



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Byblos: Sacred Urbanism and how it came to define a Town.

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Abstract

Byblos is a key site to reconstruct long-lived urban sequences in the Levant, providing a unique sequence of excavated urban settlement from the Early Bronze Age (EBA) that continued into the Middle Bronze Age (MBA) and beyond and related to exchange network that included the surrounding regions from Mesopotamia to Egypt. The paper will examine the evolving townscape from the EBA to the MBA in relation to its religious role in regional exchange, and initial heterarchical ways of organising monumentality and engagement with the wider landscape (de Vreeze & Badreshany 2023). This will be compared the MBA town that shows continuity with crucial reforms, foremost in the crystallization of temples, large residencies and palace that suggest more permanent power relations grew among more recognizable elites. In reconsidering the rise of the MBA urban world in the Levant, Byblos blends models of 'temple-urbanism' (Faust 2005) with concepts of mercantile coastal urbanism (Stager 2001). A crucial outcome of this process was that heterarchical social structures reformed into more hierarchical ones. This raises the questions whether such a process was inevitable and if this can serve as a model for other Middle Bronze Age towns in the region.

Keywords

Byblos, Middle Bronze Age, Early Bronze Age, Temple Urbanism, Heterarchy/Hierarchy

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