece, as well as the Aegean Sea respectively. During the Classical times, the area of the Lechaeon harbour and the city of Corinth were connected with long walls, which are recorded in written sources and they have been partly excavated.

The first harbour works are attributed to the tyrant of Corinth Periandros. Furthermore, the relics of the harbour, the written testimony and the pottery scattered around the area testify formations dating possibly from the Hellenistic period and definitely from the Roman times. The inner, dug out basins of Lechaeon consist the earliest example of the "cothon" type harbour in the Aegean and the one of the only two such examples in the same area, along with the one of Phalassarna.

The harbour was in use from the early 6th c. B.C. to at least the 6th c. A.D. During the middle of the 6th c. A.D. the basilica of Martyr Leonidis, which had been built near the western basin, was destroyed by an earthquake. After that, the "suburb" of the harbour was quite likely decline; although that does not necessary confirm the complete final abandonment of the harbour infrastructure.



Figures 

### Main features

Region	Corinthian Gulf
Use	Not defined
Prosperity period (centuries)	6th B.C. - 6th A.D.
Existence of contemporary port	No
Findings on site	Yes, moles, wharves, basins, canals, possibly piers

### General description

Two moles are located at the beach, north of the inner basins. Their northern ends are still visible at the surface of the sea. They are constructed with headers bind together with clamps, as it is evident from the relevant cuttings. The formation also of the western mole's end suggests the existence of a tower or a lighthouse on it. The area between the two moles, which was perhaps communicating with the inner west basin with a second channel, is considered as a "pro-limen" by some researchers (Georgiades 1907, Paris 1915). An aerial view of 1960 (Theodoulou 2002) proves the existence of the so called "pro-limen" but not the channel. East of the two moles, a row of un-worked medium size stones is visible underwater. It could have been constructed there in order to prevent the main entrance channel or the "pro-limen" from silting or even as a border of a second "pro-limen" basin (Georgiades 1907, Paris 1915). At the broader area of the harbour relics of walls can be identified as remains of the city walls, ship-sheds, temples, villas etc that are referred in the written sources, or even as other buildings necessary for the harbour's operation. Eastern of the entrance channel some conglomerated formations are considered as remains of Roman caissons. The main remnants of the Lechaeon

harbour consist of three or four inner dugout basins, which were formed where a marsh once was situated. The sand and pebbles of the prime and the following dredging of the harbour formed two hills, which hid the harbour from north. Among the two hills a channel at the northeastern of the basins was leading to the sea. Both its sides were constructed by ashlar. Another channel was also connecting the western with the eastern basins. In several areas of the banks, remains of rows of headers of a not defined construction are noticed (quays?). At the northern side of the eastern basin, on a certain area of the structure, projecting perpendicular pillars can be found, probably used for mooring or berthing. Such a construction, situated at the southern side of the same basin, could be not its limit to the south, but a pier between this and another basin further south. In the western basin, there is a rectangular construction of ashlar, possibly a base for a statue or a lighthouse (?).

#### Technical features

Construction period (centuries)	6th B.C. - 4th A.D., The first harbour configurations are dated probably to 6th c. BC. Based on pottery and located remains it seems that more harbour works took place around 45 AD. Finally some more repairs can be dated to the period around 335 AD after epigraphic witnesses.
Port configuration	Artificial Harbour, Inner Harbour, Outer Harbour
Port basin size	1500 m <sup>2</sup>
Main wind direction	NE
Port land area	km <sup>2</sup>
Port entrance	A channel at the northeast leading to the eastern inner basin. Possibly a second channel leading from the pro-limen to the inner western basin
Change of sea surface elevation	0.7 m
Sedimentation	Yes
Outer port structures	Moles, Breakwaters
Inner port structures	Quays, Piers, Canals, Basins
Land facilities	Temples, Defence Structures, Lighthouses, Other
Construction method	Ashlars and possibly caissons
Neotectonic history	Lift
Shore line displacement	Silting

#### Function and operations

The harbour of Lechaeon transacted the expansion of the Corinthian colonies to the west during the Archaic period and was used as the most important port for the navigation towards Central Greece, the Ionian Sea and Italy during its operation period, from the Archaic to Byzantine times. Furthermore, the existence of ship sheds at the harbour is witnessed in the ancient sources (Xenophon). Thus, it is also certain that at least a part of the continent of the Corinthian fleet dealing with the west was housed in one of the harbour's protected basins.

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Related researches	
Findings in	No

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