Archaeological Excavations at the Northern Ancient Harbor at Tyre - 2018
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The following summarizes the 2018 field season of the archaeological excavation and investigations of the Ancient Northern Harbour at Tyre, Lebanon, and the final report will be published in Bulletin d'archéologie et d'architecture libanaises (BAAL).

This project is a joint project between the University of Perpignan – CRESEM/ARESMAR-France, and DGA- Lebanon. The team comprised both Lebanese and French members lead by Dr. Ibrahim Noureddine and Mr. Jean Sicre.

This archaeological excavation and investigation project is set in the northern harbour of Tyre on the ancient submerged jetty which consists of two parallel walls of approximately 80 m in length with a 12,70 m void between both walls filled with sediments and ashlar/rubbles of various sizes, both outside walls of the jetty consisted of ashlar masonry laid in parallel courses.

In 2004, a test pit was excavated based on the apparent state of the northern and southern blocks of the jetty, located approximately in the middle section of the jetty, some 32 m from the pier head. During the 2018 season the same type of symmetrical excavation was carried out on the northern wall, both on the inside and the seaward side, which aimed to determine the building techniques used, and the possible dating of this ancient jetty. The field season took place from September 19 to October 11, 2018. Two excavation trenches one on either side of the northern jetty wall, were positioned and aligned vertically to the jetty. 110 dives, totaling 129 hours underwater were sufficient to excavate two large excavation trenches, Trench A located on the inner side of the northern wall and Trench B located outside the northern wall. The results are both interesting and encouraging. New tool marks on the blocks used to construct the mole were found and at least six courses of blocks can be confirmed at the base of the northern wall.

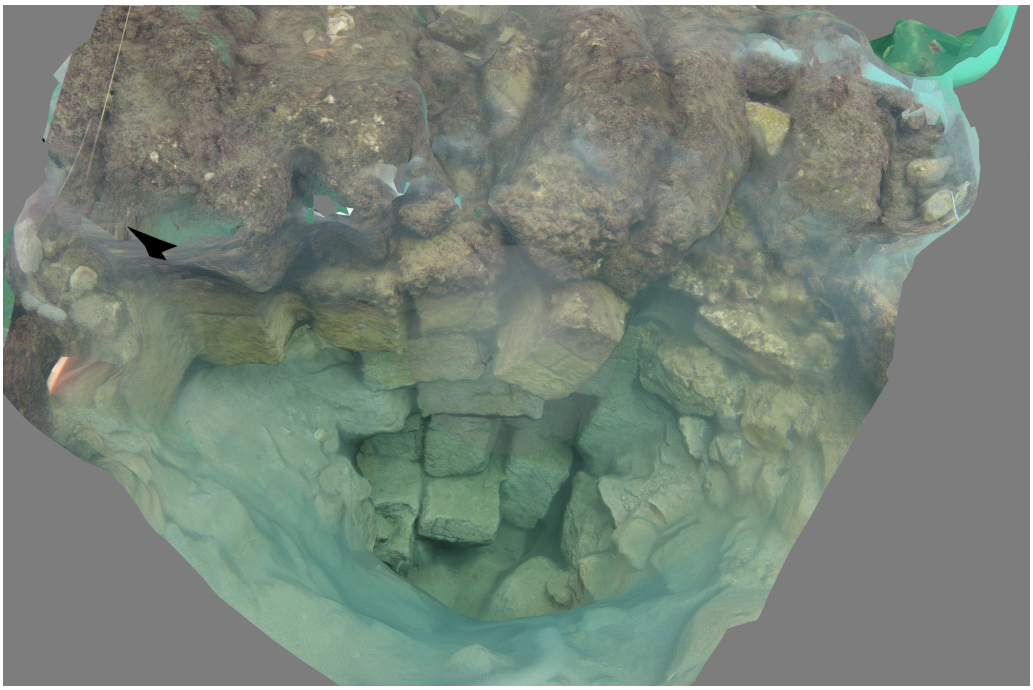
Excavation of Trenches A & B

Excavation of Trench A partly revealed the ashlar/rubble and sediment fill in the void area between both walls, where it covers the entire height of the jetty's walls. The stones that fill the area between the walls are basically the same type of sandstone blocks which comprise the jetty and are of many shapes and sizes. Ceramic sherds were also found throughout the entire excavation trench.

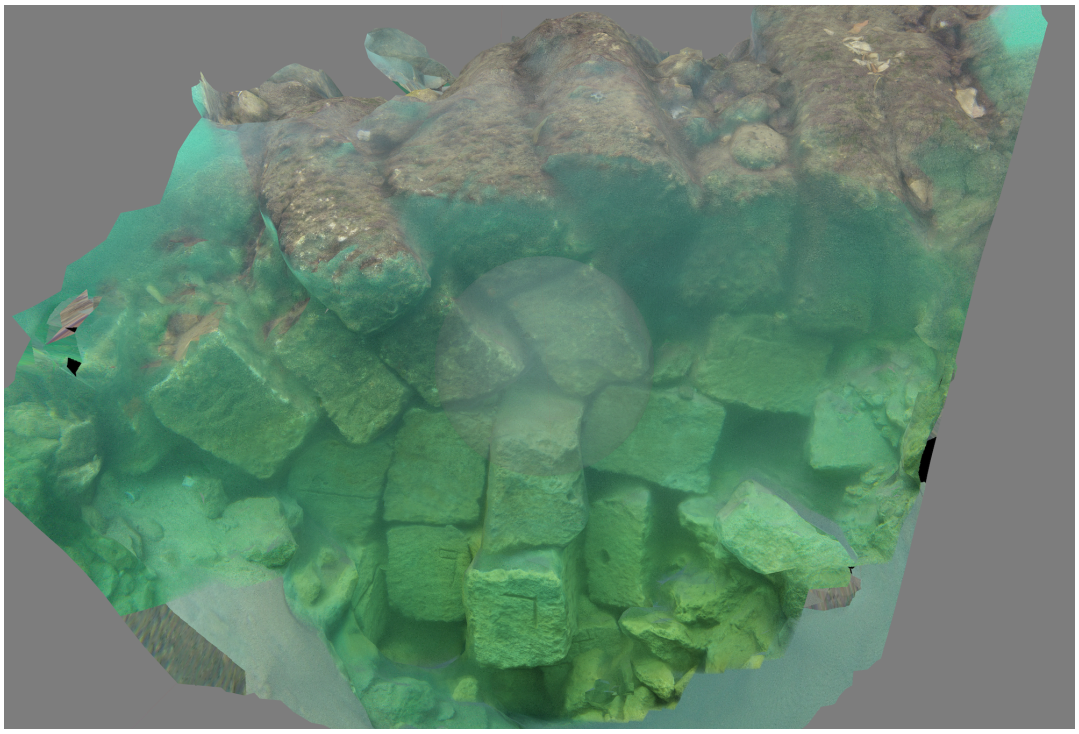
The movements of the last two courses after construction are much more visible on excavation Trench B. At the bottom of excavation Trench A, what would seem to be the first foundation course, also displays unevenness. These would seem to be the result of having been installed on a sandy seafloor, or from other possible causes such as; unleveled ground, sand movements during construction followed by ground subsidence.

The excavation of Trench B was carried out on the north face of the northern façade, the counterpart of excavation Trench A. Trench B is situated at the exterior of the mole, on the seaward side. Numerous stones were also present on the full height of the excavation trench, mixed with sediment. These stones are of all shapes and sizes and some require the use of a lifting bag. We can observe similarities between the materials excavated in Trench A and those in Trench B.

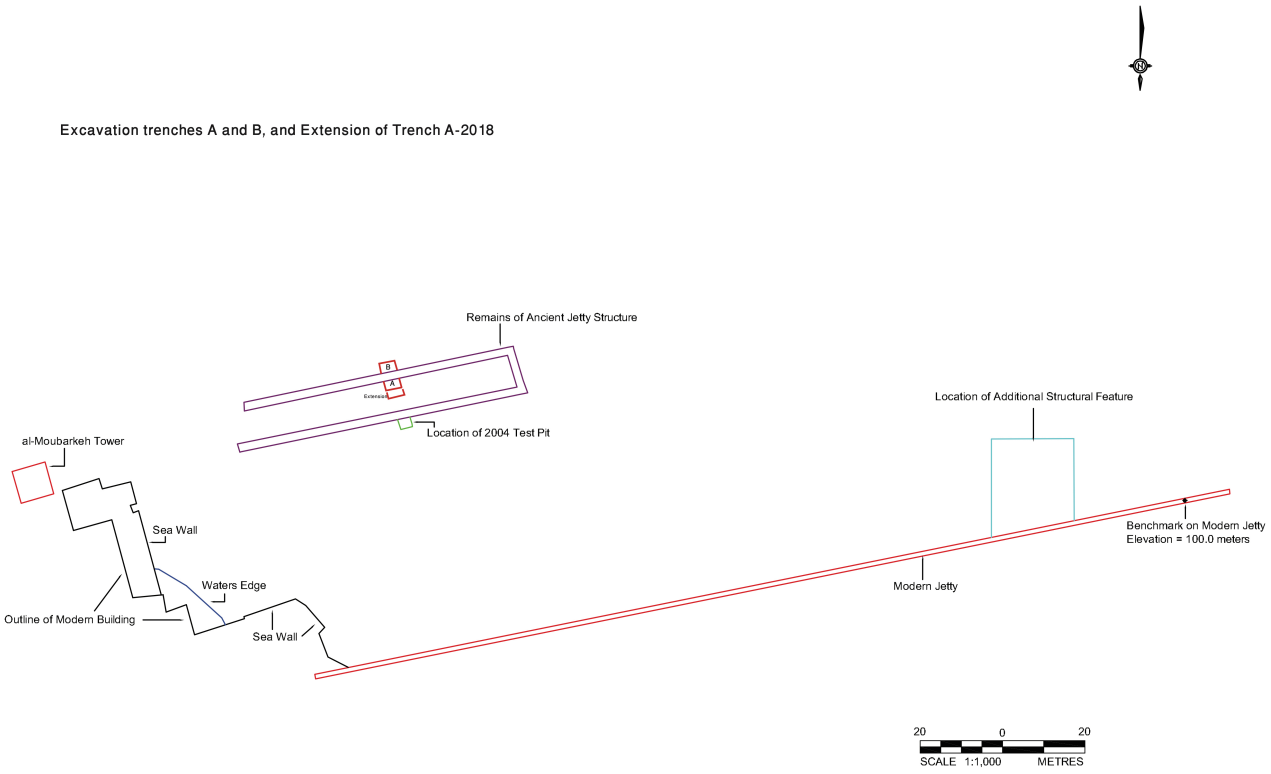
Consequently, at least six courses which make up the northern façade can be confirmed but so far, we cannot confirm the presence either of another deeper foundation course, or of the exact nature of the substrate on which the blocks are resting. New "masonry/quarrying" marks appeared during the 2018 field season. We can consider that significant variations in the marks must have existed. The space between both parallel walls is filled with all sorts of materials, and finally, seismic activities are evident throughout both excavated Trenches A and B.



Trench A – 3D model



Trench B – 3D model



Site plan - 2018