

**TRIP TO LEBANON**

**20 Epochs of History Revealed**

By GENEVIEVE MAXWELL  
Special Writer

EDITOR'S NOTE — Mrs. Maxwell is a former Wing Lake resident, now feature writer and columnist of "The Star Diary" at the Daily Star newspaper in Beirut, Lebanon.

Byblos, Lebanon's most historical archeological dig, represents 20 epochs of time from the Neolithic Period (5000 B.C.) through the later Amorite, Hyksos and Hittite, Egyptian, Phoenician-Tyrian, Assyro-Babylonian, Persian, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Frankish or Crusader, Mamluke, Ottoman right up to modern Lebanon.

Egyptian trade was already important in the First Dynasty when cedar beams were sent from Byblos for Egyptian tombs. Byblos did not come directly under the Egyptians until much later (1580-1200 B.C.).

The highest Phoenician culture was achieved during the Tyrian Epoch (1200-734 B.C.). Some of the most priceless possessions of the National Museum in Beirut have been excavated in Byblos (since 1922) from this most developed Phoenician period, including Ahiaram's beautifully carved sarcophagus with major Phoenician inscriptions on the stone lid, one of the earliest examples of Phoenician writing.

HERE ALSO the Byblos jewels were discovered. Byblos is the Greek name for this ancient religious Baal city and trading port with its picturesque harbor giving off directly on the Mediterranean. The living town of Jbeil still surrounds the walled city and takes the Phoenician name from Gubla, or perhaps Gebal of the Bible.

The word Bible itself is said to be derived from the City of Byblos, synonymous with the export of papyrus which went from Lebanon to Greece, later synonymous with the book or Bible.

THE CHIEF Phoenician goddess was Astarte whom the Greeks called Aphrodite, and one of her great sanctuaries was at Byblos, where she was called Baalath, or Lady of Byblos. Adon, the Lord of Byblos, and called Adonis by the Greeks, also figured in the Phoenician religious rites.

His cult flourished from the Cave of Atfu, still Adonis' Cave today and the source of the Nahr Ibrahim, all the way to the sea. It is his blood that still runs red in the Nahr Ibrahim, each spring.

THE PRESENT thick high walls of Byblos with the five watch towers date from the Crusader Period (1104-1289 A.D.) with Arab and Ottoman additions marking the limits of the Giblet of the di Embriacti Barons of Genoa, who ruled Byblos under the Counts of Tripoli.

These walls can easily be traced and photographed from the top of the keep or Fortress Tower which dominates Byblos, together with the Crusader Church of St. John the Baptist. These and the Sea Tower, the latter surrounded by fallen columns still piled up in the water, and the harbor walls reinforced with other granite columns, are most picturesque.

More important, however, because of their extreme antiquity are the Phoenician stelae set up in the old city as votary offerings and relics of the Phoenician city partly built over the ruins of the earlier Egyptian temples.

THE WALLS and buttresses of Byblos can also be traced, as well as the cyclopean stones which no doubt were part of the ancient Baal or religious center which now form part of the massive Crusader donjon.

The holes in the ground from which the sarcophagi of the Byblos Kings were lifted may not appear interesting at first, but these shafts are most ingenious as great precautions were taken against grave robbers, which lasted until the archeologists' soundings won out in the 20th century.

Hyksos and Egyptian excavations can also be seen and many other relics of the various epochs, including a beautiful little Greco-Roman amphitheatre which was moved to the seafloor to allow for new important discoveries under its old location.

NEW PORTALS and streets are being found each year, and many beautiful relics of bygone eras as the rubble of Byblos is gradually removed by the Department of Antiquities.

Byblos is not as striking in appearance as Baalbeck, but nevertheless is just as popular a tourist attraction. Historically, however, there is much more evidence of the early Phoenicians being discovered here than any other site.

THE CRUSADER Church of St. John or Mar Youhanna can be visited although it is kept locked except during the period of daily services. The key is usually with the Maronite Priest in charge, and with patience can be secured.

Mass in the morning or the vesper service at dusk is the most accessible and actually the most interesting time to see the interior of the church, and visitors always

leave a token fee for the privilege, in the collection box.

Built by the Latin Bishops of Giblet (1115 A.D.) the cathedral has seen some transformation, but most of its 12th century Romanesque architecture is still intact. The domed Baptistery outside, de-

serving of a photograph, has three beautifully carved arches. This addition of Italian influence was made during the ascendancy of the di Embriacti (circa 1200 A.D.).

BYBLOS-JBEIL is located 35 kilometers from Beirut on the

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North Coast Road via the Auto-strade. A small left hand lane at the entrance of Jbeil leads to an archeological site through an old picturesque Souk.

Cars may drive through the arched gate of the walled City of Byblos, and find ample parking space before the steps leading to the iron doors of the Forteres Tower. Entrance tickets are LL. 1.00.

A guide is essential, and obtainable at the entrance, at the set fee

of LL. 5.00 for the hour necessary to see the ruins. Byblos is open daily from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. A coffee house for hot or cold drinks and several small antique shops accommodate tourists.

NOTE TO TRAVELERS: When visiting Byblos in June, check the evening performances of La Troupe du Theatre de l'Ecole d'Art Moderne under the sponsorship of the Baalbeck International Festival. "Macbeth" by Shakespeare, in

Arabic, and "Les Mouchees" by Jean Paul Sartre have been most successful (1962 and 1963 respectively), presented in l'Amphitheatre de Jbeil at the Port of Byblos at 8 p.m.

Tickets are LL. 5.00 and LL. 10.00, and may be secured in Byblos at Librarie Sayyah, or in Beirut at Librarie Antoine, Rue Patriarche Hoyek, Majdeh, Tel. 223745, or Librarie Khayat, Rue Bilal, Al Hamra, Tel. 224411. A recommended place for luncheon or dinner is the Byblos Fishing Club at the Port of Byblos.

**10-Year-Old Hits Pin with Drive**

Boys and girls between the ages of eight and 13 took off two weeks ago in the first outing of Carl's Golf and Youth Program. Chris Rose led all participants with a 37 on the par-5 course, while Paul Cragin was second with a 38. Robbie Church and Doug Opie each shot 39 to tie for third.

THE MOST outstanding shot of the day was mastered by 10-year-old Church, who hit the pin with his

eye shot on the 75-yard ninth hole. He holed out a one-foot putt for a birdie.

Other scores were Todd Rosin, 40; Rick McAllister, 40; Denny Jacobson, 42; Donald Reuter, 43; Fred Alexander, 44; Gerry Badger, 45; Robert Walker, 46; David Chapman, 50; Tom Lyons, 57; and Paula Rose, 59.

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