

## **Introduction**

In 2011, a multi-disciplinary investigation project *Byblos & the Sea*, took up the reigns of Honor Frosts' research in Byblos under the direction of Egyptologist Nicolas Grimal and marine archaeologist Martine Francis-Allouche. Mainly funded by the Honor Frost Foundation (HFF), the Project has conducted to date nine field investigations under the supervision of the Directorate General of Antiquities (DGA), with the objective of linking the ancient city to its seafront, understanding the maritime approaches to Byblos, and locating its ancient commercial harbor.

### **a. Fieldwork 2011-2016: Sea & Coastline areas below Byblian headland**

Building on previous research, the field study covered the coastal rocky strip, the seafront as well as the offshore maritime area. Since 2013, the location of a harbor basin was confirmed at the southern foot of the promontory (fig. 1). Further research is programmed to understand the harbor basin and its premises.

### **b. Fieldwork 2017-2018: Southern sector of the archaeological site of ancient Byblos**

In order to connect the newly located harbor installation to the city of Byblos, *Byblos and the Sea* undertook an investigation under the scientific direction of archaeologist Julien Chanteau in the southern sector of the archaeological site (fig. 1). The objective of this investigation was to study the access between the harbor and its city and more precisely, the vestiges of a gate overlooking the harbor area. This sector of the archaeological site had been excavated by French archaeologist Maurice Dunand till the early seventies. However, structures and features in that area had not been verified extensively; existing graphic documentation on the Bronze Age southern rampart of the city had remained incomplete and schematically drawn. After two investigation campaigns conducted by *Byblos & the Sea* in 2017 and 2018 in the sector, results proved to be outstanding and unexpectedly diverse: revealing the existence of a Bronze Age fortified gate (Fig. 1) which probably connected the city's acropolis to the harbor it is overlooking. Massive city walls and an extensively built area have also been identified. Results of both campaigns on the "Harbor Gate" study, were submitted to the DGA (*Rapport Final de Synthèse/RFS 1-2*). A preliminary article will be submitted for the *Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises* by June 2020.



Fig. 1. Left: Aerial view of Byblos showing working perimeter in southern sector of archaeological site (©*Byblos & the Sea*, drone photo 2017); Right: Hypothetical reconstitution of the Bronze Age gate overlooking the silted-in antique port area. (©*Byblos & the Sea*, 2017-18, Study J. Chanteau; Drawing M. Kurkenian after J. Nassar).