

Early and Middle Bronze Age Temples at Byblos: specificity and Levantine interconnections

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Temples from Early and Middle Bronze Age at Byblos are one of the best indicators of the local specificity of cult, ritual and religious architecture on the Levantine coast, and at the same time of their deep and diversified interconnections with both the inland on the one hand, and the Eastern Mediterranean on the other hand. From the Breitraum plan of the earliest Enceinte Sacrée, to the in antis type of the Temple en L and the Chapelle Orientale, throughout the successive reconstructions of the Baalat Gebal Temple and the open-air cult precincts of the MBA Enceinte Sacrée and Champ des Offrandes, the Gublite religious compounds testify to the peculiarity of the sacred architecture of the Levantine (then Phoenician) coast, and one of its most distinctive features: to be crossroad and vehicle of both local and foreign traditions, from the inland towards the Mediterranean.

1. Introduction

Byblos with its position of interface between northern Levant, southern Levant and the Mediterranean, testifies during the III-I millennium BC a network of intense relations with both coastal and inner Syria, Palestine and the Mediterranean Sea, thanks to its strategic location and its capability in gathering and controlling specific raw materials (as cedar timber, olive oil, wine). It acted as a central crossroad of trade and cultural exchanges in Eastern Mediterranean, representing a major bridge between the ancient cultures of the Levant, its inland and the Mediterranean, as early as the end of the 4th millennium BC¹.

Byblos took advantage from another basic resource: fresh water, i.e. the spring, which represented physically and symbolically the propulsive center of

the Gublite village, gradually turning into a city. Byblos developed around its source, transformed during the 3rd millennium BC into a regulated structure, that is a built-up well (**Fig. 1**)², which became the core of the religious life of city: around it, since the beginning of the Early Bronze Age (henceforth EBA) the main sanctuaries of the city arose (**Fig. 2**).

Religious architecture, indeed, illustrates the original outcomes of the Gublite culture, with the introduction of temples typologies which at times codify prototypes which will be later adopted by other Levantine and Phoenician temples; other times, represent an innovative rielaboration of shared architectural traditions, offering suggestions for further Levantine and Mediterranean developments. The aim of this paper will be illustrating, by means of the most characteristic examples, the nature and features of the Bronze Age temples at Byblos, as original outcomes



Fig. 1- The sacred well at Byblos, located in the center of the depression between the two natural hills (the “colline haute” and the “colline basse”) of the ancient settlement.

of a vital and diversified local culture, deeply rooted in the Levantine coast, and archetypes of following Levantine and Phoenician religious traditions.

The numerous Gublite religious compounds flourished around the sacred well at the centre of the ancient settlement since the beginning of the EBA, with a variety of sacred buildings which represent one of the most original expression of the Levantine architecture (**Figs 3 and 4**)³. They are: the *Enceinte Sacrée* (§§ 3.1, 4.1), the Baalat Gebal Temple (§§ 3.2, 4.2), the *Temple en L* (§ 3.3., later Temple of the Obelisks, § 4.3), the *Chapelle Orientale* (§ 3.4), the *Temple sud-ouest* (§ 3.5) and the *Temple à Escalier* (§ 4.4), and the *Sanctuaire méridional* (then *Champ des Offrandes*, §§ 3.5, 4.5). In spite of a tentative

stratigraphic sequence, the first two sanctuaries date back to the first half of the 3rd millennium BC, to the time of the first urban settlement at Byblos (in EB II); the *Temple en L* and the *Chapelle Orientale* were presumably erected around the mid-3rd millennium BC (in EB III); while the last two, at least in their final and most renown layout, date back to the late EB III. They remained in use in the Middle Bronze Age (henceforth MBA), and, at least in the case of the main city temple, the complex of the Baalat Gebal, it was still in use in the Iron Age and Persian Period, until the Hellenistic-Roman Epoch, to which is dated the last reconstruction of the sanctuary excavated by P. Montet in the 1920s’.



Fig. 2- General view of the site of Byblos from the top of the Crusader Castle towards the sea, with indicated the Early and Middle Bronze Ages sanctuaries.



Fig. 3- Aerial view of Byblos after Dunand's excavations, from west, with indicated the Early and Middle Bronze Ages sanctuaries.

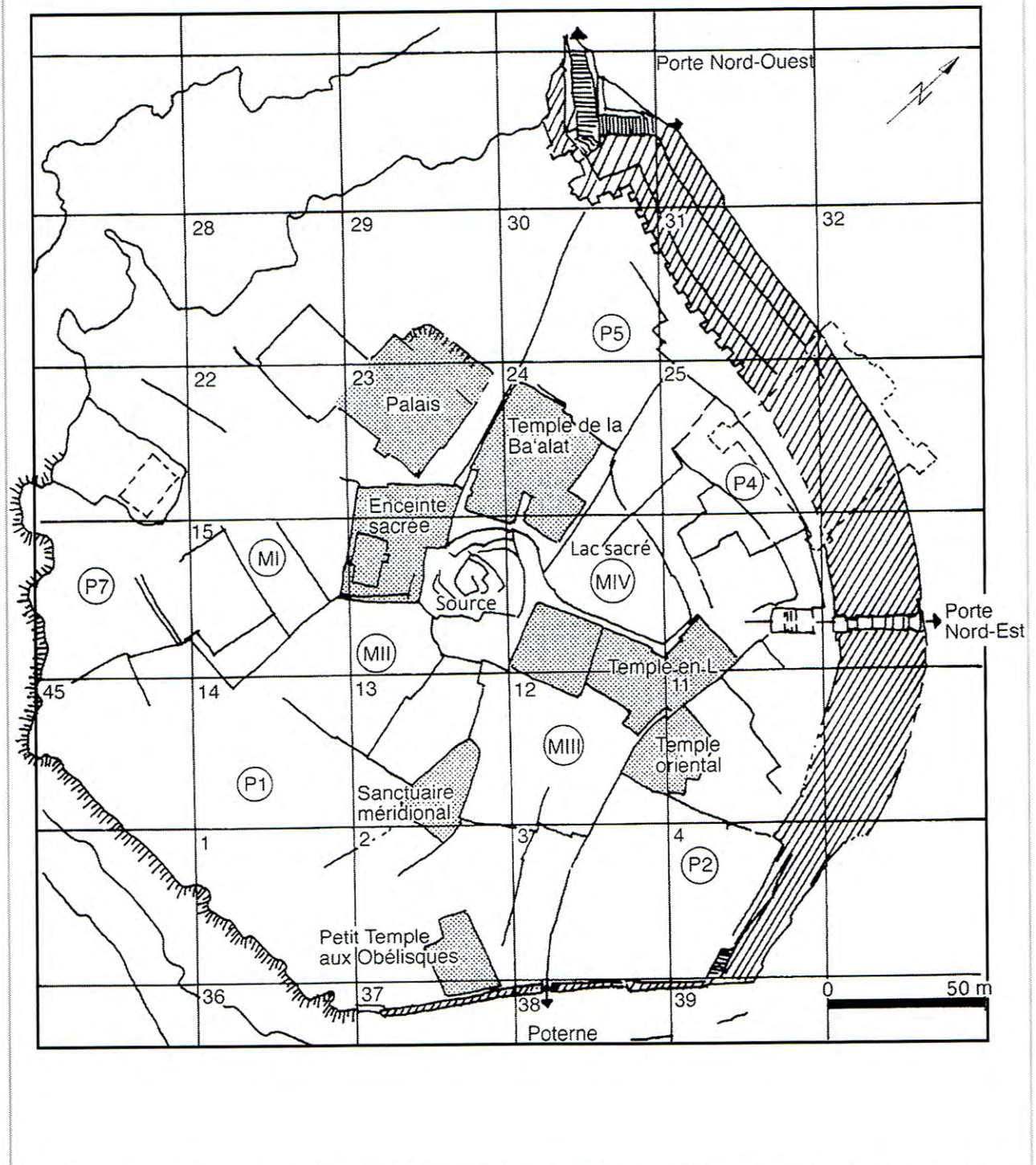


Fig. 4- Schematic plan of the urban layout of late EB III Byblos, with indicated the main sanctuaries of the city (after Lauffray 2008, fig. 150).

2. The Spring and the *Lac sacré* at the core of religious life at Byblos

The Spring was the core of the religious life of Byblos. The connection with a water source (which made the place suitable for both the human settlement – the rise of a city –, and the seat of a temple, thus delineating a symbiotic relationship between the spring, the temple and the city since the dawn of the earliest urban civilization) is a distinctive character of the Levantine (then Phoenician) sacred architecture. In the same way as Byblos, all the major Phoenician cities, and their main sanctuaries, arose in direct connection with important water sources (as Tyre with Ras el-Ain, Sidon with Nahar al-Awali and Bostan esh-Sheikh, Arwad with Amrith, etc.), several cult places were located near springs or rivers (as 'Afqa)⁴, and this relationship between water sources and sacred places was transmitted to the western Mediterranean during the Phoenician expansion⁵.

At Byblos, in particular, since the rise of the EBA city, the core of the town consisted not only of a source, but of an artificial basin, the so-called *Lac sacré* (afterwards converted into a square)⁶, located in the central depression between the two natural hills (the upper and lower hill) where the ancient settlement developed, and flanked by the two major temples of the city: the Baalat Gebal Temple and the *Temple en L*.

3. The Early Bronze Age Temples

Around the mid-3rd millennium BC the sacred area of the flourishing city of Byblos becomes one of the largest and most articulated religious centers of the EBA Levant⁷, with a number of sanctuaries progressively erected around the Spring: the *Enceinte Sacrée* to the west, the Baalat Gebal Temple to the north, the *Temple en L* and the *Chapelle Orientale* to the east, the *Temple sud-ouest* and the *Sanctuaire méridional* in the southern periphery.

3.1. The *Enceinte Sacrée*

The *Enceinte Sacrée* is the earliest EBA sanctuary, dating back to the end of the 4th millennium BC.

It was erected just west of the Spring at the end of the so-called *Énéolithique Récent* (i.e. the EB IA of southern Levantine chronology), around 3300 BC⁸: the location of the sacred area at the centre aside the Spring suggests, on the one hand, that was the religious institution which controlled the access to fresh water, on the other hand, testifies to the deep religious significance of water in the earliest Gublite settlement and religious thinking.

The cult compound was erected aside the Spring within a spatial reconfiguration of the late *énéolithique* village, subdivided by boundary-walls and terrace-walls possibly realized by an emerging ruling institution. A sector of the previous Eneolithic settlement was expressly enucleated to host the shrine, and a stone-paved street was realized flanking the temenos, while domestic compounds continued to be in use to the west and to the south⁹.

The EB I temple arose inside a sacred precinct encircled by a curvilinear stone enclosure (ca. 33.50 m wide on its NW-SE side), probably including the Spring¹⁰. The temple itself was badly preserved: just the southern part of it was excavated, with a fragment of a floor made of gravel and white mortar. Anyhow, the building might be reconstructed as a rectangular *Breitraum* cella (6.60 m wide) with a central access opened to the east (that is opened towards the sacred well), and preceded by a stone-paved courtyard (a strict parallel for which is offered by the stone-paved court [4008, 4064, 4118] within the EB I sacred precinct of Megiddo/Tell el-Mutesellim [stratum XIX/level J-2])¹¹. The temenos wall (1.60-2.00 m wide) was characterized by squared inner buttresses, placed at quite regular intervals, which represent a somewhat remarkable feature of the cult compound. It is noteworthy that at Byblos similar buttresses lined the inner face of City-Wall B (**Fig. 6**)¹² and that of the earlier temenos of the *Temple en L* in EB III¹³; the same architectural feature is found in the enclosure wall of EB IIIB Palace B at Khirbet Yarmouk¹⁴, suggesting the existence of a somewhat common architectural tradition in the southern Levant, where squared inner buttresses may have been used to dress the open spaces of public buildings. Moreover, a sort of bench or buttress (0.65-1 m wide) lined the outer face of the temenos wall, as in the little bit earlier (Late Chalcolithic) sacred precinct of En-Gedi.

Possible comparisons for this earliest shrine are represented, in fact, by the Late Chalcolithic sacred precincts of En-Gedi and Tuleilat el-Ghassul in southern Levant¹⁵, that exhibit the earliest codification of a temple-type, that is the *Breitraum* temple with direct entrance, that will become distinctive of the EBA religious architecture of Palestine, and perhaps more in general of southern Levant, at least since the EB IB onwards, as testified to by the sacred precincts of Megiddo (stratum XIX/levels J-2 and J-3)¹⁶, and er-Rujm¹⁷. The Late Eneolithic/EB IA temple compound at Byblos is thus really significant, if one takes into consideration that Byblos in particular, and the Levantine coast in general, show a high degree of cultural continuity between the Chalcolithic and EB I horizons.

The temple remained in use in the following phase, that is the proto-urban/EB IB settlement, when the village definitely turned into a town. Some reconstructions were carried out also in the sacred compound¹⁸: the temple was reconstructed (now 13.95×7.45 m), with an inner partition at one third of its length separating a pro-cella; as well as the temenos wall (now 30.15 m long), which was refurbished in a smaller oval-shaped layout, where the previous building technique with fieldstones and pebbles was abandoned, and small sandstone slabs were used. The first path (and related sustaining walls) descending into the depression of the source (which was now outside the temenos wall) was arranged, and a stone-paved path from the temenos to the temple was realized.

In the following EB II-III the *Enceinte Sacrée* was reconstructed maintaining the oval-shaped enclosure and the bipartite plan of the temple (now 15.60×8.50 m) with a cella and a pro-cella, the main new arrangement being the enlarged stone-paved path (up to 2.90 m wide) leading to the entrance of the temple, preceded by a large stone stairway, and some auxiliaries rooms inserted in the precinct (**Fig. 5:1**)¹⁹. The temple always opened to the east, towards the source.

Only at the end of EB III (phase *Piqueté III* according to the updated Lauffray's periodization), the religious compound was completely refurbished and the elliptical shape gave place to a roughly rectangular temenos (**Fig. 5:2**)²⁰, which housed a rectangular

shrine with an enlarged squared cella (8.00×7.80 m) and a juxtaposed vestibule (7.50×5 m), erected on a podium and both accessible from the east (both entrances were in fact preceded by steps leading to the podium level), and surrounded by possible auxiliary buildings (as four small *in antis* chapels). This layout would be kept in the following MBA reuse of the sanctuary (§ 4.1).

3.2. The Baalat Gebal Temple

The Baalat Gebal Temple (**Fig. 6**) was the main city temple, dedicated to the tutelary god of the city, strictly connected with the ruling institution and playing a decisive role in the diplomatic and commercial practices with the Egyptian pharaohs; a role which it would maintain until the 1st millennium BC²¹. It also represents the main example of the eclecticism and originality of the Gublite religious architecture. Its foundation might date back to the 29th century BC, as proved by the retrieval (not *in situ* but in the neighbourhood of the sanctuary) of a fragment of diorite with the cartouche of Khasekhemui²², which may have been part of a gift to the temple from last pharaoh of the Second Dynasty of Egypt.

Unfortunately, the digging method employed by Dunand, with arbitrary levels 20 cm deep, and the related method of cataloging of the objects, makes difficult any precise stratigraphic attribution of the superimposed architectural phases of the sanctuary, and their related dating. An attempt was done by M. Saghie in the 1980s, who outlined four successive temple buildings from the beginning to the end of the 3rd millennium BC, from *Bâtiment XVIII* to *Bâtiment II*²³, on the basis of the different elevations of the temple structures. However, this reconstruction did not take into consideration the strong natural slope of the area, located on the south-eastern flank of the upper hill, and, in addition, the strong slope towards to the south, i.e. towards the depression of the Spring (engendering a drop of ca. 4.5 m), and the slight slope towards to the east, i.e. towards the *Lac sacré*. That's why leveling and raising building activities took place continuously in the area; the different pieces of the sanctuary were built on different terraces, with their foundation walls reaching different depths, either cutting or re-using the walls of former phases; and the

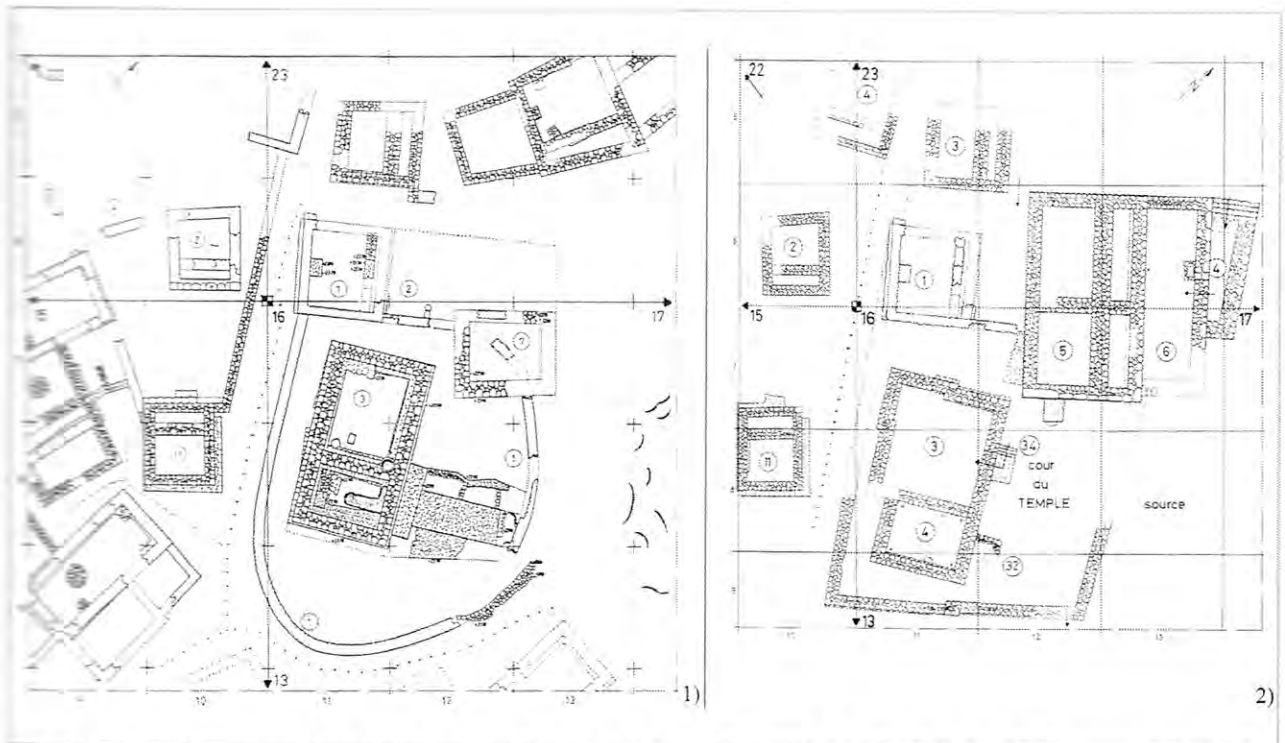


Fig 5- Plan of the EB III Enceinte Sacrée: 1) the early EB III sanctuary (after Lauffray 2008, fig. 105); 2) the late EB III sanctuary (after Lauffray 2008, fig. 180).



Fig 6- Remains of the Baalat Gebal Temple, inside the EB III city-wall, from east.

main Temple (the core of the sanctuary) was built on high artificial podium²⁴. A different sketch is now offered by the publication by J. Lauffray.

The temple, erected in the first half of the 3rd millennium BC north of the Spring, developed and progressively expanded west of the *Lac sacré*, which in turn became a public square (**Fig. 4**). The earliest phases of the sanctuary, corresponding to *Bâtiment XL* of previous sequences (phases *Grosses Fondations* to *Piqueté II* according to the updated Lauffray's

periodization), and partly founded directly on the regularized emerging bedrock, consisted of a series of halls arranged around inner courtyards in two main wings (north and south), built on sustaining platforms obtained by leveling earlier remains for a length of 29 m (**Fig. 7:1-2**)²⁵. The northern wing included a courtyard surrounded by rooms to the east and to the south, among which a double-chambered unit (9.50 × 8 m) opening on the court and interpreted as the cult chapel (*Salles H + I*)²⁶. A second main

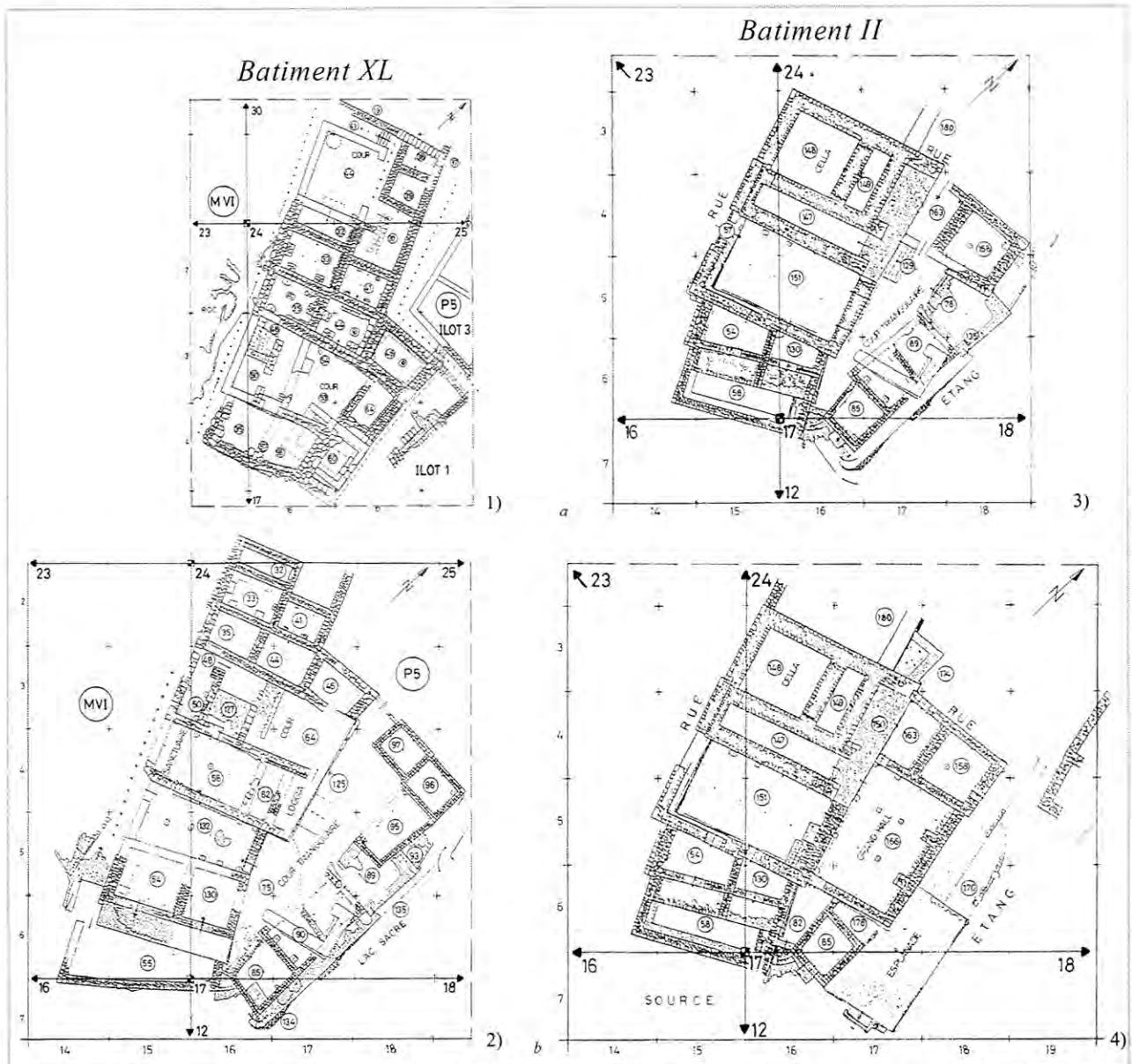


Fig. 7- Plan of the successive architectural stages of the Baalat Gebal Temple since the beginning to the end of the EB III: 1-2) *Bâtiment XL* (after Lauffray 2008, figs. 126, 197) and 3-4) *Bâtiment II* (after Lauffray 2008, figs. 198a-b).

court of roughly trapezoidal shape (*Cour A*, ca. 7 × 8 m) stood at the centre of the southern sector of the complex, and was flanked by two small chambers to the west, and by a further ensemble of rooms to the south, possible serving as an entrance loggia facing and terracing towards the source²⁷. A large triangular forecourt to the east (ca. 30 × 10 m), bordered by auxiliary rooms, gave access through a staircase to this articulated complex.

The use of inner courtyards thus appears in the sacred architecture of Byblos since the early 3rd millennium BC. Some basic principles in the outline can be also recognized, as the insertion of the focal cult place in between two courtyards; a layout inherited by coastal Levantine/Phoenician religious compounds also in the following 2nd - 1st millennium BC, as attested at Byblos itself, in the sanctuaries of Kamid el-Loz in the Late Bronze²⁸, Tell Kazel (Area I)²⁹ and Tell Arqa³⁰ in Iron Age II, consisting of two adjacent courts surrounded by small rooms and characterized by the location of the temple building in between them.

Without dealing in details with the stratigraphic issues, the sanctuary was rebuilt over a high podium leveling previous razed remains and assumed its definitive EBA layout in late EB III (phase *Piqueté III*), with an extensive refurbishing which remained in use without substantial changes in the following MBA: the *Bâtiment II* (**Fig. 7:3-4**)³¹. The temple itself was reconstructed as a huge rectangular building (28 × 19.5 m) consisting of three pieces (**Fig. 8**). It included two main rectangular *Langraum* halls, separated by a central narrow piece. A large hall, reconstructed either as a pillared hall or as an unroofed space (*E*, 16.30 × 9.00 m)³², developed to the south, and was flanked on the southern side by small auxiliary rooms opening on a terrace facing the source (possibly an entrance loggia, i.e. a secondary access to the complex from the south). North of Hall *E*, an elongated piece (*A*, 15.65 × 3-2.75 m) separated it from the proper sanctuary. The latter was a tripartite building, always opening to the east, composed by an almost squared cella (*B*, 8 × 7.70 m), apparently provided with pillar bases (at least in its last arrangement), a narrow pro-cella (*C*, 2.30 × 7.60), and a front vestibule/loggia (*D*, 1.60 × 7.60 m). The squared and pillared layout of the cella (*B*) might find a striking comparison in the roughly coeval

Red Temple (Temple D3) on the Acropolis of Ebla³³; nonetheless, in *Bâtiment II*, the temple building is not isolated, but inserted in an articulated complex, with a juxtaposed corridor and a second elongated hall aside.

The *Langraum* morphology, and above all the tripartite plan of the temple, appear an odd layout for the Levantine sacred architecture, rather characteristic of inner Syria since the following MBA, as documented in the temples of Ebla (Temples D, HH3 and HH2)³⁴, where the plan is codified and becomes the distinctive layout of dynastic chapels and central temples dedicated to the tutelary city gods, and it is transmitted to the following Late Bronze and Iron Age³⁵. Anyhow, the squared plan of the cella is maintained in the Gublite sanctuary, as in the other 3rd millennium temples, and points to the adhesion of Byblos to the southern Levantine architectural tradition, where the *Breitraum* temple plan is always preferred. This trait will be kept in the MBA Gublite temples, and then in the Late Bronze and Iron Age coastal sanctuaries, as some southern coastal Syrian Iron Age temples testify: here, in fact, in the centres closer to the proper Phoenician land (as Tell Kazel and Tell Arqa), the *Breitraum* temple type reappears and is adopted since the Iron Age II, associated with Phoenician votive elements, i.e. with the Phoenician cultural expansion³⁶; while the *Langraum in antis* type, following the official tradition of northern Syrian survives in northern Levant (as illustrated by Building A at Tell Tweini), as well as in inner Syria (at 'Ain Dara, Tell Ta'yinat, Tell Afis)³⁷.

As it regards the main access to the Baalat Gebal Temple, the triangular forecourt to the east (**Fig. 7:3**) was replaced by a large hypostyle hall, the *Bâtiment XVIII* (**Fig. 7:4**), built at the bottom of the podium where the temple stood, and subsequently preceded by a monumental staircase.

3.3. The Temple en L

The so-called *Temple en L* (due to the roughly orthogonal arrangement of its architectural units), erected east of the Spring, on the southern side of the *Lac sacré* opposite the Baalat Gebal Temple (**Fig. 4**), represents one of the most long-lasting sanctuaries of Byblos. It was probably dedicated to the male tutelary god of the city (**Fig. 9**)³⁸.



Fig. 8- General view of Bâtiment II (after Dunand 1937-1939, pl. VIII:2).



Fig. 9- General view of the Temple en L complex and the Chapelle Orientale south-east of it, from north; in the left background, the Temple of the Obelisks after its reconstruction.

Without entering the matter of the stratigraphic sequence of the building, which many studies have dealt with, from Finkbeiner's and Saghie's assessments³⁹, up to the recent publication by Lauffray (although in the latter apparently with an excessive multiplication of stratigraphic phases)⁴⁰, the *Temple en L* assumed its definitive EBA layout around the mid-3rd millennium BC⁴¹. The sacred compound consisted of four main pieces (**Fig. 10**)⁴²: the sacred precinct (*Bâtiment XIV*), the trapezoidal forecourt (*Bâtiment XV*), and two auxiliary units, respectively to the north-east (*Bâtiment XIII*) and to the west (*Bâtiment XVI*), devoted to housing both cult activities and installations, and the priesthood responsible for the cult itself.

The squared precinct (*Bâtiment XIV*, ca. 19.22 × 17.5-19.5 m) was the core of the sanctuary (with at least two reconstructions of the temenos wall)⁴³. At its centre, three small *in antis* chapels were erected, thus testifying also at Byblos the adoption of the new *in antis* temple typology, attested to in the sacred architecture of the Syro-Palestinian region since the mid-3rd millennium BC⁴⁴, from the *Langraum Antentempels* of Tell Chuera and Tell Halawa A in north-eastern Syria (where the *in antis* temple becomes the classic temple type since the second half of the 3rd millennium BC)⁴⁵; to the squared *in antis* temples of al-Rawda, Ebla/Tell Mardikh and Alep in north-western central Syria⁴⁶; up to *Breitraum in antis* temples of Megiddo and Khirbet ez-Zeraqon in northern Palestine⁴⁷. The Byblos complex thus represents an interesting attestation, as it joined in the same complex both versions of the *in antis* typology, according to the key role of Byblos at the crossroad of cultural and trade networks: the north-derived *Langraum* cella and the Levantine squared *Breitraum* cella, since the two side chapels exhibited a *Breitraum* plan similar to that of the Palestinian temples at Megiddo and Khirbet ez-Zeraqon, while the central cella had a *Langraum* plan. In fact, the central *Langraum* cella measured 4.30 × 3.70 m, while the northern *Breitraum* cella measured 2.75 × 3.90 m, and the southern *Breitraum* cella 2.65 × 4.50 m. A fourth squared *in antis* chapel was built secondly in the western corner of the same precinct.

The central temenos was given access from the *Lac sacré* through a simple passage in the northern

wall, and from the east through a central chambered gate across the eastern side, flanked by two narrower passages and opening on a trapezoidal forecourt (*Bâtiment XV*). The latter opened to the south with a six-step staircase, and included a pillared entrance hall to the south and an open-air yard to the north. The forecourt also introduced to the northern sector of the complex (*Bâtiment XIII*), provided with an independent entrance to/from the *Lac sacré*, and consisting of three rooms (a big transversal entrance hall, and two squared rear rooms), possibly devoted to cult (libation) activities, as suggested by the presence of stone basins and vats, offering tables, and a bench housing four big pottery basins in the entrance hall⁴⁸.

A third block completed the complex, the *Bâtiment XVI* (the so-called *Résidence des Prêtres*), a rectangular building (25 × 23.70 m), built next to the western wall of the central temenos (although without any passage in between them), and possibly interpreted as a residence for the priests officiating within the temple, since its plan recalls those of the coeval large Gublite residences⁴⁹: it consisted of a central hall, flanked by six squared rooms symmetrically displaced on both sides⁵⁰.

Among the cult installations detected in the *Temple en L*, two obelisks/betyls, one of which was erected in the central cella against the southern wall and aside a stone basin⁵¹, and a second bigger one stood in the forecourt, are particularly relevant. A third small betyl was set next to the southern passage between the forecourt and the temenos. The erection of betyls (i.e. standing stones) was a typical feature of worship places of pre-classic Levant, and would become a dominant feature of this temple in its following MBA reconstruction: the Temple of the Obelisks (§ 4.3). This tradition, largely documented in Syria and Palestine during the Bronze Age, was preserved until the Iron Age⁵², when numerous Biblical quotations mention the *massébot*, or betyls, worshiped in the temples of the Canaanites. The continuity of the betyls cult at Byblos itself until the Hellenistic and Roman Period, is exemplarily illustrated by a coin of Macrinus (217 AC), which shows a temple with a sacred precinct and an obelisk/betyl in the middle, possibly the last reconstruction of the Temple of the Obelisks⁵³.

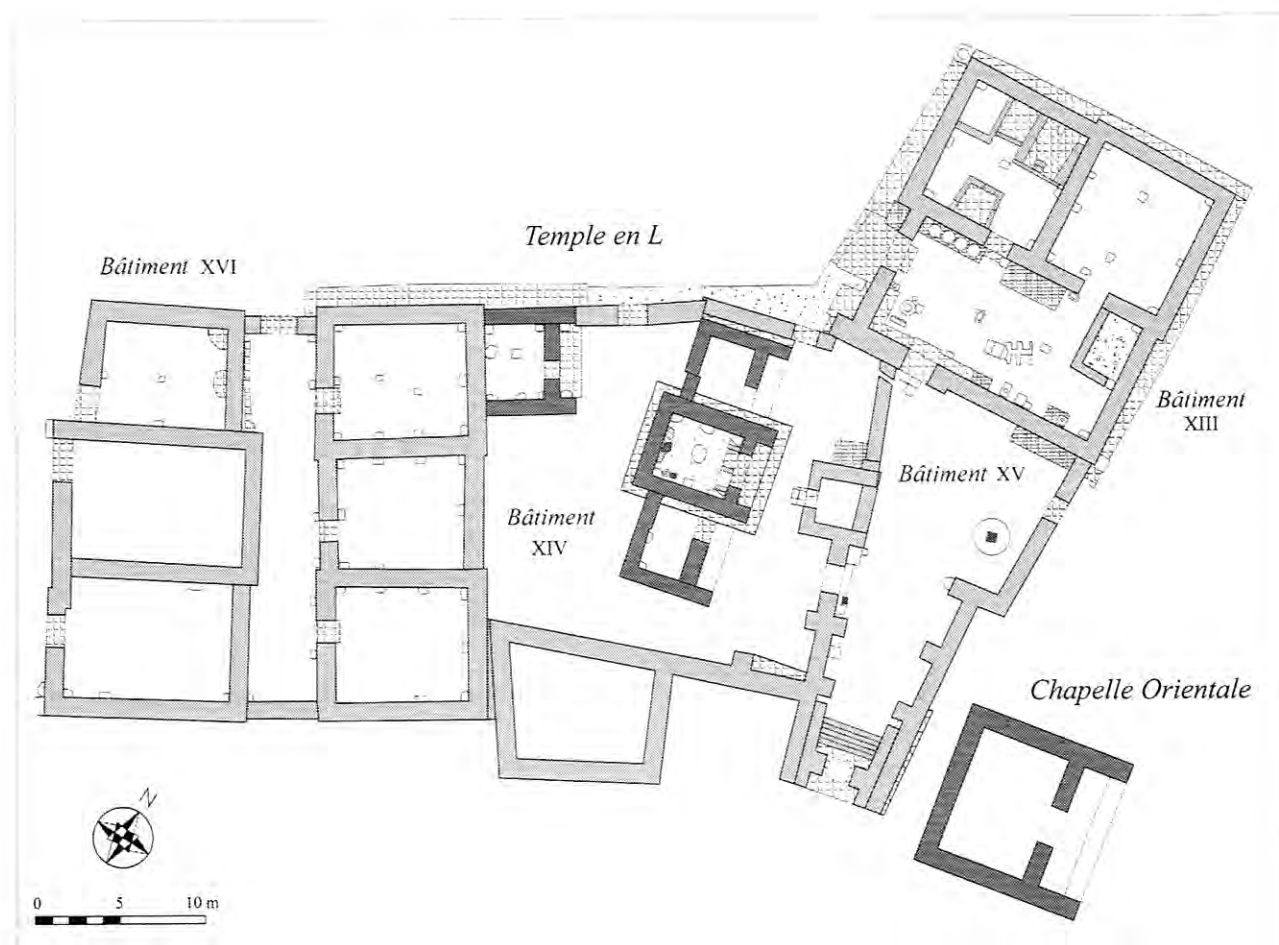


Fig. 10- Schematic plan of the EB III Temple en L complex (redrawn after Dunand 1950-1958, fig. 1007).

3.4. The Chapelle Orientale

The Levantine squared *in antis* typology with *Breitraum* cella appears at the mid-3rd millennium BC in another Gublite sanctuary, just to the south-east of the *Temple en L*: the *Chapelle Orientale* (Fig. 11). It consisted of an *in antis* *Breitraum* cella (with overall dimensions of 10.40 × 9.65), opened to the east and erected over a podium set inside a roughly trapezoidal temenos wall (reconstructed at least twice), which separated the sacred area from the surrounding urban space⁵⁴.

After the destruction which affected the city at the end of the EB IIIB, the religious destination of the area was maintained: a depot of offerings placed within stone cist, dating back to the last quarter of the 3rd

millennium BC (EB IV)⁵⁵, indicates a resilience in the use of the former shrine.

3.5. The Sanctuaire méridional and the Temple sud-ouest

The *in antis* typology was adopted around the mid-3rd millennium BC in other cult places, testifying the diffusion of this temple model at Byblos, at the same time it progressively spread all over the Levant. It appears in the chapels of sanctuaries peripherally erected south and south-west of the Spring: the *Sanctuaire méridional*⁵⁶, and the *Temple sud-ouest*⁵⁷, both set inside a temenos delimitating the sacred areas, where more monumental and articulated sanctuaries would arise in the MBA (§§ 4.4, 4.5).

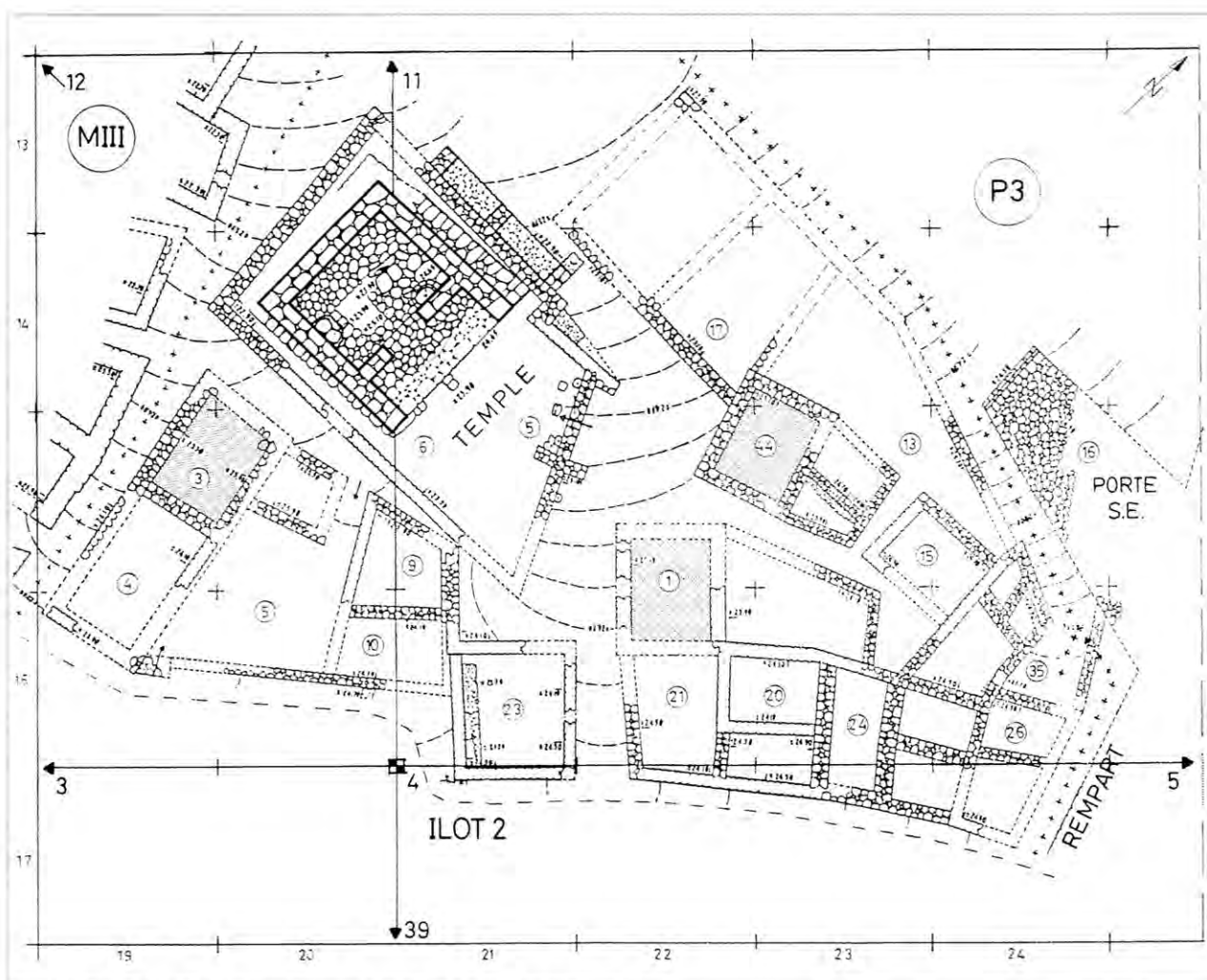


Fig. 11- Plan of the EB III Chapelle Orientale (after Lauffray 2008, fig. 136).

4. The Middle Bronze Age Sanctuaries

After the fierce fire which largely damaged the EBA city⁵⁸, the main sanctuaries of Byblos were refurbished, either basically maintaining their latest EBA layout (as in the case of the *Enceinte Sacrée* and the Baalat Gebal Temple), or being rebuilt (as in the case of the *Temple en L*, now the Temple of the Obelisks). Some peripheral sanctuaries arisen during the EBA also achieve a renewed importance, i.e. the *Temple à Escalier* and the *Champ des Offrandes*, in connection

with a renovation of cult practices. Namely, open-air cult places become the focus of communal religious rituals, in which at times the whole population should be involved, and receive the offerings of the faithful. They were shaped either as open courtyards related to temples, or sacred precincts equipped with chapels, altars and cult installations, where collective religious activities were performed and offerings from the faithful were buried.

This connotation is characteristic of many Levantine MBA sanctuaries, and seems to reflect a shared religious practice⁵⁹, as testified by the so-called "High Place" at Megiddo, where the core of the

sanctuary was represented by a wide open-air area encircled by a temenos and including a small chapel surrounded by betyls; and, above all, the coastal sanctuary at Nahariyah, an extra-urban shrine, where a large open-air courtyard hosted a *Breitraum* building and *bamah*, that is a raised platform for libations and sacrificial rites (west of the latter a slab-paved area with a stone pillar and numerous *bothroi* found full of offerings were also displaced)⁶⁰. These open-air cult places could be devoted, from the one hand, to the performance of collective religious ceremonies (including also pilgrimages, as the existence of extra-urban sanctuaries seems to suggest); from the other hand, they could be used for ritual activities as the presentation of offerings or the deposition of cult installations, as betyls and markers.

At Byblos, moreover, all the main sanctuaries were connected through a concentric path, which followed the road system of the city, and thus allowed the processions of faithful to visit them in succession during the religious holidays (and possibly also pilgrimages).

4.1. The *Enceinte Sacrée*

The earliest sanctuary (§ 3.1) was refurbished after the destruction which brought to an end the EBA city, maintaining a similar layout: a temple with a squared *Breitraum* cella (ca. 9.60 m wide) and a reduced pro-cella, as in the contemporary *Temple à Escalier* (§ 4.4), perhaps preceded to the east by a pillared vestibule (as suggested by two monumental bases), and set within a rectangular temenos (ca. 24.75 × 17.40 m)⁶¹. Due to the continuous levelling and razing activities of previous buildings, the sanctuary stood now on a high terrace overlooking the source. The connection with the latter was maintained by means of a monumental system of stairs abutting from the southern façade. Moreover, according to a visible change in the cult practices, the area of the *Enceinte Sacrée* started to receive many offerings depots, either buried in pits beneath the floor of the courtyard, or hidden beneath stone slabs⁶². The religious destination of the area of the earliest Gublite sanctuary was thus preserved through the 2nd millennia BC, when it assumed rather the character of an open-air sanctuary intended for collective ritual practices.

4.2. The Baalat Gebal Temple

Also the Baalat Gebal complex was refurbished roughly maintaining its established layout, that of *Bâtiment II* (§ 3.2), after the fierce fire documented throughout the EBA city towards the end of the 3rd millennium BC⁶³. The main changes appear in the entrance device towards the *Lac sacré* (to the east), with the addition of a raised rectangular hall (g) obliterating the previous hypostyle hall (**Fig. 12**); and in the loggia towards the source (to the south)⁶⁴. In *Cour E* many offerings depots were buried during this phase, possibly hinting at the unroofed character of the hall⁶⁵.

The sanctuary of the tutelary god of the city remained in use, with refurbishings but no substantial layout alterations, also in the following Late Bronze and Iron Age, and Persian Period⁶⁶, until its latest reconstruction in the Hellenistic-Roman epoch, the *Bâtiment I*⁶⁷.

4.3. The Temple of the Obelisks

After the destruction of the *Temple en L*, as a result of a fierce fire documented by a thick layer of ashes and calcined stones⁶⁸ (the same event which largely affected the EBA city, and in particular the nearby Baalat Gebal Temple), the sanctuary was rebuilt apparently after a short period of abandonment⁶⁹, partly re-using as foundations the structures of the previous sanctuary (such as the fences of the court and triangular forecourt, and the perimeter walls of the northern rooms of *Bâtiment XIII*), but according to a new layout (**Fig. 13**). It consisted of a roughly rectangular temenos (18 × 22.50 m), where the three cellas of the former *Tempe en L* were replaced by an elevated podium on which the new temple was built. The latter was a rectangular building (9.60 × 6.30 m), opened to the east, and including a cella and a pro-cella of similar dimensions connected by a large passage, preceded to the east by a large rectangular antechamber (to which three steps gained access). To the north, south and west it was surrounded by a lower courtyard furnished with betyls and obelisks: henceforth its name as Temple of the Obelisks⁶⁹. The rectangular antechamber (ca. 14 × 6.5 m) was perpendicularly set in between the temenos and

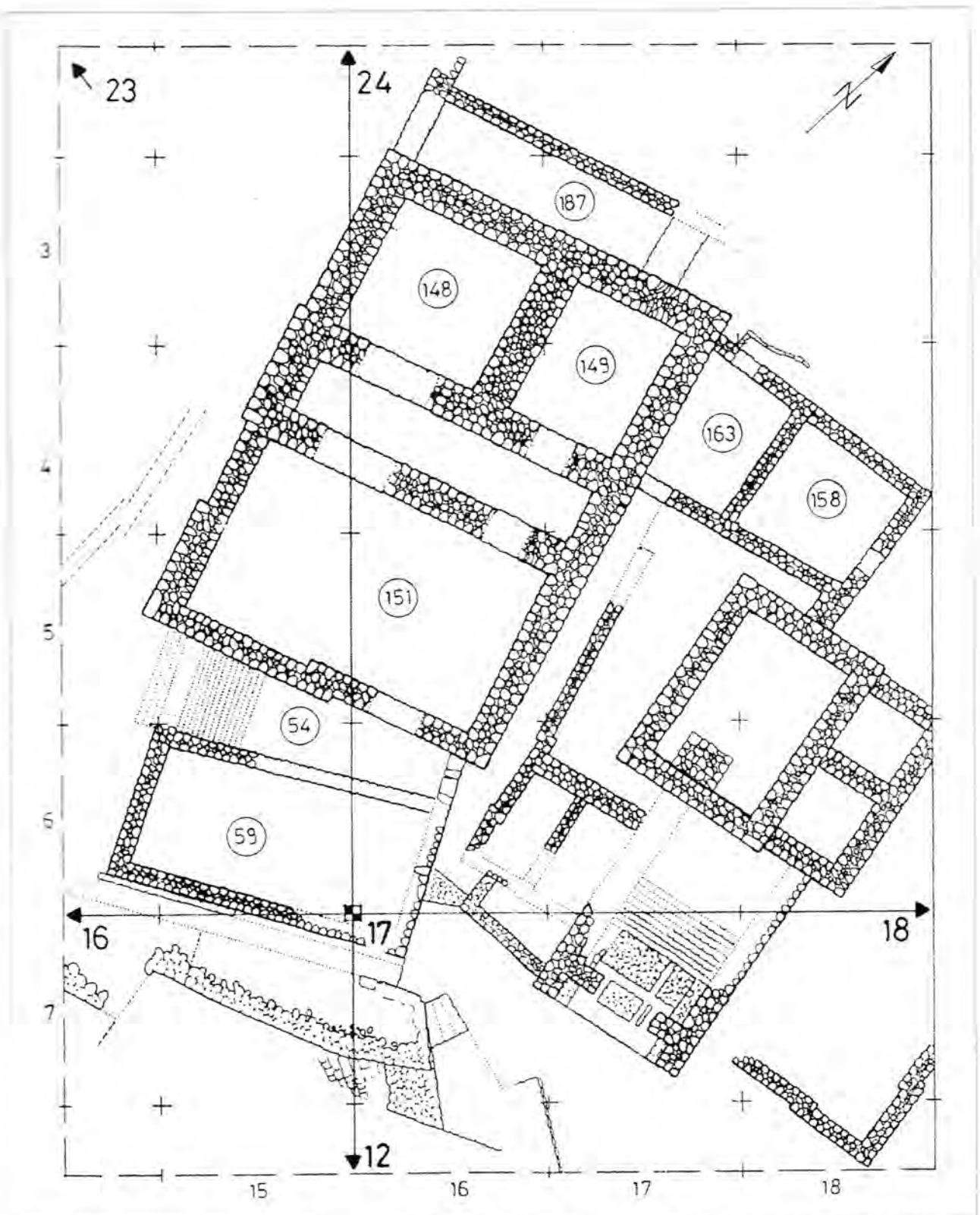


Fig. 12- Plan of the latest 3rd millennium BC reconstruction of the Baalat Gebal Temple, Bâtiment II, from east (after Lauffray 2008, fig. 201 bis).

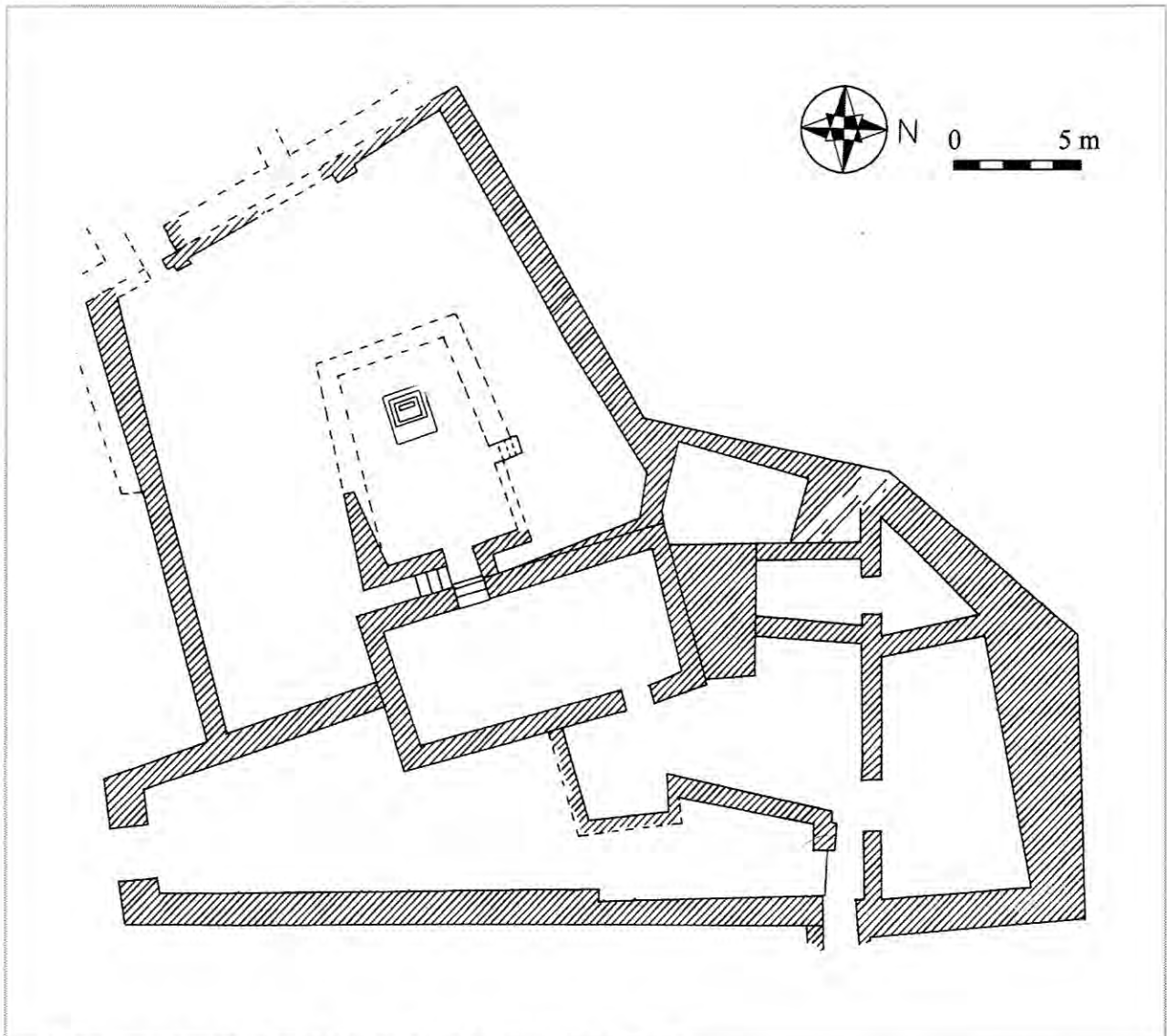


Fig. 13- Schematic plan of the Temple of the Obelisks (after Matthiae 2000, p. 187).

the triangular forecourt, inherited from the previous sanctuary, and was flanked to the east and north by some additional quite irregular auxiliary rooms, among which the so-called jeweler's workshop.

The cella was provided with a monumental base, perhaps a support for a cult object; while the procella housed some ritual installations, among which three obelisks and series of small niches set in the southern wall, possible receptacles for offerings. The

main feature of the MBA sanctuary was, nonetheless, the gradual erection of betyls/obelisks for worship, over forty standing stones, placed in the lower court surrounding the cella (plus three located in the procella, and one in the antechamber). Actually, only a small fraction of them had a proper obelisk-shape; most of these installations were in fact standing stones, cut in a rather irregular way, or in very roughly obeliskoid shape, and fit more properly the tradition

of the betyls of the Syro-Palestinian cult⁷⁰: they thus testify the confluence in Byblos of an ancient West Semitic religious tradition centred on the standing stones, and an artistic tradition inherited from Pharaonic Egypt. Some betyls exhibit also rectangular recesses, which have been interpreted as niches for small cult bronze statues, typical of the Gublite (and later on Phoenician) metalwork, and found in several closets inside the temple itself.

A small sanctuary with an alignment of standing stones, the so-called *Petit temple aux Obélisque*, is also known from the southern periphery of the city⁷¹, thus testifying the strong Gublite adherence to this Semitic cult practice during the MBA, when it also spread in southern Levant⁷²; and which from Byblos would be inherited in the following Late Bronze and Iron Age coastal sanctuaries⁷³, and, furthermore, in the Phoenician temples in the Mediterranean⁷⁴.

Along with the various alignments of obelisks and betyls, the court housed a *pithos* buried next to the rear wall of the cella, a second 1.48 m high *pithos* interred in the southern sector next to a large basin, stone cists and small *naoi*, benches, basins and stone-slab offering tables, all presumably related to libation activities⁷⁵. Many offerings depots of metal objects (figurines and weapons) were also buried under the floors of the sanctuary⁷⁶.

The Temple of the Obelisks exhibits an original spatial design. The sanctuary, indeed, differs from the contemporary temples of Syria and Palestine, where the adoption of the axial and isometric plan of the *Langraum* type is widespread during the MBA⁷⁷, and it consists, instead, of two irregular juxtaposed courts, one of which worked as the entrance of the complex, and the other one as the temenos where the temple stood; the latter was preceded by an asymmetric freestanding *Breitraum* antechamber, erected at the intersection of the two courtyards. This planimetric structure articulated in mostly irregular juxtaposed components (as in the previous *Temple en L* or in the Baalat Gebal Temple), where single components are almost never placed parallel or perpendicular to each other, creating a space devoid of defined architectural perspectives, appears as a specificity of the Bronze Age Gublite architecture.

A strong and original element of continuity, which features also the reconstruction of other Gublite

sanctuaries in the late 3rd/early 2nd millennium BC, was the rooted conception of the sacred building as a chapel placed into or between open yards, which become a basic complementary space necessary to officiate religious practices.

The Temple of the Obelisks should remain in use in the Late Bronze Age, perhaps until the reign of Ramses II, as the elements of a portal frame inscribed with the name of the pharaoh found reused in the vicinity of the temple might indicate⁷⁸. Possibly during the Late Bronze Age, or in the following Iron Age, obelisks and betyls dismissed during successive reconstructions of the temple were accumulated in a *favissa* of large blocks (that is erroneously drawn in the plan of the *EBA Temple en L*, due to the digging method for horizontal levels used by M. Dunand)⁷⁹, exactly as it would happen centuries later in the monumental Phoenician Temple of the Kothon at Motya⁸⁰.

4.4. The Temple à Escalier

The area of the *Temple sud-ouest* was refurbished during the late EB III (23rd century), or possibly even after⁸¹. A new temple was erected over a podium in a dominant position on the southern bay, and consisted of a 24 m long building, north-south oriented, with a squared cella (12 × 11 m), a reduced pro-cella, and a front staircase giving solemn entry into the temple; hence the name of *Temple à Escalier* (Fig. 14)⁸². It has been reconstructed as a “tower-temple”, according to a Syrian-derived typology which spread all over the Levant since the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC⁸³. Nonetheless, here the squared *Breitraum* typology of the cella is maintained, and the pro-cella exhibits a reduced width, thus attesting the original rielaboration of the Gublite architecture⁸⁴, and the creation a temple plan which might have become characteristic of the coastal area, later on appearing in the Middle/Late Bronze Age temples at Ugarit⁸⁵. At the base of the staircase leading to the temple entrance, five anchors (probably votive anchors) were set in the lowest step, and showed traces of burning. The parallel with the Baal’s Temple at Ugarit has been thus forwarded once more: all the anchors on the Ugarit acropolis have been in fact associated with the Baal’s tower-like temple, suggesting a connection

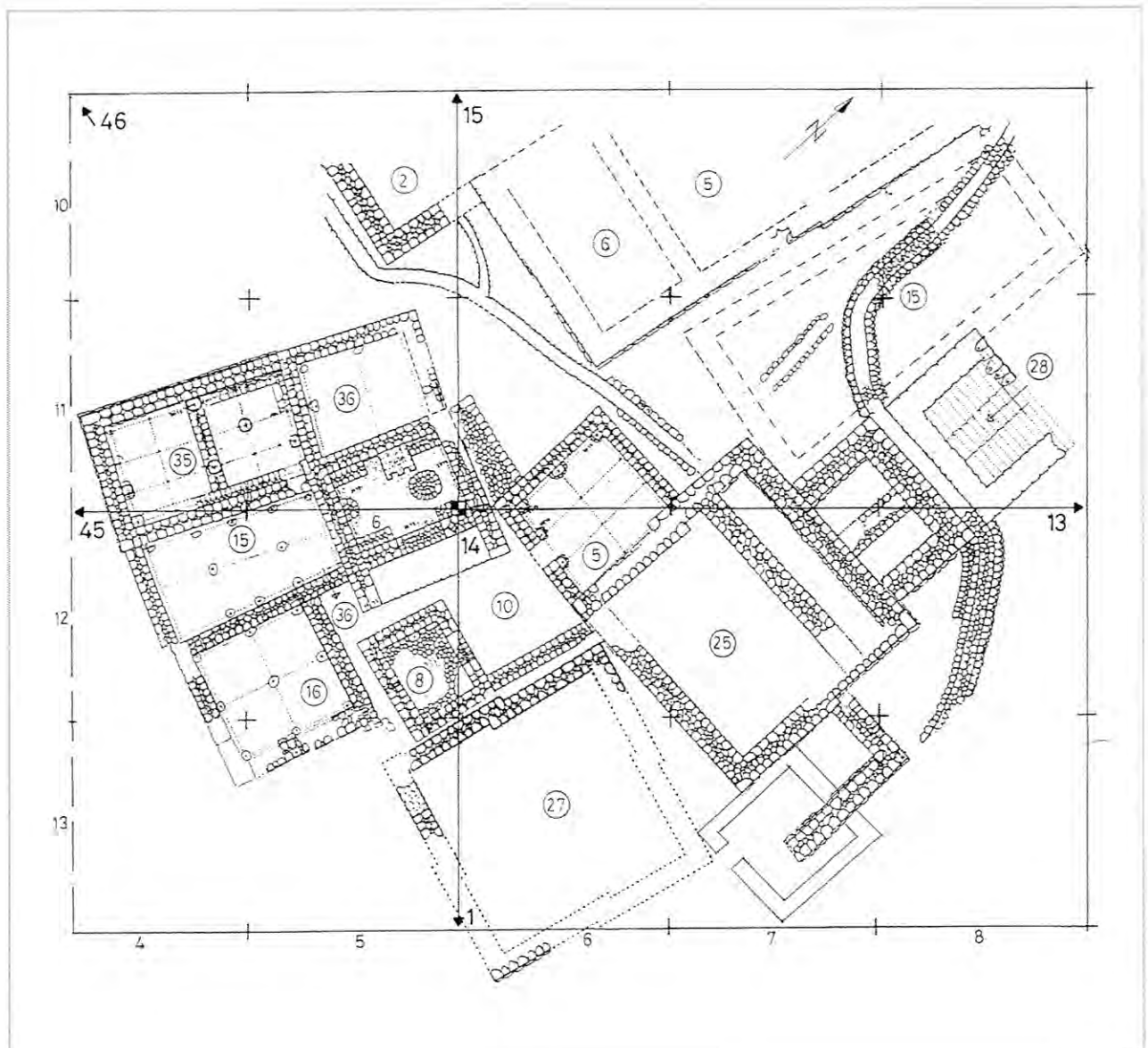


Fig. 14- Plan of the late EB III Tower Temple (after Lauffray 2008, fig. 216a).

with the sea⁸⁶. Indeed, the position of the *Temple à Escalier* dominated the sea-routes to Byblos, from the Egyptian or southern side.

Among the many Gublite sanctuaries, the Byblos *Temple à Escalier* is architecturally unique. It therefore testifies once more the eclecticism of the Gublite religious architecture, able to gather and convey in an original shape different Syro-Levantine traditions.

4.5. The *Champ des Offrandes*

The *Champ des Offrandes* arose in the MBA over the razed ruins of a previous EBA temple (the *Sanctuaire méridional*; § 3.5), and mirrors significant changes in the cult practices of the city. The MBA sanctuary consisted of a central rectangular cella (5 × 12 m) divided by an inner transversal wall, N-O/S-E

oriented, set within a courtyard, where the ground steeply sloped from east to west, and a staircase connected the western bottom with the eastern raised sector⁸⁷. An irregular temenos delimited the sacred space intended as an open area for collective religious practices⁸⁸. Many cult deposits and offerings (among which several miniature vessels, as in the contemporary coastal sanctuary at Nahariyah) were also grouped both within the cella and in the court delimited by the temenos wall⁸⁹, as in the *Enceinte Sacrée* and Temple of the Obelisks. The cult in open areas was therefore linked to religious ceremonies which a large number of faithful attended, as well as to rituals during which offerings were dedicated, usually in small containers, and buried in pits closed with pure soil.

The *Champ des Offrandes* is perhaps the most significant example of such a development of MBA cult practices, when open-air sacred areas arose around and beside the traditional temples and chapels. This tradition of open-air sanctuaries for communal ceremonies and offertory rituals, well documented at MBA Byblos, seems to be rooted in the Levantine coastal milieu, where it survives until the Iron Age, as testified by *Sanctuaire B1* at Tell Tweini, distinguished by the presence of both a central platform and hydraulic installations⁹⁰; and by the two successive open-air sanctuaries at the southern harbour of Tell Sukas, where the earliest Late Bronze/Iron Age sanctuary was a completely open field of offerings⁹¹, refurbished in the 6th century BC by adding a small *in antis* chapel with two altars, some sacrificial pits and a betyl (all elements, both plan and installations, typical of the Gublite tradition)⁹². The same tradition was transmitted during the Iron Age to the Phoenician sanctuaries to the west, as documented by the very peculiar ritual of the Tofet sanctuaries, or, more strictly, in the case of Sanctuary C3 at Motya⁹³. Here, after the final destruction of the city by Dionysius of Syracuse, an open-air sacred compound (an offerings field), called Sanctuary C3, was set over the razed ruins of the dismantled Temple of the Kothon: it included several installations (altars, ovens, *bothroi*), and offerings depots, comparably to above-mentioned sanctuary in the southern harbour of Tell Sukas. As a later heritage, these cult places and

field of offerings, with the presence of chapels and installations like betyls and altars, recall the open-air sanctuaries tradition flourished at Byblos and in the Levant during the MBA.

5. Conclusions

The Gublite sanctuaries exhibit distinctive characters of a deeply rooted local tradition, which becomes a basic reference point for the layout of Bronze and Iron Age religious compounds of coastal Levant, and then the Mediterranean. Such characters stem from both the original rielaboration of models inherited from contemporary architectural traditions of nearby regions (from northern Syria to southern Levant), adapting architecture and space conceiving to the new setting; as well as from the introduction of innovative planimetric features flourished from the creative milieu of the Gublite culture, as typical of Byblos with its role of economic and cultural crossroad. Hence, the presence of open courtyards becomes a basic feature of Byblos cult places, as evidenced by the main sanctuaries of the city, the Baalat Gebal Temple and the complex of the *Temple en L* (later on Temple of the Obelisks), as well as the *Enceinte Sacrée* and the *Champ des Offrandes*. In the Late Bronze Age, a similar conception is shown in the sanctuary of Kamid el-Loz⁹⁴, consisting of two adjacent courtyards surrounded by small rooms and characterized by the location of the *sancta sanctorum* between them, according to an arrangement that is found in a more modest way at Tell Kazel (Area I) and Tell Arqa (see above). During the 1st millennium BC open sanctuaries, with depositional camps of offerings, still appear in the Levantine and Phoenician religious compounds, as shown at Tell Sukas or at Motya, one of the main Phoenician colony to the West (see above). Similarly, cult installations as sacred wells, betyls and offerings depots, are inherited by Levantine and Phoenician sanctuaries, from the Levantine coast to the Mediterranean, through the Byblos inheritance. Evidence thus testifies to the existence of an architecture and space conceiving of cult places, codified since the Byblos sanctuaries of the 3rd-2nd millennium BC, which spreads, with different elaborations, in the Levantine,

Cypriote and Western Mediterranean regions of Phoenician influence. In this panorama, the religious architecture of Byblos, confirms its role of prototype for the sanctuaries of coastal Levant and Phoenician tradition.

The originality of the Gublite sacred buildings, where Levantine elements were reinterpreted in many ways, produces a unique architectural style. Some elements, indeed, can be recognized: first of all, the integration and centrality of open spaces within the temples plan, including courtyards that might constitute places of gathering of the faithful and their offerings; secondly, the presence of auxiliary spaces for the conservation of offerings and cult devices; and, at last, the occurrence of distinctive installations and ritual areas devoted to sacrificial and ceremonial activities.

Early and Middle Bronze Age temples at Byblos are, thus, one of the best indicators of the local specificity of cult, ritual and religious architecture of the Levantine coast, and at the same time of its deep and diversified interconnections with the neighbouring regions, playing a vital role of crossroad and vehicle of both local and foreign traditions from the inland towards the Mediterranean. The Byblos temples represent the earliest outcomes of an original sacred architecture of coastal Levant, which, elaborated since the beginning the 3rd millennium BC, will be transmitted down the centuries until the late 1st millennium BC, in the Phoenician temples in the Mediterranean.

Notes

- 1- L. Nigro, 2007.
- 2- M. Dunand, 1937-1939, p. 364; 1950-1958, p. 481, 652-653; 1982, p. 195; M. Saghie, 1983, p. 1-3, ill. 1; J.-Cl. Margueron, 1994, p. 18-19; J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 79-80, 197, This well would remain in use for centuries until the 1930s', the so-called " 'Ain el-Melek " : M. Dunand, 1961; 1973b, p. 54-55.
- 3- As it has been pointedly suggested by L. Nigro (in this volume), the different layout of the temples and concept of their related religious institutions could be connected to the dedication to different deities, to their different role in the city *pantheon*, and, at a larger extent, religious behavior.
- 4- Rouvier 1900.
- 5- For an overview on the relationship which links Levantine/Phoenician cult places and water sources see E.M.C. Groenewoud, 2005; C. Peri, 2005; G. Garbati - C. Peri, 2008; L. Nigro, 2012, p. 303-304; and L. Nigro, in this volume (at Motya, for instance, both the main sanctuaries of the Phoenician city, the Temple of the Kothon and the Temple of "Cappiddazzu", were built in connection with a sacred well: L. Nigro, 2009a).
- 6- M. Dunand, 1937-1939, p. 288-289; M. Dunand, 1973b, p. 49, 62; 1982, p. 195; M. Saghie, 1983, p. 1-2, ill. 1, plans I-II; J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 79-80, 105-107. This lake could be mentioned in the hieroglyphic text inscribed on an Egyptian alabaster vessel with the name of the Pharaoh Unis, retrieved in the foundation basement of *Bâtiment II* (P. Montet, 1928, p. 69-70, n. 46, 273).
- 7- N. Jidejian, 1968, p. 17-21; M. Dunand, 1982; M. Sala, 2007, p. 47-50, figs. 1-4; E. Aubet, 2009, p. 21-28.
- 8- M. Dunand, 1982, p. 197; 1983, p. 93.
- 9- M. Dunand, 1973a, p. 233-235, pl. J.c; L. Nigro, 2007, p. 26-31.
- 10- M. Dunand, 1973a, p. 235-241, fig. 143, pl. J.c; M. Sala, 2007, p. 48-58.
- 11- G. Loud 1948, p. 61, figs. 144-146, pls. 271-282; M. Sala, 2008b, p. 48-51, figs. 12-13.
- 12- M. Dunand, 1937-1939, p. 421-424; 1973b, p. 47-48; J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 289, 291-293.
- 13- J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 217-218, 333, figs. 120, 182.
- 14- P. de Miroschedji, 2003, p. 159*, figs. 3-5, 8:2.
- 15- D. Ussishkin, 1980; P. Seaton 2000; M. Sala, 2008b, p. 1-30, pls. 1-2.
- 16- G. Loud, 1948, p. 61, fig. 390; I. Finkelstein - D. Ussishkin, 2000, p. 38-55, figs. 3.10-3.11; M. Sala, 2008b, p. 37-71, pls. 3-4.
- 17- A. Mazar - P. de Miroschedji, 1996, p. 4-13; M. Sala, 2008b, p. 79-88, pl. 6.
- 18- N. Jidejian, 1968, p. 13; M. Dunand, 1973a, p. 241; 1983, p. 94-95, fig. 2; J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 37-39, figs. 6, 11-12.
- 19- M. Dunand, 1950-1958, p. 899; 1982, p. 197; J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 79-82, 197-201, figs. 37-39, 105.
- 20- M. Dunand, 1950-1958, p. 899; J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 325-330, figs. 179-180.
- 21- A.D. Espinel, 2002.
- 22- M. Dunand, 1937-1939, p. 26 (n. 1115), 296-304; 1973b, p. 62-63; 1982, p. 195; N. Jidejian, 1968, p. 16-17.
- 23- M. Saghie, 1983, p. 40-51, 55-58, fig. 13, pls. X-XVII.
- 24- J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 109, 355. This has made difficult the distinction of the different architectural stages of the sanctuary, producing also an excessive multiplication of its stratigraphic phases.
- 25- M. Dunand, 1937-1939, p. 290-296, fig. 246; J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 229-330, 355-361, figs. 126, 196-197.
- 26- The original denominations of Dunand's publications have been kept.
- 27- Another hypothesis sees in this enlarged southern compound the new cult focus of the temple in a subsequent intermediary phase of the complex we will not deal with (J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 360), possibly following a fire of the original religious compound. From this southern wing, in fact, will develop the core of the latest EBA sanctuary (the *Bâtiment II*).
- 28- R. Hachmann, 1978a, p. 10-17, fig. 2; 1978b, p. 29-34, fig. 1.
- 29- L. Badre - E. Gubel - J.P. Thalmann, 2008, p. 58, fig. 1; Gubel 2009, p. 455-457, fig. 3a-b.

- 30-** L. Badre - E. Gubel - J.P. Thalmann, 2008, p. 58-59, fig. 2.
- 31-** M. Dunand, 1937-1939, p. 80-81, 296-299, figs. 248-249; J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 361-373, fig. 198.
- 32-** The presence in this hall of many offerings and depositions since the end of the 3rd millennium BC (M. Dunand, 1937-1939, p. 81-84) might hint at the unroofed character of the space.
- 33-** P. Matthiae, 2009, p. 123-125, fig. 13.
- 34-** P. Matthiae, 1995, p. 155-159; 2007.
- 35-** Just consider the Late Bronze temples at Alalakh/Tell Atchana (L. Woolley, 1955, p. 71-90, figs. 30, 33-34), and Tell Munbaqat (P. Werner, 1994, p. 102-105, pls. 21-22), and the Iron Age temples at 'Ain Dara (A. Abū 'Assāf, 1990), Tell Ta'yinat (Building II: R.C. Haines, 1971, p. 53-55, pl. 103; and Building XVI: T. P. Harrison, 2012, p. 13-19, figs. 8-11, pl. 4), and Tell Afis (Temple A.I: S. Mazzoni, 2010a, p. 145-149, fig. 2; S. Mazzoni, 2010b, p. 364-366).
- 36-** A. Caltabiano, 2012. Unfortunately proper Phoenician temples are poorly known, except for the later, and quite peripheral, Phoenician sanctuaries of Amrith, Sarepta, Bostan el-Sheik or Mizpe Yammimin in the Persian Period. Coastal Syria thus represents an interesting scenario to fill up this gap and to follow the developments of the religious architecture and cult practices of the Levantine coastal/Phoenician tradition. Particularly interesting is the case of the Temple of Tell Kazel, where a diachronic analysis shows the continuity of the *Langraum* temple model from the Bronze Age traditions until the Iron I (Area IV, L. Badre, 2009, p. 264-269, fig. 4; S. Mazzoni, 2010b, p. 361), and, later on, the introduction of the *Breitraum* type associated with Phoenicians votive elements in the IA II sanctuary of Area I. The latter sanctuary is an articulated complex with an elongated *Breitraum* cella inserted in between two yards, in a rather free layout (Gubel 2009, p. 455-457, fig. 3a-b), that actually recalls a rooted Levantine coastal tradition, and finds its prodromes in the Baalat Gebal Temple (*Bâtiment* XL) of Byblos (see above).
- 37-** See above note 35.
- 38-** P. Xella 1994, p. 197-198.
- 39-** U. Finkbeiner, 1981, p. 52-60, plans 1-2; M. Saghih, 1983, p. 14-24, fig. 7a, pls. II-III.
- 40-** J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 101-104, 217-220, 333-338.
- 41-** The adoption in the sanctuary of the *in antis* temple model, which spread in the Syro-Palestinian religious architecture around the mid-3rd millennium BC (as documented in Syria at Tell Chuera, Tell Halawa, Tell Mardikh/Ebla and al-Rawda, and in southern Levant in the temples of Megiddo and Khirbet ez-Zeraqon; see below), makes this dating most reasonable (M. Dunand, 1973b, p. 49; A. Kempinski, 1989, p. 177). It may be further noted that both the central temenos with the three small *in antis* temples and the auxiliary units (*Bâtiment* XIII and *Bâtiment* XVI) find precise parallels in other Gublite buildings ascribed by Dunand to its *Installation* VI, that is the latest EBA urban phase (M. Dunand, 1952, p. 82): in their plan and architectural features; in the building technique (which exhibits the use of more accurately worked stones compared to those of the preceding phases, especially in the regularization of the protrusions and outer faces); and in some planimetric components, as the use of pillars arranged along the walls, but also in the corners and along the main axis of the rooms, the presence of recesses in the buildings perimeter, and the adoption of a central hall of the length of the entire building onto which side rooms faced (see below note 49).
- 42-** M. Dunand, 1950-1958, p. 895-898, fig. 1007, pls. XXXVII-XLII; J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 338-353, figs. 186-187.
- 43-** The earliest phase was characterized by an inner buttressed wall (J. Lauffray, 2008, fig. 120), replaced in the latest phase by a thicker temenos wall (J. Lauffray, 2008, fig. 183).
- 44-** On the diffusion of the *in antis* temple typology in both Syria and southern Levant since the mid-3rd millennium BC see M. Sala, 2008b, p. 190-201; 2010; C. Castel, 2010.
- 45-** W. Orthmann, 1990; W. Orthmann (ed.), 1989, p. 63-66, fig. 15, pl. 10. The same *Langraum in antis* typology is documented in north-eastern Syria at Tell Qara Quzaq, Tell Kabir, and Tell Matin (C. Castel, 2010, p. 125-127).
- 46-** C. Castel, 2010, p. 124-125 (with previous bibliography); P. Matthiae, 2007; 2009; K. Kohlmeyer, 2012 (here, the *Breitraum* cella is maintained in the MBA reconstruction, as in the temple of level VII at Alalakh/Tell Atchana: L. Woolley, 1955, p. 59-65, fig. 35).
- 47-** G. Loud, 1948, p. 78-84, figs. 179-186, 394; H. Genz, 2002, p. 94-96, fig. 2; M. Sala, 2008, p. 190-201, 208-249.

- 48- For a more detailed description see M. Dunand, 1950-1958, 898, pls. XXXVIII-XXXIX; M. Sala, 2008a, p. 68-69, 71-72; J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 338-339, 348-349.
- 49- The so-called *Grand Résidence* (M. Dunand, 1973b, p. 56; J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 375-380), and another residence excavated on the western slope of the northern hill (M. Dunand, 1973b, p. 62).
- 50- J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 339-341, 349.
- 51- The central cella was also equipped with a bench/podium built against its rear wall.
- 52- C.F. Graesser, 1972; J.-M. Durand, 2005; E. Bloch-Smith, 2006.
- 53- N. Jidejian, 1968, fig. 121.
- 54- M. Dunand, 1950-1958, p. 480, 898-899, pls. XLIV-XLV; M. Saghie, 1983, p. 69-71, 74-75, fig. 19, pls. XXII-XXIV; J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 248-251, 415-416, figs. 136, 229.
- 55- M. Dunand, 1950-1958, p. 273, pl. XXX:1-2.
- 56- M. Dunand, 1950-1958, p. 481, 899; 1982, p. 197; M. Saghie, 1983, p. 30-31, fig. 9, pl. VIII; J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 397, 403, figs. 219-220. The erection of this sanctuary radically changed the city's planning, since it was built over the crossroad of two main EBA roads which went out of use.
- 57- J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 275-276, 391. Other *in antis* chapels have been identified within the EBA town, possibly representing shrines related to different quarters and districts of the city.
- 58- M. Dunand, 1952, p. 88; M. Saghie, 1983, p. 131.
- 59- L. Nigro, 1996. The Ishtar's Cult Area in the Lower City at Ebla, with its favissae and monumental terrace (Monument P3), represents the most monumental evidence of such collective cult performances and religious pilgrimages.
- 60- A. Kempinski, 1989, p. 178-181; M. Dothan, 1981. The presence of platforms/altars and the evidence of communal rituals and feasting activities are documented also in the recently excavated Middle Bronze Age temple at Sidon (Doumet-Serhal – Shahud 2013).
- 61- M. Dunand, 1950-1958, p. 481, 616-619, 653, pls. XIII:2, XIV, XV; M. Saghie, 1983, p. 35, 38-39, fig. 11.
- 62- M. Dunand, 1950-1958, pls. LXXXI-LXXXII:2, LXXXIX:2,6.
- 63- M. Dunand, 1937-1939, p. 306; 1952, p. 88; J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 373.
- 64- J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 371-372, fig. 201 bis.
- 65- M. Dunand, 1937-1939, p. 81-84.
- 66- As testified by the inscriptions of the kings of the 10th century BC who restored the temple and dedicated statues to the deity: the throne of Sheshonq I's statue with a Phoenician inscription of the king of Byblos Abi-Baal (P. Montet, 1928, p. 54-57), the torso of Osorkon I's statue with a Phoenician inscription of the king Eli-Baal (P. Montet 1928, p. 49-54, pls. 36-38) and, finally, a fragment of Osorkon II's statue (M. Dunand, 1937-1939, pl. 43; 1982, p. 198; W.F. Albright, 1947; N. Jidejian, 1968, p. 67-71; G. Scandone Matthiae, 1994, p. 47). Restoration activities carried out in the sanctuary during the Persian Period are documented on the stele of king Yehawmilk (P. Montet, 1928, p. 41-44; N. Jidejian, 1968, p. 18, 96-97; P. Wagner 1980, p. 16-26).
- 67- P. Montet, 1928, p. 29-59; M. Dunand, 1937-1939, p. 66-90; M. Dunand, 1982, p. 195; N. Jidejian, 1968, p. 19, 113-114.
P. Montet, 1928, p. 29-59; M. Dunand, 1982, p. 195.
- 68- M. Dunand, 1950-1958, p. 898; 1973b, p. 49; J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 350-352.
- 69- M. Saghie, 1983, p. 18-20, 23-24.
- 70- M. Dunand, 1950-1958, p. 480-481, 644-652, fig. 767; 1973b, 50-54; N. Jidejian, 1968, p. 35-39; U. Finkbeiner, 1981, p. 60-67.
- 71- See above note 52.
- 72- M. Dunand, 1950-1958, pl. XXXVI:2-3; J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 410-412. The *Petit temple aux Obélisque* was also erected over the razed ruins of previous EB III chapels, indicated as *Temple Sud* (J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 243-244).
- 73- T.N.D. Mettinger, 1995, p. 168-191. The most monumental evidence of this cult practice is perhaps offered by the so-called "High Place" at Gezer/Tell el-Jazari (Dever 1973, p. 68-70, figs. 2-3).
- 74- For instance, in the sanctuary of the southern harbour of Tell Sukas, where a betyl stood aside a sacrificial pit: P.J. Riis, 1979, p. 46.
- 75- The same feature, as well the presence of a sacred well, is found in the monumental Phoenician Temple of the

Kothon at Motya, erected at the mid-6th century BC: see L. Nigro, 2012, p. 305; and L. Nigro, in this volume.

76- M. Dunand, 1950-1958, p. 646-649.

77- M. Dunand, 1950-1958, pls. LXXXII:1, XC-CXLI.

78- P. Matthiae, 1990.

79- M. Dunand, 1938, p. 113; 1982, p. 198.

80- M. Dunand, 1938, p. 113; 1950-1958, fig. 1007.

81- L. Nigro (ed.), 2005, p. 67-68, fig. 2.90.

82- H. Frost, 1998-1999, p. 257-258; 2002, p. 63; Saghie, 2009, p. 30. A later date is feasible since the erection of this building changed the road network of the EBA city.

83- H. Frost, 1998-1999, p. 253-258, fig. 8, 10-12, 16; 2002, p. 62-64; J. Lauffray, 2008, p. 393-395, fig. 216; E. Aubet, 2009, p. 26.

84- P. Matthiae, 1990.

85- It is curious that a similar rielaboration of the tower-temple typology is found in the more or less coeval Temple of Ninhursag at Mari/Tell Hariri, which Margueron has similarly reconstructed as a "tower-temple" of Syrian influence: J.-Cl. Margueron, 2004, p. 238, 378-380, fig. 369.

86- O. Callot, 2011.

87- H. Frost, 2002, p. 62.

88- M. Dunand, 1950-1958, p. 271-272; Saghie 1983, p. 31-32, 38-39, fig. 9.

89- L. Nigro, 1996, p. 219-220.

90- M. Dunand, 1950-1958, p. 393-399, pls. LIII-LXXX.

91- J. Bretschneider *et al.*, 1999.

92- P.J. Riis *et al.*, 1996, p. 13-22, pls. II-V.

93- P.J. Riis, 1979, p. 33-68.

94- L. Nigro (ed.), 2005, p. 39-47, 60-92, figs. 2.79-2.116; L. Nigro, 2009b.

95- Hachman, 1978a; 1978b.

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