

Byblos & the Sea - an HFF Funded Research Project

SUMMARY REPORT : Path to Harbor - Field Mission 11 / Sept.- Oct. 2019

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Introduction

In 2011, a multi-disciplinary investigation project *Byblos & the Sea*, took up the reigns of Honor Frost's research in Byblos. To date, this HFF funded project has conducted 10 field investigations under the supervision of the Directorate General of Antiquities (DGA). The first seven missions concentrated on the coastal rocky strip, and the near shore and offshore maritime areas. As a result of these investigations, the maritime approaches to Byblos were understood and the location of a silted-in harbor basin was confirmed at the southern foot of the promontory on which the city was built (Francis-Allouche and Grimal et al. *BAAL* 2017). Additional research aimed at better understanding the harbor basin and its premises is planned (mission 8 is on hold since 2016).

The next main inquiry by *Byblos and the Sea* project involved the connection between the harbor premises and the city. This issue was addressed during two field investigations under the scientific direction of archaeologist Julien Chanteau in the southern sector of the archaeological site of Byblos. The study identified a fortified gate overlooking the main harbor of the city, – probably the commercial hub of ancient Byblos, where goods, and essentially timber, was traded over the millennia at its commercial harbor, as vividly described in the Story of Wenamon (Francis-Allouche and Grimal et al. *BAAL* 2017). The results and interpretation were submitted to DGA in Rapport Final de Synthèse 1/ 2017 – mission 9 and Rapport Final de Synthèse 2/ 2018 – mission 10.

Fieldwork Mission 11

At this stage of our investigation, the understanding of the physical access to and from the southern gate leading down to the harbor installation below became important. How did one walk down to the sea? *Byblos & the Sea* project undertook a third mission (*Path to Harbor* – mission 11/2019) primarily aimed at shedding more light on the matter. Two trial excavations (fig.1, S1 and S2) were conducted under the direction of archaeologist Julien Chanteau to investigate a perimeter located to the east of the former one, which offered larger excavation space (fig.1). The main objective of this third investigations was to reach the outer limit of the glacis (retaining city wall) and locate a path (or any access system) that led down to the harbor.

The results and scientific interpretation of this investigation are presented in the Rapport Final de Synthèse 3 (RFS 3, Julien Chanteau) submitted to DGA (February 2020). A preliminary article on the overall study (Missions 9, 10 and 11) conducted in this southern sector of the archaeological site will also be submitted to the *Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises* in June 2020.



Figure 1. New study perimeter (in light blue) in the eastern sector of the archaeological site of Byblos, showing the location of two excavation soundings (S1 and S2) where the city wall turns northwards, providing a wider excavation area than in the 2018 excavation sounding (SB); (© *Byblos & the Sea*, 2019).