

Abstract on the activity of the Italian-Lebanese archaeological mission in Kharayeb-Adloun – Southern Lebanon – 2018

The archaeological mission started its work on the 10th of September and ended on the 15th of October 2018 in the localities of Kharayeb and Adloun located on the coasts of South-Lebanon governorate. It is a joint Lebanese and Italian multidisciplinary mission directed by both Ida Oggiano from the Institute for Ancient Mediterranean Studies - Italian National Research Council (Roma) and Wissam Khalil from the Department of Arts and Archaeology - Lebanese University (Sidon). This mission is funded by the Honor Frost Foundation, and implemented in close collaboration with the Directorate General of Antiquities, and with the support of the Municipality of Kharayeb.

The research and archaeological tasks of the 2018 mission are in continuity with the earlier works carried out in 2017. The main aim in 2018 is to survey the coast and planes of Kharayeb, to do underwater surveys in Adloun and Kharayeb and to undertake new soundings on the newly discovered coastal tell located on the Mouth of the Litani River in Kharayeb.

The Terrestrial Survey

The survey area stretches from the Litani River in Kharayeb along the coast till the mouth of the Abou el-Aswad stream. To the east, it covered the agricultural plains stretching from the shores and stopped at the edge of the coastal road. The survey of the near shore of Kharayeb was completed in 2017.

Seven archaeological features were discovered during the survey, including traces of the main coastal Ottoman road. The survey also delimited the Qasmieh Tell, and located a probable Roman Bridge on the Litani River. This new discovery will help in determining the possible location of the Roman coastal road. A new site was also discovered in Arzay (near Kharayeb) overlooking the Litani River dating to Roman and Byzantine eras. Ceramic shreds and flint objects were also systematically collected from the areas of the Kharayeb Plain.

The Underwater Survey

The underwater survey covered the waters of Kharayeb and Adloun. The main objectives for the 2018 season were to dive on the areas with underwater archaeological potential located in 2017. The underwater team identified a site in Kharayeb with the probable remains of two shipwrecks, one from the 6th-5th-century BC and the second from the Byzantine era. Several points were located in Adloun in which ceramic findings were identified.

The team consisted of Lebanese and Italian divers; they started their dive activities from the 1st until the 14th of October using a traditional fishing boat.

The Soundings in the Qasmieh Tell

Also Known as Khirbet Ain-el Qanater, this important archaeological tell located at the mouth of the Litani River was assessed last year by doing a cleaning of a long section located near an

agricultural road. This year the mission did a cleaning of the section, enlarged it, and undertook two soundings; the first one underneath the section on the western edge of the site, and a second one on top of the section Tell along inside the banana plantations. The first sounding reached ancient rock formations that were exposed to sea action. The second sounding reached Hellenistic and Iron Age III layers and wall. Ceramic objects and findings from the cleaning and soundings cover a chronological range from the 8th BC up to the Hellenistic period. At the end of the mission, the team covered the sounding trenches and secured the section.



Zorba, the traditional wooden boat used for the dives





The Lebanese and Italian underwater team.



General view of the section and sounding trench.



The cleaning and sounding on top of the section Tell inside the banana plantations.