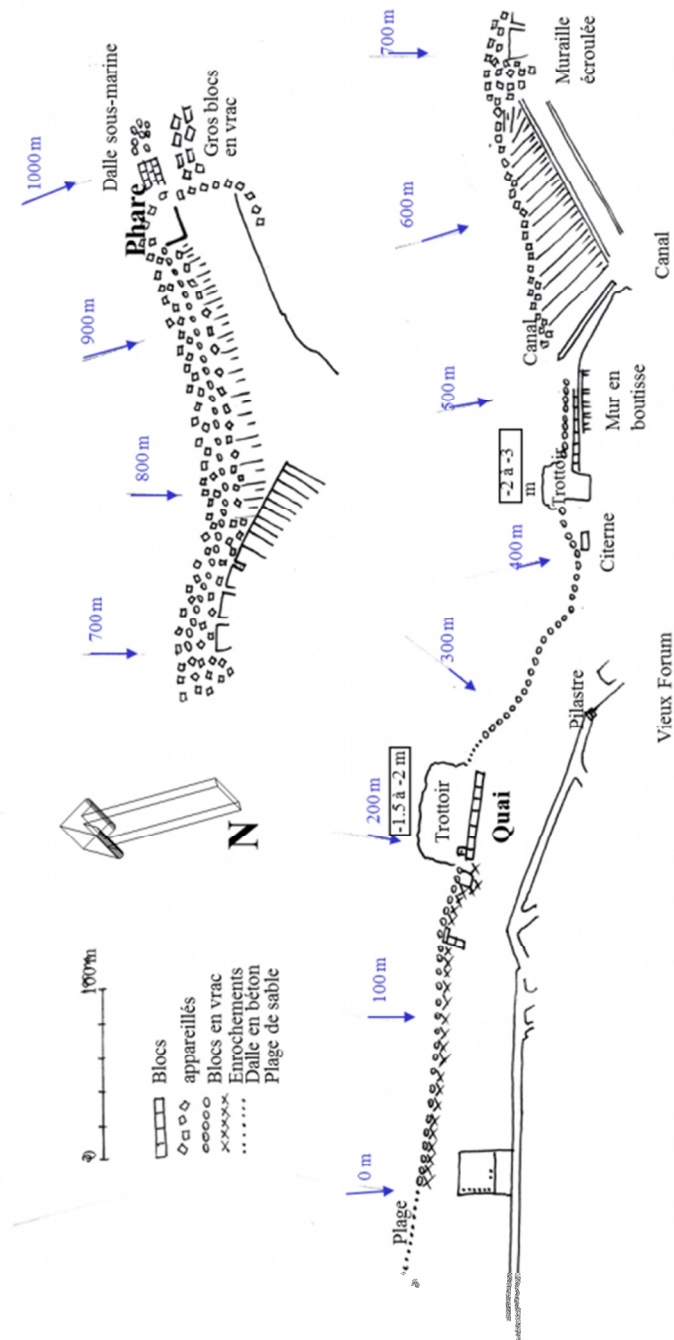


9 LEPTIS MAGNA'S NORTH COAST

The following observations were made on August 24, 25 and 26, 2000, thanks to the kind hospitality of the late Professor André Laronde during his year 2000 campaign of the "Mission Archéologique Française en Libye".

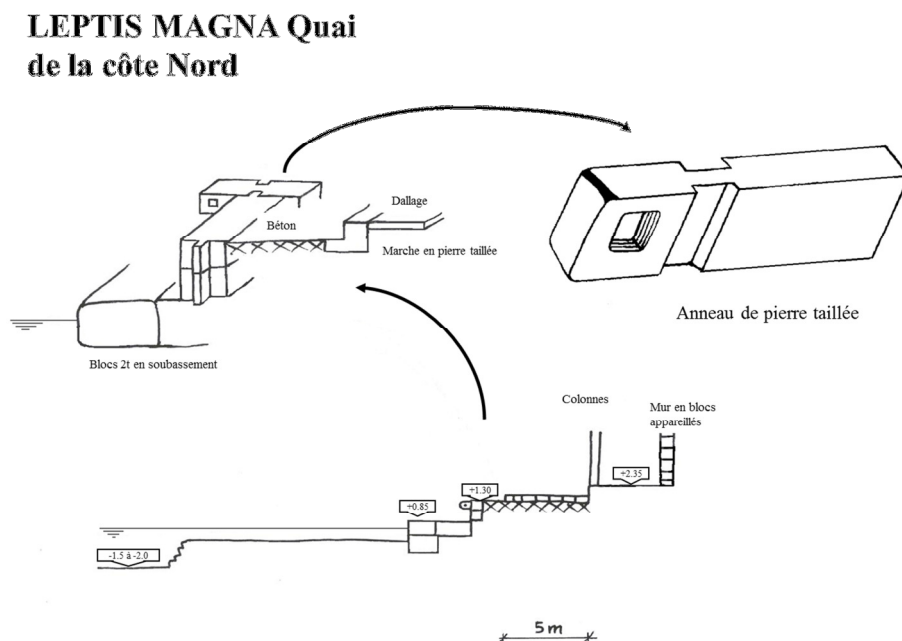
We walked from West to East from the Eastern end of the beach close to the small temple and we were heading for the ancient lighthouse located about 1 km away (NB: distances indicated hereafter are approximate as they were measured in paces on an irregular terrain, but the total distance was known from the available charts).



Map of the North coast of Leptis Magna (A. de Graauw, 2000)

Leptis Magna

- 0 – 150 m: Straight concrete slab protected by rubble on the beach.
 - 150 – 200 m: Idem in a broken line.
 - 200 m: Stone ring imbedded into a quay (see sketches). This ring was mentioned by Alberto Carlo Blanc in an annex to Bartoccini's work in 1958.
- "Trottoir" (recent geological feature, less than 2000 years) on 10 to 20 m width behind the sandy sea bed located around - 1.5 to - 2 m (Photo 1).



Quay on the North coast of Leptis Magna (A. de Graauw, 2000)

- 200 – 250 m: Quay with 2 levels oriented N290-N110 (see sketches). Constructions behind the quay front over about 15 m (levels acc. to A. C. Blanc) (Photo 2):
 - quay at + 0.85 m on approx. 4 m width, consisting of blocks of approx. 2t,
 - level of + 1.30 m on approx. 5 m width, partly consisting of a stone pavement,
 - level of + 2.35 m on approx. 5 m width: colonnade passage.
- 250 – 270 m: Small sandy beach.
- 270 – 420 m: Rubble on the beach.
- 290 m: Pilaster of the Old Forum.
- 400 m: Cistern coated with hydraulic plaster (with shards of pottery having a similar effect as pouzzolan). West of the cistern, the remains of what could have been a bathroom are found (?) (Photo 3).
- 430 – 450 m: Concrete walls forming a small building with a curved vertical opening whose use is unclear.
- "Trottoir" in the sea behind the sandy sea bed located around - 2 à - 3 m (Photo 4).
- 450 – 490 m: Wall with headers behind what seems to be a quay. Rubble on the beach (Photo 5).

Leptis Magna

→ 510 m: Concrete canal coated with hydraulic plaster. The inside width of this canal is approx. 2 m. The canal connects the inner port to the sea and is around 220 m long according to Bartocini. It is located at the edge of primitive port and the Severian port near the Neronian portico. It is more or less oriented towards NW. The beach-side end of the canal is sharp ended mortar and seems to close the canal. A dogleg staircase is found on the NE side. A trench is found on the SW side, perhaps an old archaeological excavation along this side of the canal (Photos 6 and 7).

This structure was perhaps seen as a breakwater protecting the primitive port from waves (E. Salza Prina Ricotti), but the U-shape coated with hydraulic plaster is difficult to explain in another way than a canal. It would be worthwhile to explore the inside of the canal, to check the slope and to excavate the mouth to confirm the hypothesis of a canal. It would then have to be seen what may have been its use.

→ 510 – 670 m: Slope at the toe of the wall, with pavement made of random blocks on the beach (Photo 8).

→ 670 – 700 m: Collapsed wall: former passage between the two primitive islets? Foundation problem on the sea bed? (Photos 9 and 10).

→ 700 – 770 m: Wall with rubble on the beach and in the sea down to a depth of around 5 m located at around 50 m of the shore. Rubble is rounded on the beach and angular on the upper beach and under water. Quarry blocks smaller than 500 kg (decommissioned building blocks?) seem to have been used as a coastal protection. Their weight is not sufficient and they have been rolling in the wave breaking area during storms, which may explain their rounded shape due to abrasion. This kind of coastal protection was reinvented in Northern Europe in the seventies under the name “Berm breakwater” (Photos 11, 12 and 13).

→ 770 – 950 m: Steep slope with rubble on the beach and in the sea like mentioned above.

→ 950 – 980 m: Ancient lighthouse (Photo 14).

→ 980 – 1000: Underwater pavement around -3 m.

→ 980 – 1030 m: Blocks of 10 to 20 t placed randomly on an alignment parallel to the above mentioned pavement.

→ Further South: Submerged breakwater oriented to NE and consisting of stones and large concrete masses (one of them must weight hundreds of tons). This breakwater probably formed the outer harbour of Leptis Magna. Its T-shape is visible on photo 17 and by the dark areas on the sea bed on photo 19. Photo 20 reproduces an aerial photo showing the size of Wadi Lebda and the silting-up of the ancient port.

Leptis Magna



Photo 1



Photo 1r



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8

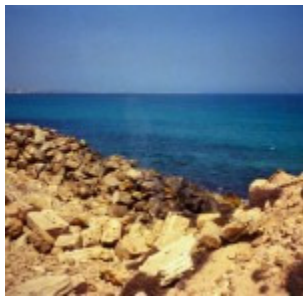


Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12



Photo 13



Photo 14

Leptis Magna



Photo 15

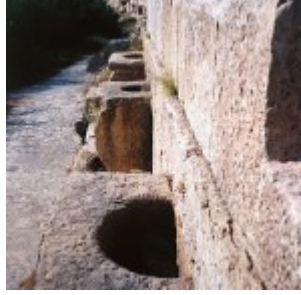


Photo 16



Photo 16r



Photo 17

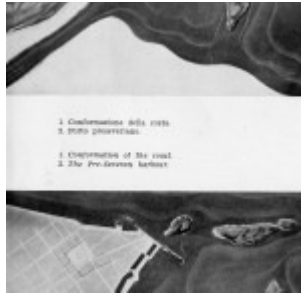


Photo 18



Photo 19



Photo 20