# BYBLOS

بيبلوس

٣٥١٩٢٩

## HISTORY OF THE CITY AND BYBLOS CITY STRUCTURE

Neolithic - Phoenician | Persian | Hellinistic | Roman | Byzantine | Islamic | Crusaders | Mamluk | Ottoman

5000 BC | 3000 BC | 1200 BC | 550 BC | 330 BC | 64 AD | 324 AD | 636 AD | 1108 AD | 1289 AD | 1516 AD | 1916 AD

7000 years ago, the Neolithic fishing community was the first people to settle on the shores of Byblos, which was the first settlement of the Phoenicians. This Phoenician settlement was then taken by the Persians who extended the city and its walls.

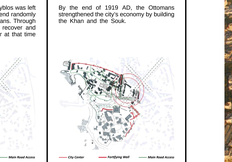
In 6000 BC the first wall was built by the Phoenicians. The city did not have any specific center, but it had its own important landmarks such as temples and trading centers distributed within the city walls.

By 550 BC, the Persian empire extended the city walls, and had its main element, which was a temple, located near the wall and created the city center.

The city encountered its first huge attempt of extension in the age of the Romans. They left the hill and fortified the lower side of the city. This brought more prosperity to the city.

The Romans (64 - 330 AD) mowed the wall to the opposite side, and built their own temple. They extended the city's main roads through one straight path leading directly to the temple, and two perpendicular roads connecting two opposit sides of Byblos. At that time, the temple was the center of the city.

By the end of the Islamic era, Byblos was left uncared of, and it started to extend randomly ruining the grid left by the Romans. Through this era, Byblos was trying to recover and prosper, but the continuous war at that time made it slow.




In the Medieval Era (636 - 1289 AD), the old city was left as it was and the new city extended to the northern side fortifying itself with a new wall and creating the city's port. At this time the cathedral became the new city center.

By the end of 1919 AD, the Ottomans strengthened the city's economy by building the Khan and the Souk.




The Ottoman Empire (1516 -1918 AD) changed the whole rhythm of expansion that the city was following. They kept the medieval wall, but extended the city's port. The concept of the center changed from being based on a religious element to becoming the most economically viable part of the city, containing the Souk and the Khan.

## BYBLOS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE AND SURROUNDING

Photo by Bassam Lahoud

## BYBLOS ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE AND MEDIEVAL CITY

**1- THE ROMAN ROAD**
These vestiges are the remains of the main road that used to be the Romans-era city of Byblos. Today, about 300m of the road can be seen, including some of the old paving stones and columns that once lined the road.

**2- A BRONZE AGE CITY GATE**
The remains of a city gate dating from the Early Bronze Age (third millennium B.C.) are located on the left side of the castle. This gate appears as a wide opening between two ancient stone ramparts. Traces of fire are visible, possibly from the Amorite invasions around 2300-1900 B.C.

**3- OLD FORTIFICATION WALL**
This primitive wall was built before 2500 B.C. It is the oldest fortification on the site.

**4- GREAT TEMPLE**

The structures visible today are the foundations of the socalled "L-shaped Temple," erected around 2700 B.C. A section of charred stone at the entrance of the temple's sacred court (4A) is evidence that the temple was destroyed by fire, probably at the time of the Amorite invasions around 2300-1900 B.C. Terracotta basins set in a bench of masonry behind the entrance (4B) probably held water for ritual cleansing ceremonies.

**5- TEMPLE OF THE OBELISKS**

Originally built on top of the "L-shaped temple" (4), the remains of the Temple of the Obelisks were moved by archaeologists to their present location. The temple dates from the Late Bronze Age (1600-1200 B.C.). The many small obelisks found in this temple were used as religious offerings. Altogether, over 1,306 offerings have been uncovered in this temple, including human figurines made of bronze covered with gold leaf.

**6-AIN EL-MALIK**
This large cavity, with large sustaining walls constructed of irregular stones, once held a water well called "Ain el-Malik." According to the archaeologist who excavated the site, this "spring" was the main source of water for Byblos in ancient times.

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**7-11- HOUSES**
**7-** The archaeological vestiges in this area are the remains of an enclosure and the foundations of houses dating from the Early Bronze Age, about 3200-3000 B.C.

**8-** Foundations of two houses, one built on top of the other. The lower one is from the Chalcolithic period (4500-3500 B.C.). The upper one is from the Early Bronze Age, 3200-3000 B.C.

**9-** Remains of a large Early Bronze Age residence (third millennium B.C.). In the structure's rooms you can see three rows of five stone pillar bases, which once held the wooden pillars used to support the structure.

**10-** Early Bronze Age building foundations, third millennium B.C.

**11-** Early Bronze Age house foundations, dating from the period of the Amorite conquest 2150-2000 B.C.

**12-15- NEOLITHIC AND CHALCOLITHIC**
Settlements dating back to the Stone Age (fifth and fourth millennia B.C.) are the remains of several mono-cellular huts with crushed limestone floors. They are situated in the area between the Early Bronze Age residence (9) and the Roman road. Nearby are several round cultic installations or temples in two of the structures: the first one (14), with an apsidal or semi-circular shape, is located at the northern edge of this area, and the second one (15) is located southeast of the first one.

**16- AMORITE QUARRY**
This large excavation in the rocks, located behind the Baalat Gebal temple (18), dates from the period of the Amorite invasions (2300-1900 B.C.). The stones extracted from this quarry were used to construct buildings in the Byblos area.

**17- BRONZE AGE HOUSE**
This Early Bronze Age house is located near the quarry (16). Most of its walls are preserved, with more than three courses of stones remaining today. Its seaside façade has especially well-built, thick walls.

**18- TEMPLE OF BAALAT GEBAL**

Today, the visitor can only see the foundations of the Temple of Baalat Gebal (2700 B.C.). This temple was dedicated to the "Lady of Byblos," the patron goddess of the city for over two millennia during the Canaanite/Phoenician era. Constructed when Byblos had close ties with Egypt, this large and important temple was rebuilt a number of times. It remained in use until the Roman period, when it was replaced by a Roman-style structure, which was dismantled during the excavations of the site in the early 20th century.

**19- RECONSTRUCTED ROMAN THEATER**
The Roman theater, which has only five tiers remaining, was built around 218 A.D. It was moved from its original site between the city gate (2) and the Great Temple (4) to its present location near the seaside. The black pebbles in the center of the theater mark the location of a mosaic that has been preserved in the National Museum of Beirut.

**20-26- ROYAL TOMBS**
The necropolis dates to the second millennium B.C. and contains nine underground tombs of the Byblos kings. The most important tomb is that of King Ahiram (13th century B.C.), whose sarcophagus bears one the earliest known inscriptions of the Phoenician alphabet. This sarcophagus is now located in the National Museum of Beirut. The tomb of King Ahiram was located on the west slope facing the sea, but it was completely destroyed by a collapse in 1922, which revealed Ahiram's sarcophagus.

**27- ROMAN COLONNADE**
These six standing columns once lined a north-south street, built by the Romans in 300 A.D., which led to the Temple of Baalat-Gebal.

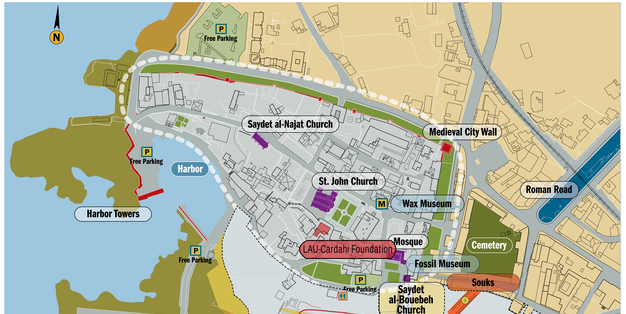
**28- BRONZE AGE RESIDENTIAL QUARTER**
At this site are the remains of a residential quarter dating to the Bronze Age. The foundations of several houses can be seen, giving the visitor a sense of the general layout of a residential area during this period.

**29-32- BRONZE AGE CITY FORTIFICATIONS**
These Bronze Age ramparts, walls, and fortifications are located inside the modern wall on the right side of the Castle entrance. The structures show successive stages of construction and restoration. The indented wall (31) belongs to the fortifications built in the Early Bronze Age (third millennium B.C.), while the terraced slopes or glacis made of large blocks (32) date from the end of the Middle Bronze Age (1725-1580 B.C).

**33- ROMAN NYMPHEUM**
Located to the left of the Castle entrance are the foundations of a Roman-era nympheum. The nymphaeum was once decorated with fountains and a niche filled with statues. The roads coming into the city from the north converged in the area in front of the nymphaeum.

**34-THE CRUSADER CASTLE**
The site of the Crusader Castle was originally occupied by an earlier fortification dating from the Fatimid period (969-1169 A.D.) in the beginning of the 12th century A.D. The Crusaders built a strong fortress, reusing Roman stonework from the site and cutting new stones to match the old ones. The castle consisted of a courtyard, an enclosure with four towers at each corner of the building, and a fifth tower in the middle of the north wall to defend the entrance. The whole castle was originally surrounded by a moat. In Mamluke and Ottoman times, the castle was reused and some parts of it were restored. Climbing to the top of the castle offers an excellent vantage point for taking in a panoramic view of the ruins and the Mediterranean Sea.

**35- PERSIAN CASTLE**
This complex dates from the Persian period (550-333 B.C.). It is believed to be a castle because of its large masonry walls and because of the architectural aspects of its architecture. The remains are located outside the Early Bronze Age city walls, and today visitors can see foundations of the castle walls and square-shaped towers. The fact that a fortress was constructed here during this period shows that Byblos was a strategic part of the Persian defense system in the eastern Mediterranean.



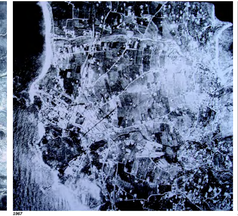

| The Site | الموقع |
|---|---|
| 1 The Roman Road | الطريق الرومانية |
| 2 Bronze Age City Gate | البوابة الأثرية |
| 3 Old Fortification Wall | السور القديم |
| 4 Great Temple | المعبد الكبير |
| 5 Temple of the Obelisks | معبد المسلات |
| 6 Ain el Malik | عين الملك |
| 7 Residential complex | سكن |
| 8 Foundations of two houses | بيوت |
| 9 Early Bronze Age residence | بيت |
| 10 Early Bronze Age building foundation | بيت حجري |
| 11 Early Bronze Age house foundation | بيوت حجري |
| 12 Hut house | بيت |
| 13 Mesocellular house | كوخ ذو بيت واحد |
| 14 Apsidal house | بيت بنصف دائرة |
| 15 Mesocellular house | كوخ ذو بيت واحد |
| 16 The Amorite Quarry | المقلع الأموري |
| 17 Bronze Age house | بيت |
| 18 The Temple of Baalat Gebal | معبد البعلة |
| 19 The Roman Theater | المسرح الروماني |
| 20 royal tomb | ضريح ملكي |
| 21 royal tomb | ضريح ملكي |
| 22 royal tomb | ضريح ملكي |
| 23 royal tomb | ضريح ملكي |
| 24 royal tomb | ضريح ملكي |
| 25 royal tomb | ضريح ملكي |
| 26 royal tomb | ضريح ملكي |
| 27 Roman Arcade | الأعمدة الرومانية |
| 28 Bronze Age residential Quarter | الأحياء السكنية |
| 29 Fortification Wall | سور المدينة |
| 30 City Fortification | أسوار المدينة |
| 31 The Crusader Castle | القلعة الصليبية |
| 32 The Crusader Castle | القلعة الصليبية |
| 33 Roman Nymphaeum | النمفيوم الروماني |
| 34 Persian Castle | القلعة الفارسية |

A thriving modern town with an ancient heart, Byblos is a mix of sophistication and tradition. The old harbor is sheltered from the sea by a rocky headland. Nearby are the excavated remains of the ancient city, the Crusader castle and church, and the old market area. The area of excavations is surrounded by a wall with the entrance at the Crusader castle. To get a good view of this large, somewhat complex site, either climb to the top of castle or walk around the periphery from outside the wall to identify the major monuments. With its many restaurants, cafés, souvenir shops, and hotels, Byblos is well prepared to welcome tourists.

## MORPHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT/AERIAL PHOTOS

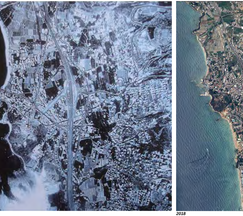
For the French (1920 -1943), the center created by the Ottomans was a smart attempt, therefore they kept it as it is, and placed their own governmental and institutional buildings as an expansion to this old center. To give it more importance, the railway was placed near the center to enhance it.

1956



1967

1973



1988

2018

## PHASES OF PREHISTORIC PHOENICIAN SETTLEMENTS

According to Maurice Dunand the Prehistoric Phoenician settlements at Byblos is divided into the following 3 stages/5 periods:

**1- Neolithic Phases**
a. Ancient Neolithic (Early Phase): represented by plastered doors and naviforme technology , 8800-7000 BC.

b. Ancient Neolithic (Late Phase): represented by pottery, sickle blades, gurines and small points, 6400-5800 BC.

**2- Middle Neolithic**
Represented by pottery, 5800-5300 BC.

**3- Late Neolithic**
Represented by pottery, stone vessels, silos, chamber tombs and seals, 5300-4500 BC.

**4- Ancient Chalcolithic**
Represented by jar burials, pierced int, churn and a violin gurine, 4500-3600 BC.

**5- Late Chalcolithic**
Represented by architecture and cylinder, seal impressions, 3600-3100 BC.