

# NINA MARAANEN SITE: COLLEGE SITE, SIDON, LEBANON

July 28, 2017   Richard Mikulski   Day of Archaeology 2017, Fieldwork   Lebanon, Sidon



*The view from the roof*

Like Richard, my speciality is skeletal human remains. I have a degree in Archaeology from the University of Helsinki as well as a degree in Human osteology and palaeopathology from the University of Bradford, UK (in other words, I like looking at bones *on* and *off* the field). Currently, I am (also) located at the University of Bournemouth, working on my PhD that will include a number of sites from both Egypt and the Levantine area.

Unlike Richard, however, this is my very first dig at Sidon (my very first dig in Lebanon, to tell you the truth). My previous stints in the area have been situated in different parts of Egypt, though recently I have been excavating in Finland, where the summer excavation season does not necessarily mean the weather is any clearer, drier or warmer. When I was presented with an opportunity to retire my wellies (for now at least) and work in Sidon, I practically had my suit cases packed the next day.

Friday morning begins like any other morning, the alarm blaring off first at 4.50, then 4.55 and finally at 5.00 – I am most definitely not a morning person but luckily, years of forced early wake-ups have caused most tasks to become automatic, and the first conscious decision takes place only after Fadia has made her coffee round of the morning.

Afterwards, I follow Fadia down to Sandikli, where all the pottery from the site gets processed (though some of the burials are stored in the office, some are kept in separate storage). The human remains have

already received a preliminary assessment, but my job is to confirm field assessments (such as age estimations) and take measurements wherever I can. This will give us a fuller understanding of the people who used to live and work at Sidon and how Sidon was connected to other places not only in Lebanon but further afield.

After marvelling about the importance of my work I am feeling quite hungry but it seems rejoicing one's excellence burns more calories than one is able to consume in the morning, and the clock is stuck at 9.00am. So I hunker down for another hour before bouncing off to breakfast to hear how the others are faring for the day. Usually Richard will provide me with a juicy detail of whatever burial-related feature they have found and I can once again lull myself into thinking how much I love my work.



*Office work in Sidon*

After breakfast, the day always seems to speed up and before I know it, it is lunch time and soon after that we are packing our equipment and heading back to the house to unpack and unwind. Every evening, I dump my pictures of the day to an external hard drive (while keeping the originals as well). Mostly, it is images upon images of laid out skeletons or other exciting bits I've come across, but I also try and include work photos as well – of the team, the workmen, the scenery. Today, I had extra fun taking my work photos as I wore my Indiana Jones t-shirt in honour of the Day of Archaeology event. Indiana's field work may have had more gun fights but he was still a big geek for Archaeology – just like the rest of us!





Nina at Sidon