

## **The Young Phoenician Man of Byrsa – Carthage**

The Archaeological Museum of the American University of Beirut and the Society of Friends of the Museum in collaboration with the National Heritage Institute of Tunis and the Carthage Museum, present between January 29 and February 28, 2014 a scientific exhibition on “The Young Phoenician Man of Byrsa- Carthage”.

### **Discovery:**

Because the curator of the National Museum of Carthage wished to plant a tree at the entrance of the museum, the tomb of the young Phoenician man was discovered by chance by the gardener in 1994.

### **The Tomb:**

A 4m deep shaft leads to the tomb which consists of 2 sarcophagi carved in the sandstone. The left tomb contained the skeleton of a young man lying on his back, his arms bent on his abdomen. The sarcophagus to the right was empty.

### **The young man of Byrsa: anthropological study:**

The anthropological study of the skeleton by Sihem Roudsli has revealed that he was a robust young man around 1m70 high, with a long skull, broad forehead, and a squarish chin.

The young man's age is estimated between 19 - 24 years based on his tooth eruption.

He was named Arish, or “the beloved one,” according to Punic inscriptions.

### **The funerary materials:**

Funerary materials were found with the skeleton and above the lid of the tomb:

Two commercial Punic amphorae, a Punic lamp with a double pinch and traces of use, the bones of a sacrificial goose resting on a plate and ten small domed ivory cabochons which must have decorated an object of perishable material, such as a wooden box.

Near the hands of the young man was scarab intaglio made of translucent chalcedony; on its flat side a fine engraving represents a young naked man in the style of a Greek athlete kneeling holding in his right hand a long lotus stem within an oval. Eighteen small Egyptian type ivory amulets were also found, probably making up a rosary. Between the knees was an ivory pyxis (a box with its lid). Very small piece of linen might be remains of clothing item or a shroud? and a fragment of red material (cinnabar) used as a funerary blush were also found.

These objects, collected in the burial, lead to date the tomb to the late sixth century, around 500 BC .

## **The reconstruction of the Young Man of Byrsa:**

The reconstruction was accomplished by Elisabeth Daynès, a world famous French specialist in reconstructions from fossils (a technique called "dermoplasty"). The reconstruction of the young man is considered to be 95 percent accurate, but the color of skin, eyes, and hair remains uncertain and subjective. The outcome is very impressive.

3 minutes film showing the reconstruction procedure is shown in the final stage of the exhibition.

The inauguration was held on January 29, 2014 in the presence of Minister of Culture, Mr. Gaby Layoun, Ambassador of Tunisia, Mr. Hatem Essaiem, Director General of the National Heritage Institute, Dr. Adnane Louhichi, Director Coordination INP, Dr. Ridha Bousoffarra, AUB Provost, Dr. Ahmad Dallal, ex-president- ICOM Arabe – AFRICOM, Mrs. Chedlia Annabi, Curator of the National Museum of Beirut, Dr. Anne Marie Affeiche, as well as a large number of members of the AUB Museum.

Mr. Nahas, President of the Society of the Friends of the Museum, opened the inauguration ceremony with a welcome word followed by Dr. Leila Badre who gave the opening introduction to the exhibition.