

ECHOES OF ANCIENT LANDS

**ECHOES OF ANCIENT LANDS: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL
HERITAGE OF THE VICINITY OF JOUN: SIDON,
BISRI, CHEHIM, JIYEH, SARAFAND AND THE CHOUF REGION**



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Contents

Echoes of Ancient Lands:.....	2
The Archaeological Heritage of the Vicinity of Joun: SIDON, BISRI, CHEHIM, JIYEH, SARAFAND and the Chouf Region	2
Executive Summary	7
BACKGROUND	9
The Early Civilizations – The Bronze Age and Beyond.....	9
The Bronze Age: Foundations of Civilizations	9
Conclusion	12
INTRODUCTION	13
The Significance of the Region in Mediterranean Archaeology	13
Ancient Maps	15
Sidon: The Phoenician Jewel	22
The Bisri Valley: A Crossroads of Civilizations	23
Awali/Bostrenos River: Lifeblood of Ancient Settlements	24
The Chouf Region: Heartland of History	25
Chapter 1: The Bronze Age Foundations (3300–1200 BCE).....	27
1.1 Introduction to the Bronze Age in the Levant	27
1.2 Sidon: An Early Urban Center	27
1.3 The Bisri Valley: A Fertile Agricultural Hub	28
1.4 The Awali River: Lifeline of the Region.....	28
1.5 The Chouf Region: A Strategic Hinterland.....	28
1.6 Transition to the Late Bronze Age (1600–1200 BCE).....	29
1.7 Conclusion	29
Chapter 2: The Iron Age and the Rise of the Phoenicians (1200–539 BCE)	30
2.1 Introduction to the Iron Age in the Levant.....	30
2.2 Sidon: A Leading Phoenician City-State.....	30
2.3 Cultural and Religious Flourishing.....	31
2.4 The Bisri Valley and the Awali River’s Role	31
2.5 The Chouf Region: A Strategic Hinterland.....	32
2.6 Sidon’s Interactions with Major Empires	32

2.7 Conclusion	32
Chapter 3: Classical Antiquity and Roman Influence (539 BCE–641 CE).....	35
3.1 Introduction to Classical Antiquity in the Levant.....	35
3.2 Sidon under Persian Rule (539–332 BCE)	35
3.3 The Hellenistic Period: Alexander the Great and His Successors (332–63 BCE) 35	
3.4 Roman Rule: A New Era of Prosperity (63 BCE–395 CE)	36
3.5 The Byzantine Era: Christianity and Cultural Shifts (395–641 CE).....	37
Chapter 4: The Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods (395–750 CE).....	39
4.1 Introduction to the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods	39
4.2 The Byzantine Era: Christianization of the Region	39
4.3 The Early Islamic Period: Transition and Continuity	40
4.4 Conclusion	40
Chapter 5: The Crusader and Mamluk Periods (1099–1516 CE)	41
5.1 Introduction to the Crusader and Mamluk Periods	41
5.2 The Crusader Period (1099–1291 CE).....	41
5.3 The Mamluk Period (1291–1516 CE).....	42
5.4 Economic and Social Impact.....	43
5.5 Conclusion	43
Chapter 6: The Ottoman Era (1516–1918 CE)	44
6.1 Introduction to the Ottoman Era in the Levant.....	44
6.2 Ottoman Governance and Administrative Structure	44
6.3 The Druze Emirate and the Role of the Chouf	44
6.4 Sidon as an Ottoman Trade Hub.....	45
6.5 The Bisri Valley and Awali River under Ottoman Influence.....	45
6.6 Social and Religious Dynamics	45
6.7 The Decline of Ottoman Rule and Rise of Nationalist Movements	45
6.8 Conclusion	46
Chapter 7: The French Mandate and Modern Era (1918–Present).....	47
7.1 The End of Ottoman Rule and the Beginning of the French Mandate	47
7.2 The Role of Sidon under the French Mandate	47
7.3 The Chouf and Bisri Valley under the Mandate	47

7.4 Nationalist Movements and Resistance	48
7.5 Lebanese Independence and the Post-Mandate Era (1943–1975).....	48
7.6 The Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990).....	48
7.7 Post-War Reconstruction and Modern Development	49
7.8 Conclusion	49
Chapter 8: Modern Archaeological Efforts in Sidon, the Chouf, and the Bisri Valley..	50
8.1 Introduction to Modern Archaeology in Lebanon	50
8.2 Archaeological Efforts in Sidon.....	50
8.4 The Bisri Valley and Awali River	52
8.5 Technological Advances in Archaeology.....	52
8.6 Preservation and Heritage Management.....	52
8.7 Conclusion	53
Focus on the Temple of Eshmun	53
Historical Background	53
Architectural Features	53
Chapter 9: Cultural Significance and Tourism Potential of Sidon, the Chouf, and the Bisri Valley	55
9.1 Introduction: The Growing Appeal of Cultural Heritage Tourism.....	55
9.2 Sidon: A Gateway to Phoenician Civilization	55
9.3 The Chouf: A Testament to Druze and Ottoman Heritage	56
9.4 The Bisri Valley: A Landscape of History and Nature	57
9.5 The Role of Lady Hester Stanhope’s Excavations	64
9.6 Challenges and Opportunities in Cultural Tourism Development	64
9.7 Conclusion: A Vision for the Future	65
FOCUS ON: THE RICH HERITAGE OF THE AWALI RIVER.....	66
FOCUS ON: HISTORICAL LANDMARK: THE PALACE OF LADY HESTER STANHOPE	68
FOCUS ON: THE RICH HERITAGE OF THE TEMPLE OF ESHMUN	75
Note about the Temple of Eshmun:	76
The origins of Eshmun in Phoenician mythology	77
Architectural styles and features of the temple complex	78

FOCUS ON: CHEHIM.....	81
Project name:.....	81
Description of the site and research:.....	83
OUTLOOK ON CHEHIM.....	85
Archaeological site.....	85
Chhim, Lebanon: A Roman and Late Antique Village in the Sidon Hinterland.....	87
Porphyreon through the Ages: The Fading Archaeological Heritage of the Lebanese Coast.....	87
Chhim, Lebanon: A Roman and Late Antique Village in the Sidon Hinterland.....	87
Chhim-Jiyeh Excavations 1996.....	88
Chhim – Village and Oil-Press.....	93
FOCUS ON: JIYEH.....	95
FOCUS ON: SARAFAND / Zarephath.....	98
Biblical Background.....	98
Overview.....	99
CONCLUSION.....	101
Unveiling the Layers of Lebanon’s Past.....	101
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	103
Primary Sources.....	103
Secondary Sources.....	103
Journal Articles.....	103
Archaeological Reports and Excavation Records.....	104
Books and Academic Publications.....	105
Journal Articles.....	105
Institutional Sources.....	105
MORE RELEVANT LITERATURE.....	106
END OF THE DOCUMENT.....	108

Executive Summary

Echoes of the Past: Unveiling the Archaeological Heritage of Sidon, the Bisri Valley, and Joun

This book explores the profound archaeological significance of Sidon, the Bisri Valley, and Joun, shedding light on their pivotal roles in the ancient Levantine world. Spanning from the Phoenician era to the Ottoman period, it uncovers the intricate tapestry of human civilization along the Awali/Bostrenos River and the Chouf region, emphasizing how these locations served as vital cultural, trade, and religious hubs.

The narrative begins with Sidon, one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, renowned for its Phoenician legacy, seafaring prowess, and craftsmanship. The journey continues through the Bisri Valley, revealing its role as a strategic corridor that connected inland civilizations with coastal settlements. The book delves into the Awali River's historical evolution, illustrating its influence on settlement patterns, agriculture, and trade.

A significant portion of the book is dedicated to Joun, particularly its association with Lady Hester Stanhope, whose excavation at the Temple of Venus marked one of the earliest instances of modern archaeological exploration in the region. The archaeological sites of Khashbiyeh and Mazraat Al-Barghoutiyeh near Joun are highlighted for their unexplored potential, calling for further research and preservation efforts.

Through vivid descriptions, archaeological findings, and historical narratives, *Echoes of the Past* aims to inspire appreciation for the rich cultural heritage of this region. It advocates for sustainable tourism, community involvement, and heritage preservation, envisioning a future where archaeology not only informs but also empowers local communities.

This book will appeal to historians, archaeologists, and general readers interested in the ancient history of the Levant, offering a compelling blend of scholarship and storytelling that connects the past to the present.

أصداء الماضي: كشف النقاب عن التراث الأثري لصيدا ووادي بسري وجون

يستكشف هذا الكتاب الأهمية الأثرية العميقة لصيدا ووادي بسري وجون، ويسلط الضوء على أدوارها المحورية في العالم الشامي القديم. يمتد من العصر الفينيقي إلى الفترة العثمانية، ويكشف عن النسيج المعقد للحضارة الإنسانية على طول نهر عوالي / بسترينوس ومنطقة الشوف، مع التركيز على كيف كانت هذه المواقع بمثابة مراكز ثقافية وتجارية ودينية حيوية.

يبدأ السرد بصيدا، واحدة من أقدم المدن المأهولة باستمرار في العالم، وتشتهر بتراثها الفينيقي، وبراعتها البحرية، وحرقيتها. وتستمر الرحلة عبر وادي بسري، كاشفة عن دوره كحجر استراتيجي يربط الحضارات الداخلية بالمستوطنات الساحلية. يتعمق الكتاب في التطور التاريخي لنهر عوالي، موضحاً تأثيره على أنماط الاستيطان والزراعة والتجارة.

جزء كبير من الكتاب مخصص لجون، لا سيما ارتباطه بالسيدة هيستر ستانهوب، التي كانت حفرياتها في معبد فينوس واحدة من أقدم حالات الاستكشاف الأثري الحديث في المنطقة. تم تسليط الضوء على المواقع الأثرية في الخشبية ومزرعة البرغوثية بالقرب من جون لإمكاناتها غير المستكشفة، مما يستدعي المزيد من البحث وجهود الحفظ.

من خلال الأوصاف الحية والاكتشافات الأثرية والروايات التاريخية، تهدف أصداء الماضي إلى إلهام التقدير للتراث الثقافي الغني لهذه المنطقة. وهي تدعو إلى السياحة المستدامة، والمشاركة المجتمعية، والحفاظ على التراث، وتصور مستقبلاً لا يقوم فيه علم الآثار بإعلام المجتمعات المحلية فحسب، بل يمكنها أيضاً.

سوف يجذب هذا الكتاب المؤرخين وعلماء الآثار والقراء العامين المهتمين بالتاريخ القديم لبلاد الشام، ويقدم مزيجاً مقنعاً من المنح الدراسية ورواية القصص التي تربط الماضي بالحاضر.

BACKGROUND

The Early Civilizations – The Bronze Age and Beyond

The history of Sidon, the Bisri Valley, the Awali/Bostrenos River, the Chouf region, and Lady Hester Stanhope's influence in Joun stretches back to ancient times, with roots firmly planted in the Bronze Age. This period, from around 3300 to 1200 BCE, marks the emergence of significant cultural and technological advancements in the Levant. These regions, which would later become vital nodes in Phoenician history, had already started to form the foundations of trade, agriculture, and urbanization.

The Bronze Age: Foundations of Civilizations

During the Bronze Age, the Eastern Mediterranean saw the rise of powerful city-states, and the Phoenicians—whose cultural and trade empire would define much of the region's later history—were beginning to emerge from the broader cultural milieu of the ancient Levant.

- Sidon, as one of the principal Phoenician cities, likely had its origins in the early Bronze Age. Archaeological findings indicate that Sidon, by the 2nd millennium BCE, was already an important urban center involved in trade and metallurgy. The city's proximity to the sea allowed it to develop as a maritime power, laying the groundwork for its later dominance in Mediterranean trade.

- Bisri Valley, with its fertile soil and access to water, was an ideal location for early agricultural development. Early Bronze Age settlements are evidenced by remains of rural villages and burial sites that have been found in the valley. These settlements would have supported the growing population of the coastal cities, such as Sidon, through agriculture and trade.

- The Awali/Bostrenos River has always been a key geographical feature of the region. During the Bronze Age, rivers were critical for both agriculture and trade routes. The Awali River, which flows through the Bisri Valley, provided a valuable resource for irrigation and transport, contributing to the region's early prosperity.

The Rise of the Phoenicians: From the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age

By the late Bronze Age, around 1200 BCE, the Phoenicians had begun to emerge as a dominant force in the Mediterranean. Known for their exceptional shipbuilding skills, the Phoenicians of Sidon, Tyre, and Byblos expanded their reach far beyond the Levant, establishing colonies in North Africa, Sicily, and Spain.

- Sidon, as a leading Phoenician city-state, played a pivotal role in the spread of trade, culture, and the Phoenician alphabet—one of the world’s first alphabetic writing systems. The influence of Sidon in the Mediterranean world grew as it became a center for luxury goods such as purple dye, glassware, and textiles.
- The Temple of Eshmun in Sidon, dating from the 7th century BCE but likely rooted in earlier Bronze Age religious practices, provides evidence of the region’s long-standing religious and cultural importance. The worship of Eshmun, a healing god, reflects the early Phoenician affinity for divine figures tied to natural forces, which continued to play a significant role throughout the Iron Age.
- The Chouf region, while less developed than Sidon, would have been influenced by these larger neighboring cities. The mountain areas of the Chouf offered strategic value, and the settlements in this region may have served as key trading posts or agricultural centers feeding into the larger Phoenician economy.

The Transition from the Bronze to Iron Age: Urbanization and Empire Building

As the Iron Age dawned around 1200 BCE, the collapse of many Bronze Age civilizations, including the Mycenaean and Hittite empires, created an opportunity for smaller city-states like Sidon to rise to prominence. This period marked the beginning of Phoenician maritime dominance, a feat largely attributed to their advanced shipbuilding techniques and trade networks.

- Sidon expanded significantly during this period. Archaeological evidence of fortified city walls and large-scale industrial production suggests that Sidon’s urban development was on the rise, setting the stage for its eventual position as a leading Mediterranean power. The city’s role in the spread of Phoenician alphabet and its engagement in trade networks from the Levant to Europe was instrumental in shaping the cultural and economic landscape of the ancient world.

- In the Bisri Valley, settlements began to grow in complexity, likely due to the influence of these emerging Phoenician city-states. As a center for agriculture, the valley provided the resources needed to sustain the growing urban populations, while its location along trade routes further emphasized its importance.
- The Awali River continued to be a lifeline for the region, facilitating the movement of goods and people. The river's role in supporting agriculture and urban development during the Iron Age would have been integral to the growth of both Sidon and the smaller towns that dotted the region.
- The Chouf, with its mountainous terrain, likely served as a buffer zone between the coastal Phoenician cities and the interior regions. The Chouf's role as a stronghold for the Druze during later periods can trace its roots to the strategic importance of the region during these early times.

Lady Hester Stanhope and the 19th-Century Rediscovery of the Ancient World

Fast forward to the early 19th century, when Lady Hester Stanhope arrived in Joun. A British aristocrat and early archaeologist, she became one of the first to systematically explore ancient ruins in Lebanon. Her excavations, though not always conducted with modern archaeological methods, brought global attention to the region's rich cultural heritage.

- Stanhope's interest in the ancient cities of the Levant, including those around Sidon, was part of the broader European fascination with the Middle East during the period of colonial exploration. Her travels in Lebanon were instrumental in fostering the early interest in the archaeological sites that would later be formally excavated and studied.
- Her exploration of Joun and its surroundings, where she took up residence, laid the groundwork for future archaeological studies, providing insight into the local architecture and historical layers that continue to attract archaeologists and historians.

Conclusion

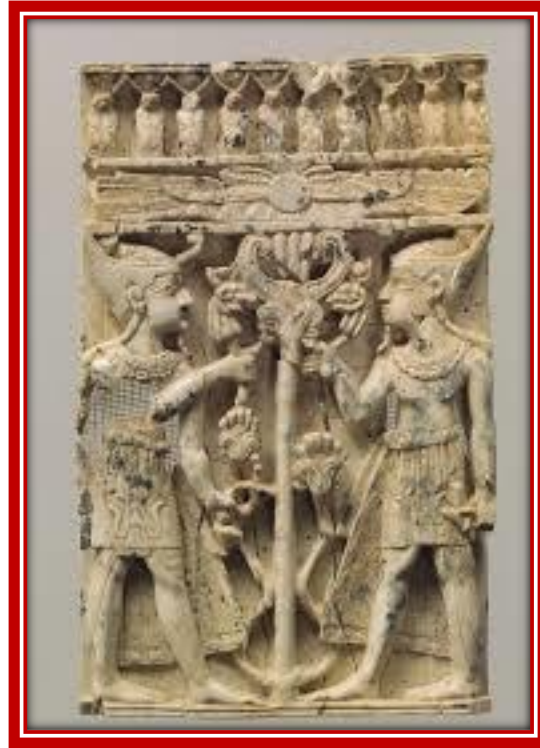
Beginning in the Bronze Age, the region around Sidon, the Bisri Valley, the Awali River, the Chouf, and Joun offers a rich tapestry of cultural and archaeological heritage. From the rise of the Phoenician maritime empire to the complex religious and agricultural systems of the Bronze and Iron Ages, these regions have played a crucial role in the shaping of Mediterranean civilization. The archaeological sites uncovered through centuries of exploration—from the Temple of Eshmun in Sidon to the valleys and rivers of the Awali—provide a window into the intricate connections between the ancient Mediterranean peoples and their environments.

In the following chapters, we will explore in greater detail the specific archaeological sites, their excavation history, and their impact on our understanding of ancient civilizations in Lebanon and the broader Mediterranean.



INTRODUCTION

The Significance of the Region in Mediterranean Archaeology



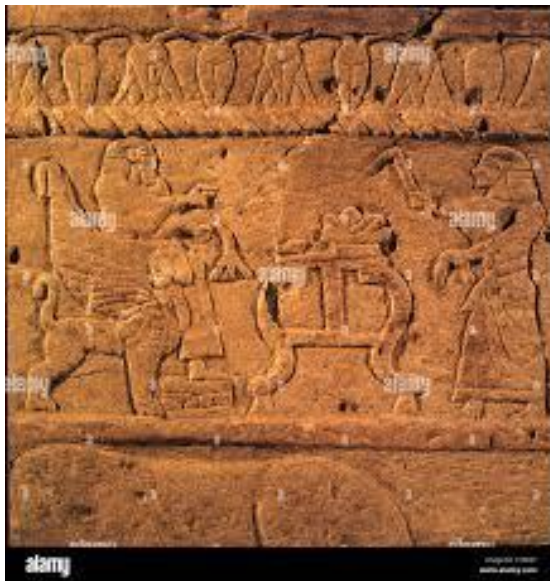
The regions of Sidon, the Bisri Valley, the Awali/Bostrenos River, and the Chouf collectively form a historical tapestry that spans thousands of years. These areas have witnessed the rise and fall of civilizations, from the Phoenicians to the Romans and beyond. Their strategic locations made them key nodes in trade, religious pilgrimage, and military conquest across the Mediterranean.



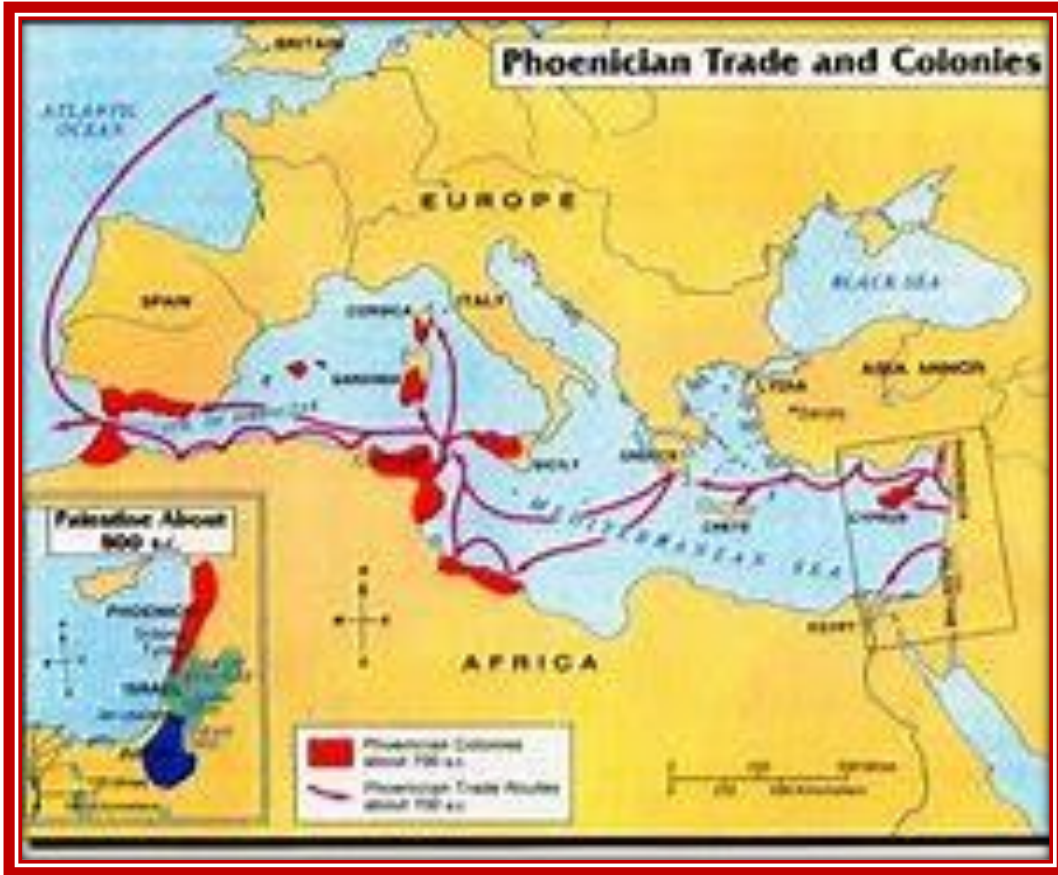
Sidon was one of the principal Phoenician city-states, renowned for its maritime prowess and craftsmanship in glass and purple dye production. The Bisri Valley, a fertile corridor between coastal cities and the inland Bekaa Valley, served as a vital link for trade and communication. The Awali/Bostrenos River nourished settlements along its banks, playing an essential role in agricultural and spiritual life. Finally, the Chouf region has long been a stronghold of political power and cultural preservation, from its Ottoman-era palaces to its Druze heritage.



The archaeological significance of these regions lies in their ability to reveal how ancient societies adapted to their environments, developed trade networks, and integrated diverse cultural influences.











An uncommon map of Lebanon by the classical scholar and cartographer H. Kiepert. Covers all of modern day Lebanon as well as parts of adjacent Israel, Palestine, Jordan and Syria. This map is based on the 1838 travels of E. Robinson and E. Smith in this area. Robinson and Smith, in search of unidentified Biblical sites, traveled throughout the Middle East but most particularly in modern day Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. The duo used local traditions as well as established Biblical scholarship to identify a number of important sites. This map is largely the result of their research and work. Their route, shown in red, leads Israel northwards to Tyre then skirts the coast to Beirut. Most place names are transliterations of Arabic though biblical references are included where appropriate. This map was drawn by Heinrich Kiepert, a noted expert on historical cartography, for Robinson's important work *Biblical Researches in Palestine, and in the Adjacent Regions*.

Sidon: The Phoenician Jewel



Historical Background

Sidon, founded around 2000 BCE, is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities. Its location on the eastern Mediterranean made it a hub for maritime trade. Known as “the city of the sea,” Sidon played a pivotal role in disseminating Phoenician culture and technologies, including the spread of the alphabet, which influenced Greek and Latin scripts.

Key Archaeological Discoveries

1. Temple of Eshmun: Dedicated to the Phoenician god of healing, this temple complex near the Awali River dates back to the 7th century BCE. The temple's remains include large limestone blocks, altars, and inscriptions, reflecting both Phoenician religious practices and later Hellenistic influences.
2. Sidon Necropolis: The discovery of richly adorned sarcophagi, such as the "Alexander Sarcophagus" (famous for its detailed carvings depicting battles and hunting scenes), highlights Sidon's role as a cultural melting pot where Phoenician, Greek, and Persian influences converged.
3. Crusader-Era Sea Castle: Built in 1228 CE, this fortress illustrates Sidon's enduring strategic importance. The castle is a testament to medieval military architecture, offering panoramic views of the Mediterranean and the old city.



The Bisri Valley: A Crossroads of Civilizations

Historical Background

The Bisri Valley's lush landscape and proximity to key trade routes made it an essential corridor connecting coastal and inland regions. Throughout antiquity, it served as a thoroughfare for Phoenician traders, Roman legions, and later, Islamic and Crusader forces.

Archaeological Findings

Recent excavations have uncovered ancient settlements, burial sites, and agricultural terraces, indicating continuous human activity from the Bronze Age through the Byzantine period. The valley is also known for its Roman roads and bridges, showcasing the engineering prowess of ancient civilizations.

Modern Controversy

The Bisri Dam project, initially intended to supply water to Beirut, threatened to submerge several archaeological sites. Activists and archaeologists protested the potential loss of cultural heritage, leading to the project's suspension in 2020. This incident highlights the ongoing tension between development and preservation.

Awali/Bostrenos River: Lifeblood of Ancient Settlements

Geographical and Cultural Importance

The Awali River, historically known as Bostrenos, played a crucial role in sustaining early settlements. Its waters were essential for irrigation, enabling the development of agriculture, which supported growing populations and trade economies.

Religious and Mythological Associations

The river is believed to have held spiritual significance for ancient peoples. The nearby Temple of Eshmun suggests that rituals involving water purification and healing were integral to Phoenician religious practices. The river's mention in various classical texts underscores its prominence in local mythology and history.

The Chouf Region: Heartland of History

Political and Cultural Significance

The Chouf region, known for its rugged mountains and fertile valleys, has been a center of political and cultural influence since ancient times. It is home to traditional Lebanese villages, Ottoman-era palaces, and the Druze community, whose unique religious and social structures have shaped the area's identity.

Archaeological Sites and Natural Landmarks

- **Beiteddine Palace:** Built in the 19th century by Emir Bashir Shihab II, this palace is an architectural masterpiece, blending traditional Lebanese and Italian Renaissance styles.
- **Moukhtara and Deir al-Qamar:** These historic towns feature well-preserved Ottoman-era buildings and ancient religious sites, offering a glimpse into the region's rich past.

Archaeological Techniques and Challenges

Archaeologists in these regions face challenges such as political instability, funding constraints, and the delicate balance between modern development and preservation. Techniques like ground-penetrating radar (GPR), aerial surveys, and digital mapping have been instrumental in recent discoveries.

Cultural Legacy and Future Prospects

The preservation of these archaeological sites is crucial for understanding the interconnectedness of ancient Mediterranean civilizations. Efforts to promote sustainable tourism and educational initiatives are key to ensuring that future generations appreciate this rich heritage.

Beginning from the Bronze Age and moving through the historical periods will provide a structured, chronological framework for this book. This approach will allow readers to understand the development of these key sites and their importance in the broader context of Mediterranean history.

Chapter 1: The Bronze Age Foundations (3300–1200 BCE)

1.1 Introduction to the Bronze Age in the Levant

The Bronze Age, spanning from roughly 3300 to 1200 BCE, marks the emergence of early urban centers, complex trade networks, and technological advancements in metalworking. The Levant, situated between Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Anatolia, became a cultural crossroads, fostering the growth of prominent city-states like Sidon. The region's rich natural resources, particularly timber from the nearby mountains and access to the Mediterranean, positioned it as a crucial hub in the ancient world.

1.2 Sidon: An Early Urban Center

Sidon is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, with its roots traceable to the early Bronze Age. Archaeological evidence suggests that Sidon's early settlers engaged in agriculture, fishing, and basic trade. By the Middle Bronze Age (2000–1600 BCE), Sidon had grown into a significant urban center with fortified walls and organized governance, indicating its rising importance.

Trade and Maritime Influence:

Sidon's coastal location facilitated maritime trade with Egypt, Cyprus, and Crete. Excavations reveal imported pottery, copper ingots, and precious stones, highlighting Sidon's role in long-distance trade. The exchange of goods also led to the diffusion of cultural and religious practices, making Sidon a melting pot of influences.

Religious Practices:

Sidon's early religious life revolved around nature worship, with temples dedicated to Baal, the storm god, and Astarte, the goddess of fertility. Early shrines and altars have been uncovered, suggesting ritualistic practices that laid the foundation for later Phoenician religious traditions.

1.3 The Bisri Valley: A Fertile Agricultural Hub

The Bisri Valley, with its fertile plains and proximity to the Awali River, played a crucial role in supporting early Bronze Age communities. Archaeological surveys indicate the presence of small, organized settlements that relied heavily on agriculture and animal husbandry. The valley's fertility made it a vital source of grain and livestock for nearby urban centers, including Sidon.

Burial Sites and Religious Significance:

Dolmens and megalithic tombs discovered in the Bisri Valley suggest that the area held religious or ceremonial importance. These structures, often associated with burial rituals, indicate a complex belief system tied to ancestor worship and the afterlife.

1.4 The Awali River: Lifeline of the Region

The Awali River (ancient Bostrenos) has long been a vital resource for communities in the region. In the Bronze Age, it provided irrigation for agricultural lands and served as a natural transportation route for moving goods between inland settlements and coastal cities.

Irrigation and Agricultural Development:

Early irrigation techniques, such as canals and stone-lined channels, allowed farmers to cultivate crops year-round. The surplus produced by these agricultural efforts supported population growth and urban expansion in Sidon and other coastal areas.

1.5 The Chouf Region: A Strategic Hinterland

Although less urbanized during the Bronze Age, the Chouf mountains were integral to the region's economic and defensive strategies. The forests of the Chouf supplied timber for building ships and fortifications, while its rugged terrain provided a natural defense against invading forces.

Trade and Resource Exploitation:

The Chouf's resources, including timber and minerals, were essential for trade and construction. Evidence of early mining activities and logging points to a well-organized resource extraction system that supported both local and regional needs.

1.6 Transition to the Late Bronze Age (1600–1200 BCE)

As the Bronze Age progressed, Sidon's influence grew, and its role in international trade expanded. The city became known for its craftsmanship in bronze weapons, pottery, and jewelry, exporting these goods across the Mediterranean. By the Late Bronze Age, Sidon had established diplomatic ties with powerful empires like Egypt and Hatti, as evidenced by letters found in the Amarna archive in Egypt, which mention Sidon as a significant trade partner.

Cultural Exchange and Diplomacy:

This period saw an increase in cultural exchange, with Sidon absorbing influences from both Mycenaean Greece and Mesopotamia. Artifacts such as Cypriot pottery and Egyptian scarabs have been uncovered in Sidonian tombs, showcasing the city's cosmopolitan nature.

1.7 Conclusion

The Bronze Age laid the groundwork for the later Phoenician civilization, with Sidon emerging as a pivotal center of trade, culture, and religious practice. The Bisri Valley, Awali River, and Chouf region played supportive roles, providing the resources and agricultural base necessary for Sidon's rise. This foundational period set the stage for the region's subsequent development during the Iron Age, which saw the Phoenicians become one of the most influential seafaring civilizations in history.

Chapter 2: The Iron Age and the Rise of the Phoenicians (1200–539 BCE)

2.1 Introduction to the Iron Age in the Levant

The Iron Age marked a period of significant transformation in the Levant, characterized by the collapse of major Bronze Age empires and the rise of new, independent city-states. Around 1200 BCE, the destruction of key centers like Ugarit and the decline of the Hittites and Egyptians opened opportunities for emerging powers. Among them were the Phoenicians, whose dominance was rooted in their mastery of maritime trade and shipbuilding, as well as their strategic coastal cities, particularly Sidon.

2.2 Sidon: A Leading Phoenician City-State

By the early Iron Age, Sidon had evolved into a thriving city-state, known for its advanced urban planning, defensive structures, and bustling ports. Sidon's success stemmed from its strategic location and its ability to navigate the shifting political landscape, balancing alliances with powerful neighbors like Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia.

Maritime Prowess:

Sidon's wealth and influence were built on its maritime skills. The city was renowned for its cedar ships, constructed using timber from the Chouf forests. These ships facilitated extensive trade networks, linking the Levant with Cyprus, Greece, North Africa, and Italy. Sidon's merchants traded goods such as purple dye (Tyrian purple), glassware, and fine textiles, making the city synonymous with luxury.

Political Structure:

Sidon operated as an independent city-state ruled by a local king, often supported by a council of elites. The kings of Sidon played a diplomatic role, maintaining correspondence and alliances with larger empires to ensure the city's autonomy. Sidon's political resilience allowed it to flourish despite external pressures from regional superpowers.

2.3 Cultural and Religious Flourishing

The Phoenicians were not only traders but also cultural disseminators. Sidon became a hub of artistic and religious development, with its artisans and craftsmen influencing neighboring cultures.

The Temple of Eshmun:

Built during the Iron Age, the Temple of Eshmun near Sidon was dedicated to the Phoenician god of healing. Its construction reflects a blend of Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Greek architectural styles, showcasing Sidon's cosmopolitan nature. The temple served as both a religious and medical center, attracting pilgrims from across the Mediterranean seeking healing.

The Phoenician Alphabet:

One of the most significant Phoenician contributions to global civilization was their development of an alphabetic writing system. This simplified form of writing, consisting of 22 characters, spread throughout the Mediterranean via trade, influencing the development of Greek and Latin scripts. Sidon played a crucial role in the dissemination of this alphabet, particularly through its interactions with Greek traders.

2.4 The Bisri Valley and the Awali River's Role

While Sidon flourished as a coastal power, the Bisri Valley and Awali River were essential in sustaining its inland economy. The fertile lands of the Bisri Valley supported agricultural production, particularly grains, olives, and wine, which were crucial exports. The Awali River facilitated the transport of these goods to Sidon's port, integrating the inland economy with the city's maritime trade.

Agricultural Innovation:

During the Iron Age, advancements in irrigation technology, such as terracing and water channels, enabled more efficient farming in the Bisri Valley. This agricultural surplus contributed to Sidon's economic prosperity, allowing the city to focus on trade and craftsmanship.

2.5 The Chouf Region: A Strategic Hinterland

The Chouf mountains continued to serve as a vital resource base for Sidon, supplying timber, stone, and other materials essential for construction and shipbuilding. Additionally, the Chouf's rugged terrain provided a natural defensive barrier, protecting Sidon from inland invasions.

Fortified Settlements:

Archaeological evidence suggests the presence of small fortified settlements in the Chouf during the Iron Age, possibly established to guard key trade routes and natural resources. These settlements likely played a role in maintaining Sidon's economic stability by ensuring the secure transport of materials.

2.6 Sidon's Interactions with Major Empires

Throughout the Iron Age, Sidon navigated a complex geopolitical landscape, balancing its independence with alliances and tributes to larger empires.

- **Assyrian Period (9th–7th centuries BCE):** Sidon maintained its autonomy by paying tribute to the Assyrian Empire, as evidenced by inscriptions from Ashurbanipal and Tiglath-Pileser III. This relationship allowed Sidon to continue its trade activities relatively undisturbed.
- **Babylonian and Persian Influence (7th–6th centuries BCE):** Following the decline of Assyria, Sidon came under Babylonian and later Persian control. Under Persian rule, Sidon enjoyed considerable autonomy, becoming a key naval base for the Persian fleet. Sidon's contributions to Persian military campaigns, particularly during the Greco-Persian Wars, solidified its strategic importance.

2.7 Conclusion

The Iron Age was a transformative period for Sidon and its surrounding regions. Sidon's maritime dominance, cultural innovations, and diplomatic acumen enabled it to become one of the most influential city-states of the ancient world. The Bisri Valley, Awali River, and Chouf region played crucial supporting roles, providing the resources and

infrastructure necessary for Sidon's rise. This period laid the foundation for Phoenician influence across the Mediterranean, setting the stage for the next era of regional development under Persian and later Hellenistic control.



Chapter 3: Classical Antiquity and Roman Influence (539 BCE–641 CE)

3.1 Introduction to Classical Antiquity in the Levant

The transition from Phoenician autonomy to successive rule under powerful empires—first the Achaemenid Persians, followed by Alexander the Great, the Hellenistic kingdoms, and ultimately the Romans—marked a significant transformation in the Levant. This era saw the integration of Sidon and its surrounding regions, including the Bisri Valley, Awali River, and Chouf, into broader imperial systems. Trade flourished, new architectural styles emerged, and local cultures blended with Greco-Roman influences.

3.2 Sidon under Persian Rule (539–332 BCE)

Sidon played a critical role in the Persian Achaemenid Empire as a strategic naval base. The city's renowned shipbuilders constructed fleets for Persian campaigns, particularly during conflicts with Greece. In return, Sidon enjoyed a degree of autonomy, flourishing as a center of commerce and culture.

Cultural Syncretism:

Sidon's religious practices under Persian rule reflected a blend of Phoenician and Persian traditions. Temples like the Temple of Eshmun were expanded, integrating Persian motifs into their architecture, symbolizing the fusion of local and imperial ideologies.

3.3 The Hellenistic Period: Alexander the Great and His Successors (332–63 BCE)

In 332 BCE, Sidon welcomed Alexander the Great, opening its gates without resistance and securing a favored position within his empire. Under Hellenistic rule, Sidon embraced Greek culture while retaining its Phoenician heritage.

Urban Transformation:

The city adopted Hellenistic urban planning, with theaters, gymnasiums, and public squares. Greek language and customs became prevalent, yet Phoenician religious practices persisted. This period saw Sidon evolve into a cosmopolitan hub where Eastern and Western traditions coexisted.

Impact on the Chouf and the Bisri Valley:

The Hellenistic influence extended inland. Settlements in the Chouf adopted Hellenistic architectural styles, while the Bisri Valley benefited from enhanced agricultural techniques and infrastructure, such as roads connecting inland farms to coastal markets.

3.4 Roman Rule: A New Era of Prosperity (63 BCE–395 CE)

The Roman conquest of the Levant brought stability and prosperity to the region. Sidon retained its importance as a major port city within the Roman province of Syria.

Architectural Advancements:

Roman influence reshaped Sidon with the construction of amphitheaters, temples, and baths. The Roman road network linked Sidon to the interior regions, enhancing trade and mobility.

The Temple of Eshmun:

The Temple of Eshmun remained a prominent religious site, receiving architectural enhancements that blended Roman and Phoenician elements. The site became a pilgrimage destination for those seeking healing, further boosting Sidon's economy.

Integration of the Bisri Valley and Awali River:

The Romans capitalized on the agricultural potential of the Bisri Valley and the Awali River by implementing advanced irrigation systems. These innovations increased agricultural output, with the surplus exported through Sidon's ports to other parts of the empire.

The Chouf as a Strategic Military Outpost:

The Chouf mountains served as a defensive stronghold during Roman rule. Fortified outposts were established to secure vital trade routes and protect the region from potential uprisings or external threats.

3.5 The Byzantine Era: Christianity and Cultural Shifts (395–641 CE)

The Byzantine Empire inherited the Roman administrative framework, but the spread of Christianity profoundly altered the cultural landscape. Sidon became an early center of Christian activity, with churches and monasteries replacing many pagan temples.

Religious Transition:

The Temple of Eshmun declined as Christianity took hold, though some of its structures were repurposed for Christian worship. The Bisri Valley and Chouf region also saw the rise of Christian monastic communities, which played a key role in the spiritual and cultural life of the region.

Economic Continuity:

Despite the religious changes, trade and agriculture continued to thrive. The Awali River remained a crucial artery for transporting goods, while the Chouf provided timber and other resources essential for local construction and shipbuilding.

3.6 Conclusion

Classical Antiquity was a transformative era for Sidon and its neighboring regions. Under successive Persian, Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine rule, Sidon maintained its prominence as a cultural and economic hub. The integration of the Bisri Valley, Awali River, and Chouf region into broader imperial systems ensured the continued prosperity of these areas, laying the groundwork for their enduring significance in the medieval period.

Chapter 4: The Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods (395–750 CE)

4.1 Introduction to the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods

The Byzantine period (395–636 CE) and the Early Islamic period (636–750 CE) were transformative times for the Levant, marked by religious, political, and cultural shifts. The transition from Roman paganism to Christianity and later to Islamic rule profoundly affected cities like Sidon, as well as the Bisri Valley, Awali River, and the Chouf region.

4.2 The Byzantine Era: Christianization of the Region

The Byzantine Empire's Christian influence reshaped the religious landscape of the Levant. Pagan temples, including the Temple of Eshmun, were either repurposed or abandoned as Christianity spread.

Christianization of Sidon:

Sidon became a key center for early Christianity, with churches and monasteries established throughout the city and its hinterlands. Archaeological evidence, including Christian mosaics and baptismal fonts, reflects the city's integration into the broader Byzantine ecclesiastical framework.

Impact on the Bisri Valley and Awali River:

Christian monastic communities flourished in the Bisri Valley and along the Awali River, benefiting from the region's natural resources and tranquility. These monastic centers often played a dual role as religious institutions and hubs of agricultural production, contributing to the local economy.

The Chouf Region's Role:

The Chouf mountains provided a secluded refuge for Christian communities, particularly during periods of religious persecution. Monasteries and hermitages were established, many of which continued to serve as spiritual centers well into the Islamic period.

4.3 The Early Islamic Period: Transition and Continuity

The conquest of the Levant by Muslim Arab forces in the mid-7th century ushered in a new era. Despite the political shift, many aspects of daily life, including trade and agriculture, continued with minimal disruption.

Sidon Under Early Islamic Rule:

Sidon retained its importance as a coastal trade hub under the Umayyad Caliphate. The city's port facilitated commerce between the eastern Mediterranean and the Arabian Peninsula, with goods such as textiles, glassware, and agricultural products continuing to flow through its markets.

Integration of Local Populations:

The region saw a gradual cultural and religious integration. While Islam became the dominant religion, many Christian communities retained their religious practices under the system of dhimma, which allowed for religious autonomy in exchange for a tax (jizya).

4.4 Conclusion

The Byzantine and Early Islamic periods brought significant religious and political transformations to Sidon, the Bisri Valley, the Awali River, and the Chouf region. However, the underlying economic and cultural continuity ensured the region's resilience and prosperity. These changes set the stage for further development during the Abbasid Caliphate and subsequent medieval periods.

Chapter 5: The Crusader and Mamluk Periods (1099–1516 CE)

5.1 Introduction to the Crusader and Mamluk Periods

The Crusader and Mamluk periods were defined by significant geopolitical changes and military confrontations in the Levant. Following the First Crusade (1096–1099 CE), much of the coastal Levant, including Sidon and its surrounding regions, fell under the control of European Crusaders. The Mamluks, who emerged as a dominant force in the 13th century, eventually expelled the Crusaders and reasserted Islamic rule over the region.

5.2 The Crusader Period (1099–1291 CE)

Crusader Control of Sidon

In 1110 CE, Sidon was captured by the Kingdom of Jerusalem during the First Crusade, becoming part of the Crusader Lordship of Sidon. Sidon's strategic coastal location made it a vital port for Crusader supply lines and a defensive outpost against Muslim forces. The city was fortified with massive stone walls, towers, and a castle to protect it from both land and sea attacks.

Fortifications:

- **The Sea Castle of Sidon:** Constructed by the Crusaders in 1228, the Sea Castle was built on a small island connected to the mainland by a causeway. It served as a defensive stronghold and a symbol of Crusader dominance over the Mediterranean coast.
- **Inland Fortifications:** The Crusaders also reinforced inland defenses along key routes leading to the Bisri Valley and the Chouf mountains to secure supply lines and protect agricultural resources.

Impact on the Local Population:

The Crusader presence significantly affected local demographics. While some Phoenician and Christian communities aligned with the Crusaders, many Muslims and Druze retreated to the Chouf mountains and other remote areas. Despite the tensions, trade continued, with Sidon serving as a hub for European and Levantine merchants exchanging goods such as silk, spices, and glassware.

Crusader Influence in the Chouf and Bisri Valley

The Chouf region and Bisri Valley were crucial hinterlands supplying the Crusader strongholds with timber, agricultural products, and water. Small fortified outposts were established to monitor the roads and ensure safe passage for caravans. However, resistance from local Muslim and Druze communities frequently disrupted Crusader control.

5.3 The Mamluk Period (1291–1516 CE)

The Fall of Sidon and the End of Crusader Rule

In 1291 CE, the Mamluks, led by Sultan al-Ashraf Khalil, launched a decisive campaign against the remaining Crusader strongholds along the Levantine coast. Sidon fell to the Mamluks, marking the end of Crusader rule in the region. The Mamluks destroyed many of the Crusader fortifications to prevent future European incursions.

Reintegration into the Islamic World:

Under Mamluk rule, Sidon was integrated into the province of Damascus. The city was rebuilt, emphasizing Islamic architecture and administration. The Mamluks also restored agricultural production in the Bisri Valley and reinvigorated trade along the Awali River.

The Chouf and the Druze Resistance

The Chouf region became a stronghold for the Druze community during the Mamluk period. The Mamluks initially attempted to suppress local resistance but later adopted a policy of indirect rule, allowing Druze leaders to maintain local autonomy in exchange for loyalty and tax contributions.

Cultural Flourishing:

Despite the destruction of Crusader infrastructure, the Mamluk era saw a cultural revival. Mosques, madrasas, and markets were constructed, and the region regained its status as a vital link between Damascus and the Mediterranean.

5.4 Economic and Social Impact

The Mamluk emphasis on trade and agriculture revitalized Sidon and its hinterlands. The Awali River and Bisri Valley remained crucial for irrigating crops, while the Chouf mountains supplied timber for construction and shipbuilding. Sidon became a thriving market town, attracting merchants from across the Islamic world and beyond.

5.5 Conclusion

The Crusader and Mamluk periods were times of conflict, transformation, and cultural integration in the Levant. Sidon's strategic importance as a coastal stronghold and trade hub ensured its continued relevance despite the changing political landscape. The Chouf region, Bisri Valley, and Awali River played vital roles in supporting both Crusader and Mamluk endeavors, setting the stage for the region's evolution in the Ottoman period.

Chapter 6: The Ottoman Era (1516–1918 CE)

6.1 Introduction to the Ottoman Era in the Levant

In 1516, the Ottoman Empire defeated the Mamluks at the Battle of Marj Dabiq, establishing their rule over the Levant, including Sidon, the Chouf region, the Bisri Valley, and the Awali River basin. For over four centuries, the region experienced relative stability under Ottoman administration, marked by significant political, economic, and social changes.

6.2 Ottoman Governance and Administrative Structure

The Ottomans implemented a feudal administrative system in the Levant, dividing it into sanjaks (districts) and vilayets (provinces). Sidon became part of the Sidon Eyalet, which later merged into the Beirut Vilayet. Local governance relied heavily on local elites and feudal families, particularly in the Chouf, where the Druze played a pivotal role in maintaining order.

6.3 The Druze Emirate and the Role of the Chouf

The Chouf region rose to prominence under the leadership of the Druze Ma'an dynasty in the 17th century. The most notable figure was Emir Fakhr al-Din II (1572–1635), who established semi-autonomous rule over large parts of Mount Lebanon, the Chouf, and coastal cities, including Sidon. His policies emphasized religious tolerance, agricultural development, and trade expansion.

Fakhr al-Din's Achievements:

- **Fortifications and Infrastructure:** He strengthened fortresses in the Chouf and built bridges and roads connecting the region to Sidon, facilitating commerce.
- **Trade Expansion:** His openness to European alliances helped Sidon become a significant trade hub, attracting Venetian and Genoese merchants.

After Fakhr al-Din's fall in 1635, the Ottomans reasserted direct control, yet the Druze retained influence, particularly during periods of Ottoman decentralization.

6.4 Sidon as an Ottoman Trade Hub

Sidon flourished under Ottoman rule, becoming a vital port for the export of silk, olive oil, and timber from the Chouf and Bisri Valley. Ottoman authorities built custom houses, markets (souks), and caravanserais to support growing trade networks connecting Europe, the Arabian Peninsula, and North Africa.

6.5 The Bisri Valley and Awali River under Ottoman Influence

The Bisri Valley and Awali River were central to the region's agricultural economy. The Ottomans introduced tax farming (iltizam), wherein local landlords collected taxes on agricultural output, particularly grain, olive oil, and fruit crops. The Awali River continued to provide irrigation, while the valley's fertile lands were integral to feeding the surrounding population and supplying markets in Sidon.

6.6 Social and Religious Dynamics

The Ottoman period was marked by a complex interplay of religious communities. The Druze, Maronites, Sunni Muslims, coexisted, though tensions occasionally flared into conflict, particularly in the 19th century. These conflicts were often exacerbated by external powers, including France and Britain, who sought to influence local affairs.

6.7 The Decline of Ottoman Rule and Rise of Nationalist Movements

By the late 19th century, the Ottoman Empire faced internal decline and external pressures from European powers. Nationalist movements began to emerge, particularly in Mount Lebanon and Sidon, influenced by increasing European missionary activity and educational institutions.

6.8 Conclusion

The Ottoman era was a period of transformation for Sidon and its surrounding regions. While the empire's centralized control ebbed and flowed, local governance, trade, and agriculture thrived, laying the groundwork for the modern era. The resilience of Sidon, the resource richness of the Bisri Valley, and the strategic importance of the Chouf continued to shape the region's identity as it transitioned into the modern period under French Mandate rule.

Chapter 7: The French Mandate and Modern Era (1918–Present)

7.1 The End of Ottoman Rule and the Beginning of the French Mandate

The fall of the Ottoman Empire during World War I marked a significant turning point for the Levant. In 1918, following the defeat of Ottoman forces, the Allied Powers divided the former Ottoman territories under the Sykes-Picot Agreement, placing Lebanon and Syria under French control. This arrangement was formalized in 1920 by the League of Nations, leading to the establishment of the French Mandate over Lebanon and Syria.

7.2 The Role of Sidon under the French Mandate

Sidon, a historically significant port city, underwent substantial political and infrastructural changes during the French Mandate. French authorities modernized the city's infrastructure, including the port, roads, and administrative buildings, to integrate it into the broader colonial economy. Sidon became a center for trade, education, and French cultural influence, with new schools and institutions promoting French language and Western ideals.

7.3 The Chouf and Bisri Valley under the Mandate

The Chouf region retained its strategic importance due to its Druze population and historical significance. French authorities adopted a policy of indirect rule, working with local Druze leaders to maintain order while suppressing nationalist uprisings. The Bisri Valley remained a key agricultural region, with French investments in irrigation and transportation enhancing its role in supplying coastal markets, particularly Sidon.

7.4 Nationalist Movements and Resistance

The French Mandate faced growing resistance from various communities in Lebanon, particularly in the Chouf. Nationalist movements advocating for independence gained momentum, driven by both Christian Maronites and Druze leaders. Sidon and the Chouf were hotbeds of political activity, with local leaders organizing protests and participating in broader calls for independence.

Key Figures:

- Emir Majid Arslan: A prominent Druze leader from the Chouf, Arslan played a critical role in opposing French rule and advocating for Lebanese sovereignty.
- Riad al-Solh: Though not from Sidon, his leadership in the broader nationalist movement influenced political dynamics in southern Lebanon.

7.5 Lebanese Independence and the Post-Mandate Era (1943–1975)

Lebanon gained independence in 1943, with Sidon, the Chouf, and the Bisri Valley becoming integral parts of the newly formed Republic of Lebanon. Political and economic developments in these regions reflected Lebanon's growing national identity.

Development Initiatives:

Post-independence, Sidon benefited from initiatives aimed at modernizing its port and expanding its role as a regional trade center. The Chouf saw investments in education and infrastructure, fostering economic growth while preserving its cultural heritage.

7.6 The Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990)

The Lebanese Civil War had a profound impact on Sidon, the Chouf, and the Bisri Valley. Sectarian tensions led to widespread violence, with the Chouf becoming a major battleground, particularly during the Mountain War between Druze forces and Christian

militias. Sidon, strategically important, experienced repeated attacks and occupations, disrupting trade and displacing many residents.

7.7 Post-War Reconstruction and Modern Development

Following the end of the civil war in 1990, efforts to rebuild Sidon, the Chouf, and the Bisri Valley began in earnest. International aid and government initiatives focused on infrastructure repair, agricultural revival, and tourism development.

Modern Projects:

- **Bisri Dam Project:** Although controversial, this proposed dam aimed to improve water supply across southern Lebanon. However, environmental concerns and local opposition led to its cancellation in 2020.
- **Tourism and Cultural Heritage:** Sidon's Sea Castle, the Temple of Eshmun, and Lady Hester Stanhope's archaeological site in Joun have become focal points for tourism, with ongoing restoration efforts highlighting the region's rich history.

7.8 Conclusion

The French Mandate and modern era reshaped Sidon, the Chouf, and the Bisri Valley, transforming them into symbols of resilience and cultural diversity. From colonial rule to independence, civil war, and reconstruction, these regions have continuously evolved, contributing to Lebanon's complex national identity and its enduring historical legacy.

Chapter 8: Modern Archaeological Efforts in Sidon, the Chouf, and the Bisri Valley

8.1 Introduction to Modern Archaeology in Lebanon

Lebanon's archaeological richness has attracted scholars, archaeologists, and institutions from around the world. In the aftermath of political stability following the civil war, there has been a renewed focus on excavating, preserving, and studying the country's ancient sites, particularly in Sidon, the Chouf region, and the Bisri Valley. These efforts aim to uncover the layers of Phoenician, Roman, Byzantine, Crusader, and Islamic history, contributing to a deeper understanding of the region's past.

8.2 Archaeological Efforts in Sidon

8.2.1 Excavations at Sidon's Necropolis and Urban Core

Recent excavations have revealed an extensive necropolis dating back to the Bronze Age, highlighting Sidon's role as a major urban center during the Phoenician and Canaanite periods. Key findings include:

- Phoenician sarcophagi with intricate carvings.
- Artifacts such as pottery, amulets, and inscriptions demonstrating Sidon's extensive trade networks with Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Aegean.

Urban Excavations: In Sidon's old city, archaeologists have uncovered layers of Roman roads, Byzantine mosaics, and Crusader fortifications, illustrating the city's continuous habitation and strategic importance throughout history.

8.2.2 The Temple of Eshmun

The Temple of Eshmun, a major Phoenician sanctuary dedicated to the god of healing, has been the focus of significant restoration projects. Modern archaeological efforts have:

- Restored portions of the temple's marble columns and stone altars.
- Recovered numerous inscriptions and statues, shedding light on religious practices and the temple's role in Sidon's spiritual life.

8.3 Archaeological Discoveries in the Chouf Region

8.3.1 Rural Settlements and Fortifications

Archaeological surveys in the Chouf have uncovered remnants of ancient villages, agricultural terraces, and fortified structures dating back to the Byzantine and Islamic periods. These discoveries indicate the region's long-standing role in supporting agricultural and military endeavors.

Key sites include:

- Druze fortresses adapted from earlier Crusader structures.
- Ancient irrigation systems used for sustaining the region's agricultural productivity.

8.3.2 Lady Hester Stanhope's Excavation Legacy

The archaeological site associated with Lady Hester Stanhope in Joun holds a unique place in Lebanon's archaeological history. Stanhope, one of the earliest figures to conduct excavations in the region during the early 19th century, led an ambitious but controversial dig near Sidon. Though her findings were limited, her work introduced Western archaeologists to the potential of Lebanon's ancient sites.

8.4 The Bisri Valley and Awali River

8.4.1 Archaeological Potential and Challenges

The Bisri Valley has been the subject of archaeological surveys identifying potential settlements from the Neolithic, Bronze Age, and Roman periods. However, large-scale excavation efforts were limited by the valley's geographic inaccessibility and more recently by debates surrounding the Bisri Dam Project.

Key Findings:

- Roman bridges and aqueducts along the Awali River, indicating the region's importance in water management.
- Burial mounds and ceramic fragments suggesting the existence of early agricultural communities.

8.5 Technological Advances in Archaeology

Modern archaeological efforts in Sidon, the Chouf, and the Bisri Valley have benefited from advances in technology:

- Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR): Used to detect subsurface remains without invasive digging.
- 3D Mapping and Digital Reconstruction: Creating virtual models of ancient sites, allowing for enhanced study and preservation.
- Carbon Dating and DNA Analysis: Providing precise dating for artifacts and human remains, offering insights into ancient diets, migrations, and diseases.

8.6 Preservation and Heritage Management

Efforts are underway to protect these archaeological sites from urban encroachment, looting, and environmental degradation. Government agencies, in collaboration with international organizations such as UNESCO, have launched initiatives to:

- Establish museums and cultural centers in Sidon and the Chouf.
- Promote eco-tourism in the Bisri Valley, balancing heritage preservation with sustainable tourism.

8.7 Conclusion

Modern archaeological efforts in Sidon, the Chouf, and the Bisri Valley have transformed our understanding of Lebanon's ancient history. By combining traditional excavation methods with cutting-edge technology, archaeologists continue to uncover the rich layers of the past, preserving the region's heritage for future generations and fostering a renewed appreciation for its historical significance.

Focus on the Temple of Eshmun

Historical Background

The Temple of Eshmun is one of the most significant archaeological sites near Sidon, located in the Al-Bustan area, about 2 kilometers northeast of the city. Dedicated to Eshmun, the Phoenician god of healing, this temple complex reflects the religious, cultural, and architectural evolution of the region over several centuries.

Eshmun, often associated with Aesculapius, the Greek god of medicine, was revered for his healing powers. The temple's origins date back to the 7th century BCE, during the Phoenician period, but it underwent significant modifications and expansions under Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman influence, making it a prime example of religious syncretism.

Architectural Features

The temple complex features a unique blend of Phoenician, Greek, and Roman architectural elements. Key components of the site include:

- **The Sacred Pool and Canal System:** Central to the temple's healing rituals was a large sacred pool, fed by the Nahr al-Awali (Awali River) through an intricate canal system. This pool was used for ritual purification, emphasizing the temple's role as a healing sanctuary.
- **Limestone Staircase and Terraces:** The approach to the temple is marked by a grand limestone staircase, leading to multiple terraces that housed various altars and ceremonial platforms. These terraces highlight the hierarchical design typical of Phoenician sanctuaries.
- **Hellenistic and Roman Additions:** During the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the site saw the addition of Corinthian columns, marble altars, and decorative mosaics, reflecting the influence of Greco-Roman religious practices while preserving its Phoenician core.

Religious Practices and Healing Rites

Pilgrims visited the temple seeking cures for ailments, believing in Eshmun's divine healing powers. Rituals often involved bathing in the sacred pool, offering votive statues and inscriptions, and participating in ceremonies led by the temple's priesthood. These practices persisted well into the Roman period, with evidence of continuity even as Christianity began to dominate the region.

Significance in Regional History

The Temple of Eshmun exemplifies the Phoenicians' ability to adapt to various cultural influences while maintaining their religious identity. It served as a spiritual center for Sidon and surrounding areas, reinforcing the city's prominence in the ancient world. The temple's continuous use and modification over centuries illustrate its enduring significance, from the Phoenician era through the Roman period and into the early Byzantine era.

Chapter 9: Cultural Significance and Tourism Potential of Sidon, the Chouf, and the Bisri Valley

9.1 Introduction: The Growing Appeal of Cultural Heritage Tourism

Cultural heritage tourism has become a cornerstone of Lebanon's post-war recovery and economic revitalization. Visitors are increasingly drawn to the rich historical landscapes of Sidon, the Chouf region, and the Bisri Valley, where ancient ruins, traditional architecture, and natural beauty converge. These areas offer an immersive experience into Lebanon's Phoenician, Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, and Druze heritage, showcasing the country's unique cultural identity.

9.2 Sidon: A Gateway to Phoenician Civilization

9.2.1 The Sea Castle and Old Souks

Sidon's iconic Sea Castle, constructed by the Crusaders in the early 13th century, serves as a symbol of the city's strategic maritime importance. Adjacent to the castle, the Old Souks offer a vibrant cultural experience, with narrow alleyways lined with artisan shops, traditional cafes, and historic mosques. Visitors can explore the city's Crusader, Mamluk, and Ottoman layers, enhancing their understanding of the region's multifaceted history.

9.2.2 The Temple of Eshmun

Located just outside Sidon, the Temple of Eshmun is a crucial site for understanding Phoenician religious practices. As one of the most significant healing sanctuaries of the ancient world, it attracts both scholars and spiritual tourists, who marvel at its architectural remains and inscriptions honoring the god Eshmun.

9.3 The Chouf: A Testament to Druze and Ottoman Heritage

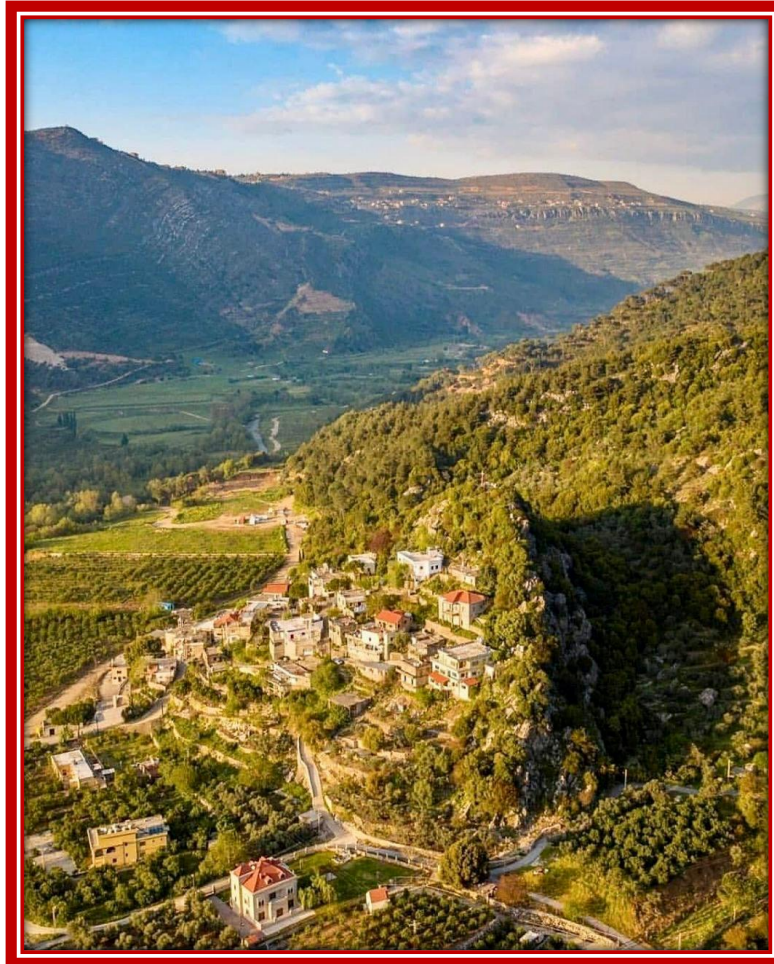
9.3.1 Beiteddine Palace and Deir el-Qamar

The Beiteddine Palace, a masterpiece of Ottoman architecture built by Emir Bashir Shihab II, is a prime example of Lebanon's royal heritage. With its mosaics, gardens, and fountains, the palace draws thousands of visitors annually. Nearby, Deir el-Qamar—the former capital of Mount Lebanon—offers a glimpse into the region's political and cultural past, featuring historic churches, mosques, and Druze heritage sites.

9.3.2 Ecotourism in the Chouf Biosphere Reserve

The Chouf Biosphere Reserve, Lebanon's largest nature reserve, combines ecotourism with cultural heritage. Visitors can hike through ancient cedar forests while learning about the Druze community's sustainable land management practices. The reserve plays a crucial role in preserving the region's biodiversity and traditional agriculture, making it a model for eco-friendly tourism.

9.4 The Bisri Valley: A Landscape of History and Nature



The Bisri Valley displays distinct geological and ecological features that foster sensitive agricultural practices, dotted by countless archaeological remains and places of worship that testify of its historical, strategic and religious importance across all periods of history. It is a cultural landscape that shows a clear balance between a natural environment and human activities that shaped, developed and gave meaning to the landscape. One can consider it to be a part of a wider “Cultural Landscape of the Sacred Valley of Eshmoun”, centered on the entire course of the Awali/Bisri river.

The Bisri Valley holds great historical, cultural and religious significance. In the direct hinterland of the ancient city of Sidon, ... the valley has known uninterrupted human occupation since the Bronze Age. Around 70 identified archaeological sites; settlements, tombs, fortresses, ruined convents, a temple, bridges, roads, stairs; testify of this rich history. **Even the name “Bisri” is a derivative of “Bostrenos”, the river’s name in Hellenistic times.** Located on the edge of the same water course, the famous temple of

Eshmoun north of Saida and the Roman- period temple of the Bisri Valley had a symbolic connection and were located on the same pilgrimage route. Indeed, the river used to also be named “Asclepios” which is the Greek equivalent of Eshmoun. A religious importance that lived on after the advent of Christianity, with historic churches and convents dotting the valley (Atallah, 2017).

More below:

The Nahr el-Awali is one of Mount Lebanon’s great rivers. It is born of the junction of the Nahr Barouk that starts in the heights of the Chouf region, and of the Nahr Array descending from the valley of Jezzine. After the crossing of those two rivers, it is named “Nahr Bisri” until it takes the name of “Al-Awali” in its lower course and reaches the Mediterranean north of Saida. The course of the River, from the valley of Bisri to the sea, constitutes an exceptional site of high ecological, cultural and archaeological importance. Half of its valley however is in danger of being submerged by a dam project.



The river system of the Nahr el-Awali
Antoine Atallah on Google Earth satellite image



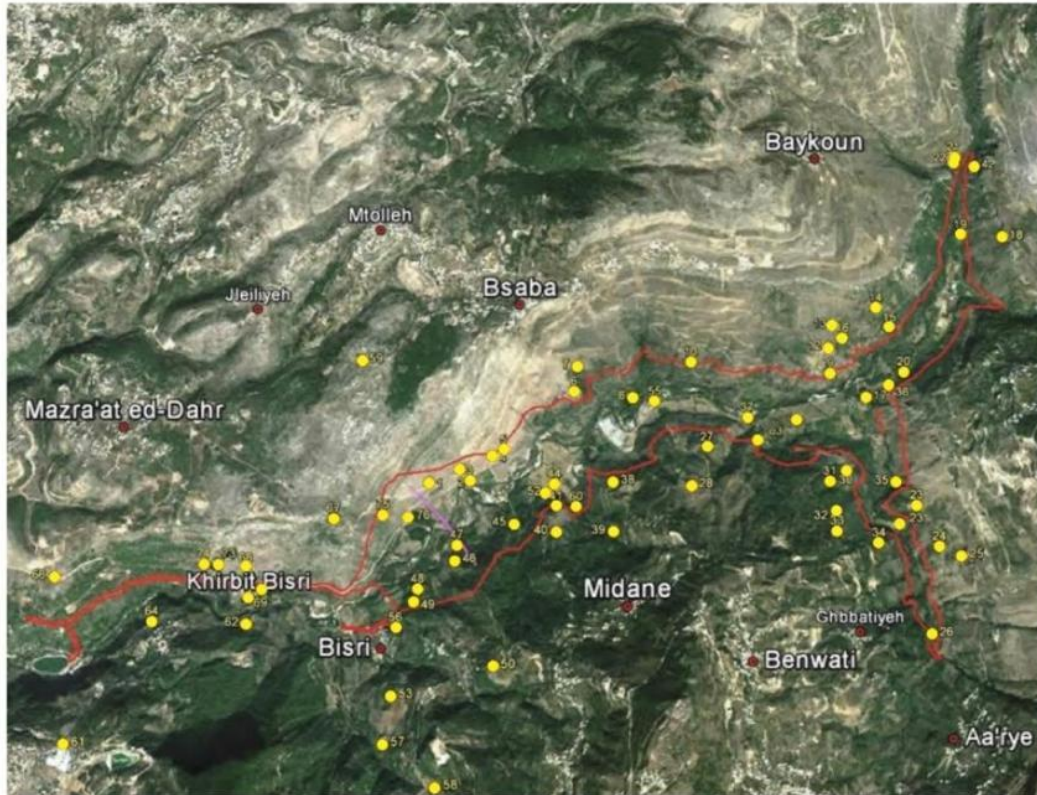
The roman road network, including the two roads linking Saïda to Jezzine and Jezzine to the Chouf
Khalil, Wissam. "Routes et Fortifications dans le Chouf Libanais" in Dossier d'Archéologie No 350 Mars/Avri

The name "Bisri" is in itself a testimony of the valley's ancient history, as it is a variation "Bostrenos" which was given to the Awali's upper course in antiquity. A name probably a settlement named "Bostra" which could correspond to the modern village of Bisri. As the temple complex and pilgrimage site of Eshmoun near its mouth, it had a strong sacr that was expressed in another of the river's ancient names, "Asclepios", which is also th the Greek god of healing.



The Bostrenos, ancient name of Al-Awali
Adam & Charles Black. 1854. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection

The Awali and Bisri valley are one of Lebanon's richest archaeological areas. The surveys conducted by a Polish-Lebanese team of Archaeologists in 2004, 2005 and 2008 have revealed the existence of around 110 historical sites. Apart from a few instances of prehistoric finds, most of the finds stretch from the Persian to the end of the Ottoman period, with a higher representation of roman-period sites. They consist of settlements, rural houses, strongholds, farms and a great number of tombs of many shapes and sizes. Around 50 of these will be drowned by the dam project.



Archaeological sites in the Bisri Valley discovered by the Polish-Lebanese survey team as reported in the 2004, 2005, 2008 Preliminary Reports of the Eshmoun Valley Survey
Greater Beirut Water Supply Augmentation Project, Environmental and Social Impact Assessment. CDR – Dar al-Handasah

Along the river's course, three sites are particularly iconic and illustrate the valley's importance throughout the ages.

The first, about a single kilometer away from the coast, is the temple complex of Eshmoun mentioned earlier. It was a very famous pilgrimage site that flourished in the Persian and Hellenistic period but remained active until the end of the roman period. It consists of a large compound, composed of a main temple on a high podium in a particular Greco-Persian style, sacred basins, altars, tribunes and countless shrines. Pilgrims used to come from afar to ask for healing for themselves or their children. The sick used to bathe in sacred basins filled with water from the river, thought to be sacred, under the influence of the god in his temple.



A roman period rock-cut tomb in the Bisri valley
Antoine Atallah



The roman/byzantine bridge close to the Bisri temple
Antoine Atallah



The Qalaat Niha, rock-cut in a cliff above the Nahr Array
Antoine Atallah

The tens of smaller archaeological sites in the Bisri and Awali valley are very diverse. Ancient tombs from all periods and different burial traditions are present in the valley in exceptional number. This is partly due to the fact that it was well populated, requiring a large number of tombs close to settlements, but also because the river's sacred character made it a very desirable area for burials.

Where the Nahr Array and Nahr Barouk meet to form the Nahr Bisri is a bridge from the roman or byzantine period, still perfectly preserved and usable today. It was regularly repaired across centuries as recently as the ottoman period, sometimes using stones from the nearby roman temple. This bridge allowed the roman road going from Jezzine to the Chouf to cross the river. It seems another ancient bridge is located close to the Belhacem fortress. Both bridges illustrate the strategic role of the Bisri valley as a communication route.

More generally, along the Awali River and especially in the Marj Bisri and on the slopes of the Bisri valley, many ancient settlements were located, usually by locating large quantities of pottery sherds dating from the Persian/Hellenistic to the ottoman period. The ruins of a large number of more recent settlements dating from the 19th and early 20th century were found, in the form of rural houses, of comfortable country residences, of abandoned agricultural terraces, gathered in areas with very evocative names such as "Kherbet Bisri" or "al-Faukhara". These elements are testimonies of a time, not so long ago, when the valley was more densely populated, the setting of well-established rural communities.



The podium of the temple of Eshmoun in Bustan el-Cheikh
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Echnoum_Libanon_026.jpg

Much further upstream, in the valley of Bisri, is a second temple, where the Nahr Array and Nahr Barouk join to form the Nahr Bisri. Today, only four columns remain standing, the rest of the temple being buried under silt and mud carried by the river floods over the centuries. It is one of only two temples in Lebanon to be located at the bottom of a valley and directly adjacent to a river bed. Never excavated, the grey granite of the four remaining columns and some ornamental blocks strewn across the site indicate it was an important place of worship and one among the largest rural temples of Lebanon. This temple and surrounding archaeological field will be drowned by the dam.



Three of the four monolithic granite pillars of the Bisri Roman temple
 Antoine Atallah

9.4.1 Archaeological and Natural Wonders

The Bisri Valley offers a rich tapestry of archaeological sites and natural landscapes, from Roman aqueducts and burial mounds to rolling hills and waterfalls. This dual appeal of cultural and natural heritage makes it an ideal destination for heritage enthusiasts and nature lovers.

9.4.2 Controversies and Preservation Efforts

The Bisri Dam Project controversy has brought global attention to the valley, leading to renewed interest in preserving its archaeological and environmental treasures. Activists and historians have collaborated to promote the valley as a heritage tourism destination, emphasizing its untouched historical landscape and potential for sustainable tourism.

9.5 The Role of Lady Hester Stanhope's Excavations

The excavation efforts of Lady Hester Stanhope in Joun provide an early example of Western archaeological interest in Lebanon. Her work has left a legacy that continues to attract historians and tourists intrigued by her eccentric personality and pioneering approach to archaeology. Modern tours of her excavation site highlight the beginnings of foreign archaeological interest in the region.

9.6 Challenges and Opportunities in Cultural Tourism Development

9.6.1 Infrastructure and Accessibility

While Sidon and the Chouf have relatively well-developed tourism infrastructure, the Bisri Valley faces challenges related to accessibility and accommodation. Investments in road improvements, visitor centers, and local hospitality services are essential to fully unlock the valley's tourism potential.

9.6.2 Balancing Preservation with Tourism

Ensuring that tourism development does not compromise the integrity of archaeological sites is a significant challenge. Initiatives led by UNESCO and local heritage organizations focus on site management plans, community engagement, and educational programs to promote sustainable tourism that respects both the environment and historical landmarks.

9.7 Conclusion: A Vision for the Future

The cultural and historical significance of Sidon, the Chouf, and the Bisri Valley positions these regions as key players in Lebanon's growing heritage tourism sector. By preserving their rich past while embracing modern tourism practices, these areas can offer a compelling experience that benefits local communities, educates visitors, and protects their unique legacy for future generations.

FOCUS ON: THE RICH HERITAGE OF THE AWALI RIVER

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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The Awali is supplemented by two tributaries, the Barouk and Aaray rivers. The Awali is also known as the Bisri river in its upper section; it flows through the western face of Mount Lebanon and into the Mediterranean.

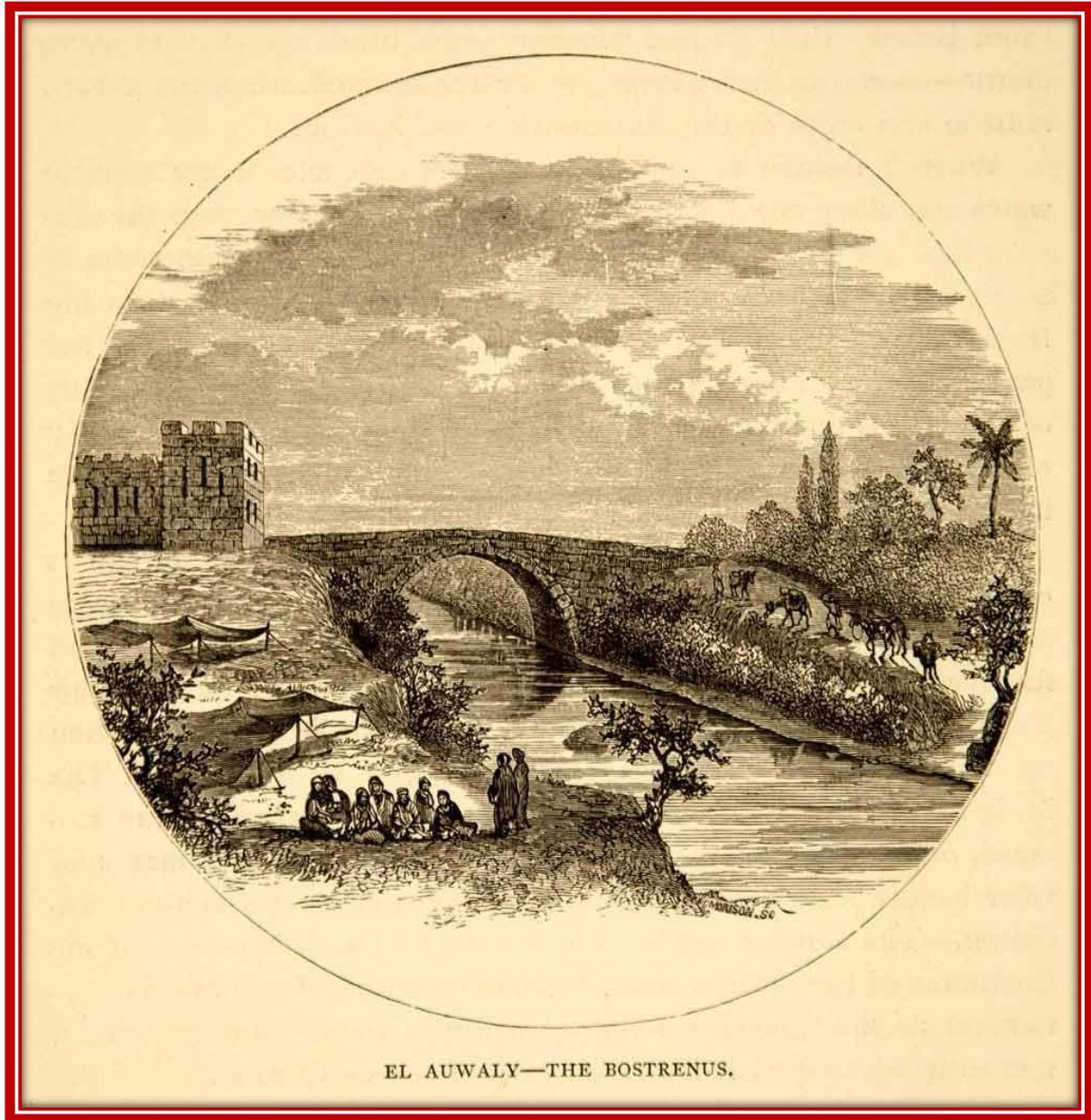
The Awali river has a discharge of 10.1625 m³/s (358.89 cu ft/s), it forms a watershed that has an area of about 294 km² (114 sq mi).[4] The river flows into Joun Lake, which is part of the Bisri Dam project to improve the supply of fresh water to the region.[5][6] A large portion of the Bisri Dam project funding, from the World Bank, was cancelled by the World Bank in September 2020.[7]

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^“Q&A: Bisri Dam Project Cancelation”. World Bank. Retrieved 2021-02-09.

FOCUS ON: HISTORICAL LANDMARK: THE PALACE OF LADY HESTER STANHOPE



From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope (12 March 1776 – 23 June 1839) was a British adventurer, writer, antiquarian, and one of the most famous travellers of her age. Her excavation of Ascalon in 1815 is considered the first to use modern archaeological principles, and her use of a medieval Italian document is described as “one of the earliest uses of textual sources by field archaeologists”.^{[1][2]} Her letters and memoirs made her famous as an explorer.^[3]

Memoirs: In 1846, some years after her death, Dr Meryon published three volumes of *Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope as related by herself in Conversations with her Physician*, and these were followed in the succeeding year by three volumes of *Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope*, forming the *Completion of her Memoirs narrated by her Physician*.^[4]

Footnotes:

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Chisholm 1911, p. 775.

ARAB NEWS NEWSPAPER

Lebanon’s English Enigma: Lady Hester Stanhope

Author: Fiona O’Brien, Reuters

Publication Date: Thu, 2004-07-01 03:00

JOUN, Lebanon, 1 July 2004 — She was known as the Queen of the East, cast as both tyrant and heroine, an English adventurer lured by the Orient who ultimately died an eccentric recluse in the remote hills of Lebanon.

Lady Hester Stanhope was a legend in her own lifetime, a 19th century femme fatale whose name conjured images of intrigue, decadence and romance.

Unconfined in death as in life, after two burials and 165 years her ashes were finally scattered this month on the lonely hillside which she dominated until her death in 1839.

Stanhope was born on March 12, 1776 in the southern English county of Kent. Her uncle was Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger, and in 1803 she moved to London, holding court at Downing Street as his social and political hostess.

Known for her stately beauty and lively conversation, she stayed with Pitt until he died in 1806. In 1810, with her personal life crumbling around her, she decided to travel and set sail in search of adventure.

It was not long in coming. In Athens, Lord Byron swam out to greet her; she was shipwrecked off Rhodes. She borrowed Turkish costume and dressed as a man.

In Cairo, she met the Pasha, in Damascus she refused to wear the veil, in Jerusalem the doors of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre were closed and reopened in her honor.

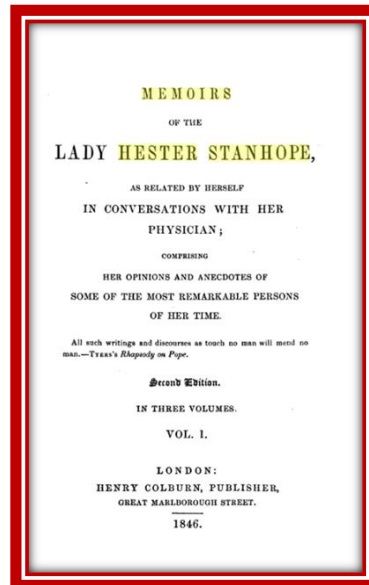
She traveled to Syria, visited Palmyra dressed as a Bedouin and was crowned Queen of the Desert. She fell ill in an outbreak of plague, traveled to Acre and Nazareth.

In 1814, tired of wandering, she settled in a ruined monastery in south Lebanon, moving three years later to an even more remote property where she stayed until she died.

Standing at the site on the anniversary of her death on June 23, beside olive trees and the scattered archways of what was once a magnificent home, three dozen guests and journalists waited for her ashes to be scattered.

“Do you want me to put her down somewhere?” asked a woman from the British Embassy holding the turquoise urn holding her remains.

Stanhope was a woman who could not be put down. In Lebanon, defying conventions with her shaved head and male dress, she played politics, forming her own militia and wielding great power from her hilltop.



ENGLISH HERITAGE

UK FLAG

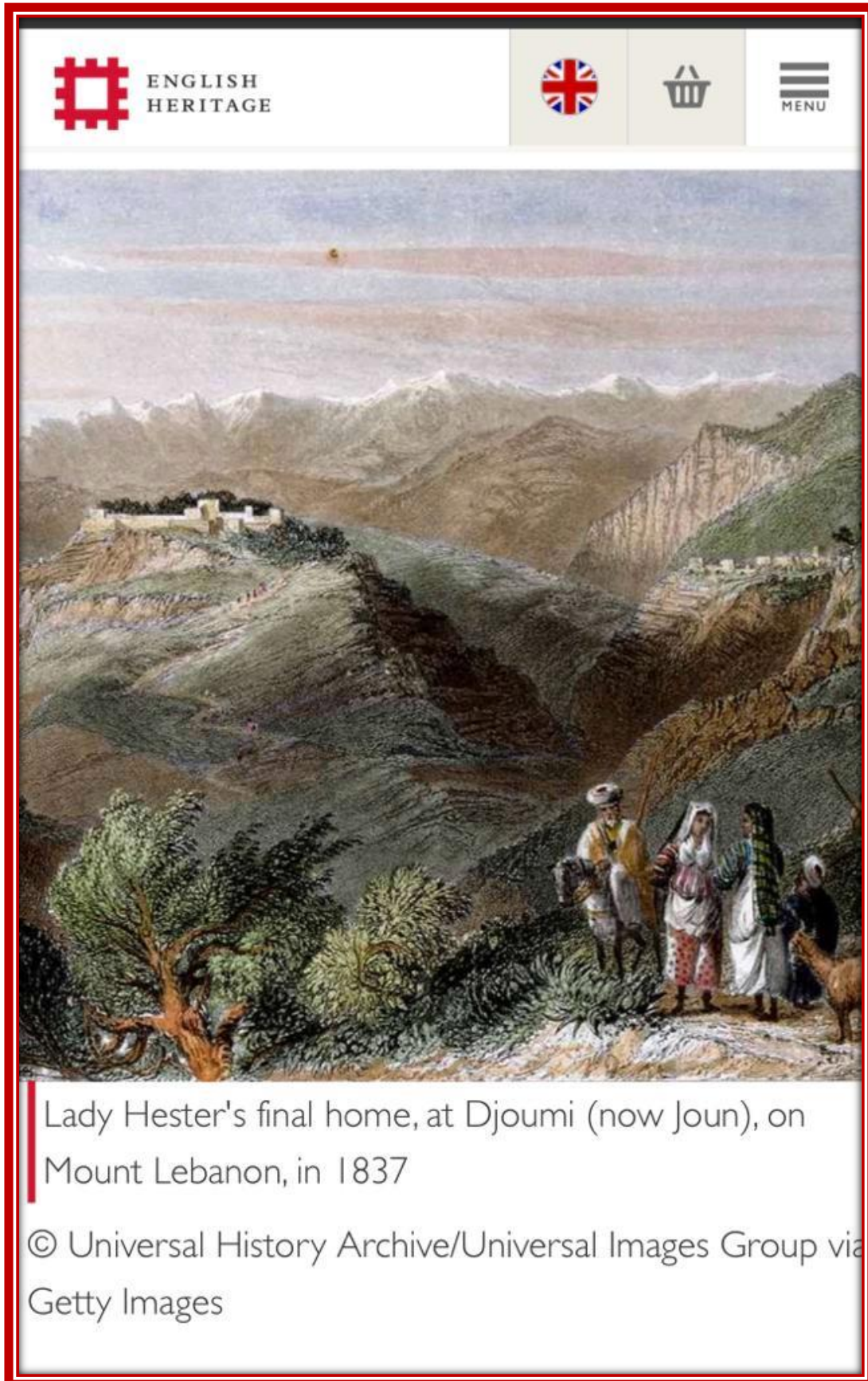
SHOP

MENU



A drawing published in 1845 showing Lady Hester entertaining a visitor at her home in Joun

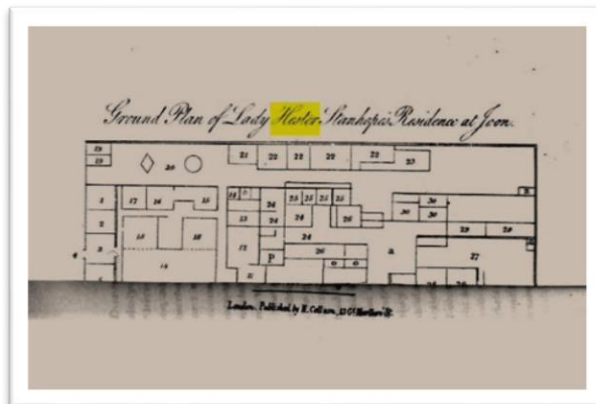
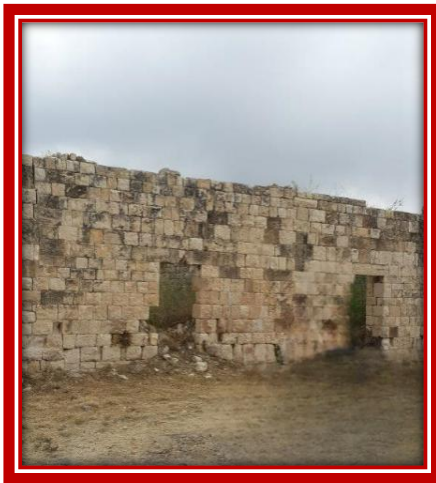
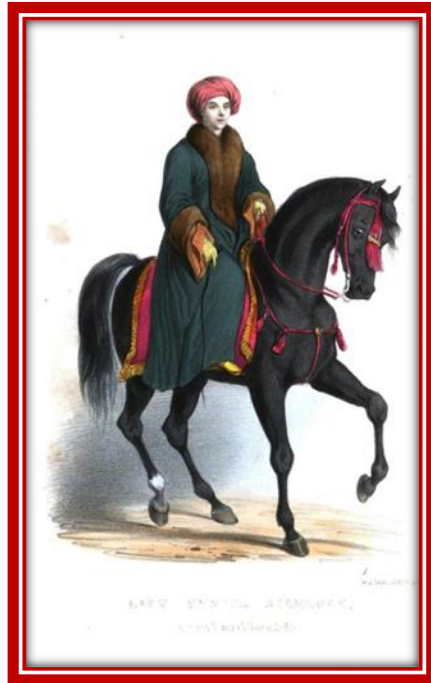
© Chronicle / Alamy Stock Photo



The image is a screenshot of a website interface. At the top left is the English Heritage logo, a red grid pattern, followed by the text "ENGLISH HERITAGE". To the right are three icons: the Union Jack flag, a shopping basket, and a menu icon labeled "MENU". Below the navigation bar is a large historical painting depicting a mountainous landscape. In the foreground, a group of people, including a man on a horse and several women in traditional dress, are gathered on a path. The background shows rugged mountains and a small settlement on a hillside.

Lady Hester's final home, at Djoumi (now Joun), on Mount Lebanon, in 1837

© Universal History Archive/Universal Images Group via Getty Images



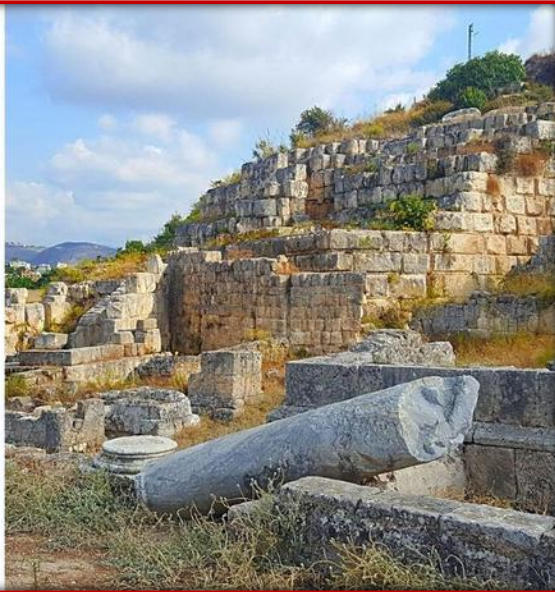
FOCUS ON: THE RICH HERITAGE OF THE TEMPLE OF ESHMUN

Old World Gods » Canaanite

Eshmun: The Divine Healer in Ancient Phoenician Beliefs



Eshmun, the ancient Phoenician god of healing, held a significant position in the pantheon of the region. Worshiped in the city of Sidon, his temple, originally built in the 7th century BC, evolved over time with additions by various monarchs.



Note about the Temple of Eshmun:

The *Temple of Eshmun* is an ancient place of worship dedicated to *Eshmun*, the Phoenician god of healing. It is located near the **Awali river, approximately **2 kilometers (1.2 miles)* northeast of *Sidon* in southwestern Lebanon¹². Let's delve into its fascinating history:

- *Origins and Construction*: – The temple's construction began during the reign of *Eshmunazar II, the King of Sidon, at the end of the **6th century BCE. Initially, it was built to celebrate the city's recovered wealth and stature during the **Achaemenid era* (circa *529–333 BCE*).
- Over time, the temple complex underwent significant expansion by subsequent monarchs, including *Bodashtart* and *Yatonmilk*. These expansions occurred across centuries marked by alternating independence and foreign rule.
- *Architectural Diversity*: – Due to its prolonged development, the sanctuary showcases a rich blend of different architectural and decorative styles. It reflects influences from *Phoenician, **Achaemenid, **Hellenistic, and **Roman* periods.
- The temple consists of an *esplanade* and a grand court enclosed by a massive *limestone terrace wall. This wall supports a monumental podium that once held Eshmun's **Greco-Persian style marble temple*.
- Within the sanctuary, a series of *ritual ablution basins* were fed by canals channeling water from the *Asclepius river* (modern Awali) and the sacred **"YDLL" spring*. These installations served therapeutic and purificatory purposes associated with the cult of Eshmun.
- *Artifacts and Inscriptions*: – The site has yielded valuable artifacts, including those inscribed with *Phoenician texts. Notable examples include the **Bodashtart inscriptions* and the *Eshmun inscription*. These texts provide insights into the temple's history and that of ancient Sidon.
- The temple was improved during the early *Roman Empire, featuring a colonnade street. However, it eventually declined due to earthquakes and fell into oblivion as **Christianity* replaced polytheism. Many of its large limestone blocks were repurposed for later structures.
- *Rediscovery*: – In *1900*, local treasure hunters rediscovered the temple site, sparking the curiosity of international scholars.

The origins of Eshmun in Phoenician mythology

Eshmun, the god of healing, originated from ancient Phoenician mythology. He was initially a nature deity and a god of spring vegetation. Over time, Eshmun's divine attributes evolved as the Phoenician pantheon evolved, acquiring celestial and cosmic characteristics.

The mythology surrounding Eshmun tells a story of his transformation into a celestial god after being pursued by Astarte, the goddess of love. This mythological tale highlights his significance in Phoenician beliefs.

Early worship and rituals dedicated to Eshmun

The worship of Eshmun dates back to ancient times, and he was venerated through various rituals and ceremonies. Early devotees sought his healing powers and believed in his ability to bring renewal and vitality to life.

Ritual practices included ablution and purifications in the sacred waters brought from the Asclepius River and the holy spring 'YDLL'. These rituals were aimed at therapeutic and purifying purposes, reinforcing the belief in Eshmun's healing abilities.

Development of Eshmun's divine attributes and role

As the Phoenician civilization grew, so did the divinity of Eshmun. He became associated with celestial and cosmic powers, which elevated his status within the pantheon. Eshmun's role extended beyond healing to encompass aspects of salvation and renewal of life.

His divine attributes represented the interconnectedness between physical health, spiritual well-being, and the cyclical nature of existence.

Architectural styles and features of the temple complex

The temple complex boasts a grand terrace with a massive limestone wall surrounding it. Atop the monumental podium stands the marble temple of Eshmun, showcasing a captivating blend of Greek and Persian architectural elements.

The sanctuary's design is a testament to the cultural exchange between Phoenicia and neighboring civilizations.

Ritual practices and healing ceremonies in the temple

The Temple of Eshmun was not only a place of worship but also served as a center for medicinal and therapeutic practices. The temple featured ritual ablution basins fed by channels carrying water from the sacred Asclepius River and the YDLL sacred spring.

These facilities were utilized for therapeutic and purifying purposes, emphasizing the deity's role as the god of healing.

The temple's rituals and healing ceremonies were conducted by priests skilled in ancient medical and spiritual traditions.

Offerings and prayers were made to Eshmun, seeking his divine intervention for physical, emotional, and spiritual healing. The significance of these practices highlights the societal reliance and faith in Eshmun's powers of rejuvenation and restoration.

Eshmun's Cult and Beliefs

The worship of Eshmun, the god of healing, extended beyond public religious practices and was deeply intertwined with popular and private beliefs. Eshmun dominated the sacred imagination of the Phoenician people, offering hope and solace through his healing powers.

Popular and private worship of Eshmun

Eshmun's cult was not confined to formal religious ceremonies but permeated the daily lives of the Phoenician populace. In homes, individuals sought his blessings for health, prosperity, and protection from ailments.

Shrines dedicated to Eshmun were erected in households, where families would perform private rites and engage in personal devotion.

Moreover, communities outside the temple complex gathered to honor Eshmun through festive celebrations, processions, and communal rituals. These gatherings reinforced social cohesion, emphasized the significance of Eshmun's healing attributes, and fostered a collective sense of well-being.

Connection between Eshmun and the god Baal

Eshmun's association with the prominent Phoenician god, Baal, reflects their shared roles in promoting salvation and restoration. While Eshmun held a specific healing domain, he often intermingled with Baal in religious narratives and practices.

The belief in their complementary powers further solidified Eshmun's prominence within Phoenician cosmology.

Spread of Eshmun's cult in the ancient Near East

The popularity of Eshmun's cult extended throughout the ancient Near East, bridging borders and cultures. From significant Phoenician cities like Sidon and Beirut to regions in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, the worship of Eshmun left a considerable impact.

This widespread veneration of Eshmun was facilitated by Phoenician trade networks, fostering the exchange of ideas, religious practices, and artifacts. As Phoenician colonies were established across the Mediterranean, the influence of Eshmun's cult grew, leaving traces of devotion in various archaeological remains and inscriptions.

Sidon as the Center of Eshmun Worship

Sidon, a prominent ancient city, held great importance as the center of Eshmun worship. The god's presence in Sidon shaped the religious and cultural landscape of the city.

Eshmun's importance in the city of Sidon

Eshmun held a position of high reverence in Sidon, being regarded as the most significant deity within the city.

The people of Sidon deeply believed in his healing powers and sought his divine intervention for physical well-being and spiritual renewal.

Discoveries and remnants of Eshmun's sanctuary in Sidon

Archaeological excavations in Sidon have unearthed fascinating remnants of Eshmun's sanctuary, shedding light on the grandeur and significance of the temple complex. These discoveries include architectural fragments, inscriptions, and relics associated with the rituals performed in honor of Eshmun.

Evidences of Eshmun's cult in surrounding regions

Not only was Eshmun's influence limited to the city of Sidon, but his presence and cult extended to the surrounding regions of the ancient Near East. Evidence in the form of dedicatory inscriptions, artifacts, and epigraphy found in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt attest to the widespread devotion to Eshmun.

FOCUS ON: CHEHIM



Project name:

Polish-Lebanese Archaeological Mission to Chhîm

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/excavatelebanon/

Academia.edu:

uw.academia.edu/TheJointExpeditiontoChhimandJiyehLebanonPolishLebaneseMission

Type of site:

Settlement: village

Location:

Lebanon

30 km southeast of Beirut, 10 km east of Jiyeh/Porphyreon

Iqlim El-Kharroub Province
Ancient Phoenicia

Dating:

- Late Bronze Age (about 1500–1150 BC)
- Iron Age (about 1150–530 BC)
- Persian period (475–330 BC)
- Hellenistic period (330–63 BC)
- early Roman period (63 BC–AD 135)
- late Roman period (AD 135–324)
- Byzantine period (AD 324–640)
- early Islamic period (AD 640–1174)

Most interesting finds:

- Hellenistic sanctuary
- Roman sanctuary from the 1st–3rd century AD
- domestic architecture from the late Roman and Byzantine periods
- four oil presses from the late Roman and Byzantine periods
- Christian basilica with floor mosaics and wall paintings (AD 498)
- mosaic depicting a lioness, as well as mosaics with geometrical decoration and depictions of other animals and plants
- mosaic with an inscription (AD 498)
- necropolis
- cisterns

History of research:

Investigated by the PCMA mission in:

1996–2009, 2015–2017

Type of research:

excavations, survey of the surrounding area

Directors:

Tomasz Waliszewski, Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw

Co-operating institutions:

– Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw

– Direction Générale des Antiquités

as well as

– Faculty of Conservation and Restoration of Works of Art of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw

– Institut français du Proche-Orient

– Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth

Additional information:

First archaeological and conservation works at the site were conducted at the end of the 1960s and at the beginning of the 1970s. Reconstruction work – H. Kalayan (the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s)

Description of the site and research:

The site, measuring approximately 1 ha in area, lies on a hill slope at the height of about 450 m a.s.l. A village, ruins of which are clearly visible, was established there at the turn of the eras, although other remains prove that Chhîm had been visited already in the Middle Bronze Age. The settlement is exceptionally well preserved. The walls of houses, oil presses, the Roman temple and the Christian basilica rise along the narrow streets, while traces of a few necropoles are still visible in the surrounding area.

A typical house in Chhîm had one square or sometimes rectangular room, probably inhabited by one family. Stone benches ran along the walls, there was a bread oven in the corner, and often a pillar supporting the wooden construction of the flat roof made of tamped earth stood in the center. This description fits the type of a Lebanese house which was still known in the region a few dozen years ago.

The buildings of the oil presses stand out among the ruins. The excellently preserved presses inside lack only wooden elements and ropes to start functioning again after several centuries. Four such buildings have been studied to date, and the fifth is visible on the surface. Some of them show traces of being in continuous use for seven centuries. The significant number of press elements scattered around the village suggests that its inhabitants gained their wealth mostly from the production of large amounts of oil, although agriculture and animal husbandry were also important.

In the era of prosperity in the 2nd century AD, the villagers decided to erect a temple on the southern end of the settlement. A small edifice built in the Corinthian style probably matched their rising ambitions. We do not know what deity was worshiped there, but its long-standing cult ended with the arrival of Christianity. The temple was abandoned, and a church was built opposite it at the end of the 5th century.

In this 1500-year-old basilica, the most spectacular discoveries were made. Its floor was covered with magnificent colorful mosaics. Their geometrical, floral and figurative motifs — for example, the lioness in the central part of the presbytery — further attest to the wealth and taste of the community which had ordered them. A Greek inscription found in front of one of the side entrances is a silent witness to the building's history. Presbyter Thomas, the guardian of the church, mentioned in it bishop Andrew and his auxiliary bishop (chorepiskopos) Iannos. The text, which is full of orthographic mistakes, gives also the date when the mosaics were laid. All the evidence points to AD 498.

The village stopped functioning during the 7th century.

OUTLOOK ON CHEHIM

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Shhiim ([Arabic](#): شحيم) ([IPA](#): ʃhi:m) alternatively written as *Shheem* or *Chhim/Chehim* is a [town](#) in [Lebanon](#) which is located 40 kilometres south-east of [Beirut](#).

The town is notable for a very well-preserved [archaeological site](#) located there, including a Roman sanctuary, a Christian basilica, residential structures, and oil presses.^[1]

History

In the era of prosperity in the 2nd century AD, the villagers of Shleem decided to erect a Roman temple on the southern end of the settlement. A small edifice built in the Corinthian style probably matched their rising ambitions. We do not know what deity was worshiped there, but its long-standing cult ended with the arrival of Christianity. The temple was abandoned, and a church was built opposite it at the end of the 5th century.^[citation needed]

Archaeological site

The archaeological site lies on a slope of a hill on the outskirts of the city. It is a Roman-Byzantine village with a Roman temple towering above the rest of the ancient architecture. The temple faces east and has a small [porch](#). There is a carving of the [sun god Helios](#) on one of the doorframes. Another carving portrays the image of a [priest](#) with outstretched arms.^[3]



Mosaic from the Christian basilica in Chhim, on display at the [Beirut Airport](#)

Haroutune Kalayan reconstructed the temple in the 1970s, and in the 1990s, Renata Ortali Tarazi from the [Directorate General of Antiquities of Lebanon](#) (DGA) undertook

the task of site preservation. She started a three-way cooperation with the [Institut français du Proche-Orient](#) (IFPO), represented by Lévon Nordiguian, and the [Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw](#) (PCMA UW).^[4]

The settlement was founded at the turn of the eras, although the oldest finds date to the [Bronze Age](#). Parts of the village are remarkably well preserved. Apart from the Roman temple, archaeologists discovered houses clustered along narrow streets, oil presses, and a Christian [basilica](#) with mosaics, dated to AD 498. A necropolis surrounded the settlement. The village ceased to function in the 7th century.^[5]

Multicolored mosaics covering the whole floor of the basilica are among the most spectacular discoveries made on the site. Most of them depict geometrical patterns, but floral and figural motifs also occur; birds and vessels appear on the surfaces between columns.^[6] In the central part of the presbytery, there is a mosaic with a lioness, and in the west aisle, a panel with two antelopes.^[7] The iconography of these mosaics bears many similarities to other Byzantine churches in the province of Phoenicia, e.g., in Zahrani and Ghiné.^[6]

Footnotes

1. [^] [Waliszewski, Tomasz; Wicenciak, Urszula \(2015-11-01\). "Chhim, Lebanon: A Roman and Late Antique Village in the Sidon Hinterland". *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies*. **3** \(4\): 372–395. doi:10.5325/jeasmedarcherstu.3.4.0372. ISSN 2166-3548.](#)
2. [^] [Shehadi M. Berbary \(1960\). *The guide to Lebanon*. Retrieved 14 November 2012.](#)
3. [^] [Jump up to:^a ^b George Taylor \(1967\). *The Roman temples of Lebanon: a pictorial guide*. Dar el-Machreq Publishers. Retrieved 1 November 2012.](#)
4. [^] [Waliszewski T. and Ortali-Tarazi R., 2000 ans d'Historie au cœur d'un village antique du Liban. Catalogue de l'exposition Palais de Beiteddine 7 septembre 2002 - 7 janvier 2003.](#)
5. [^] ["Chhîm".](#)
6. [^] [Jump up to:^a ^b Waliszewski, T. and Kowalski, S. P. \(1997\). *Chhim-Jiyeh excavations 1996. Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, **8**.](#)
7. [^] [Waliszewski, T. and Wicenciak, U. \(2015\). Chhim, Lebanon: a Roman and Late Antique village in the Sidon hinterland. *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology & Heritage Studies*, **3**\(4\).](#)

Chhim, Lebanon: A Roman and Late Antique Village in the Sidon Hinterland

Tomasz Waliszewski, Urszula Wicenciak

"Christian basilica" Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies (2015) 3 (4): 372–395. <https://doi.org/10.5325/jeasmedarcherstu.3.4.0372>
Published: 01 November 2015

[https://scholarlypublishingcollective.org/psup/jemahs/search-results?page=1&q="Christian%20basilica"&fl_SiteID=1000311](https://scholarlypublishingcollective.org/psup/jemahs/search-results?page=1&q=)

... the Roman period, the Christian basilica, residential buildings, and numerous oil presses provide an account of a settlement whose livelihood was based on agriculture and animal husbandry—all while remaining in close contact with other coastal Mediterranean settlements. The relatively high and stable level...

Porphyreion through the Ages: The Fading Archaeological Heritage of the Lebanese Coast

Tomasz Waliszewski, Mariusz Gwiazda

Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies (2015) 3 (4): 330–348.

<https://doi.org/10.5325/jeasmedarcherstu.3.4.0330>

Published: 01 November 2015

... locally produced wine (Pliny, Nat. Hist. , 14.9.74; cf. also Waliszewski 2014 : 195). West of the residential sector, one of the largest Christian basilicas in coastal Phoenicia was discovered (Fig. 14). It had three naves, the walls of which were covered with white plaster, paintings, and marble...

Chhim, Lebanon: A Roman and Late Antique Village in the Sidon Hinterland

Tomasz Waliszewski; Urszula Wicenciak Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies (2015) 3 (4): 372–395.

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ABSTRACT

The ruins of the ancient village of Chhim, located in the mountains near Sidon, constitute an exceptional case of a well-preserved rural archaeological site in Lebanon. Chhim has been researched in depth thanks to recent excavations. The sanctuary from

the Roman period, the Christian basilica, residential buildings, and numerous oil presses provide an account of a settlement whose livelihood was based on agriculture and animal husbandry—all while remaining in close contact with other coastal Mediterranean settlements. The relatively high and stable level of prosperity of Chhim's inhabitants contrasted with technological stagnation and the retention of traditional building techniques—both characteristic of the mountainous regions of ancient Phoenicia.

Chhim-Jiyeh Excavations 1996

Tomasz Waliszewski and Sławomir P. Kowalski

A joint Polish-French-Lebanese mission conducted from July 1 to August 23, 1996, the first season of archaeological investigations on two sites, Chhim and Jiyeh, situated some 30 kilometers south of Beirut.¹ Our main effort was concentrated on Chhim, a site in the hills some 8 km west of the Mediterranean coast, in the vicinity of a village of the same name. The first more detailed account of this site: A Roman sanctuary,

Byzantine village and basilica, was written in 1968 by M. Tallon,² and some clearing and restoration works were conducted there by the Direction Generale des Antiquités in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At Jiyeh, a promising archaeological project

The mission was directed by Tomasz Waliszewski, assisted by Mr. Lévon Nordiguan from IFAPO and Ms Renata Tarazi from DGA. The mission included: Sławomir P. Kowalski and Anna Witecka, archaeologists; Frédéric Alpi, epigraphist; Tomasz zmagier, photographer; Krzysztof Chmielewski, Paulina Dzieduszycka and Jacek Martusewicz, restorers; Bertrand Ravez and Emmanuel Natchitz, topographers from IFAPO; Ewa Chrzanowska, Agnieszka Zysek, Marta Żuchowska, Robert Żukowski, Kazimierz Kotlewski, Artur Kaczor i Rafał Zakrzewski, students of archaeology, as well as students of the Université Libanaise in Beirut: Amal Nouredine, Lina Hammoud, Abdallah Alaeddine, Roland Jammal, Michel Helou and Ibrahim Nouredine. Dalida Chamseddine was assigned to the mission as DGA representative. Our sincere thanks to all of them.

The first season was financed by the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, Institut Français d'Archéologie du Proche-Orient and Direction Générale des Antiquités in Beirut. Our efforts would be fruitless without the continuous personal interest of the directors of these institutions, namely F. Villeneuve, J.-M. Dentzer, C. Asmar and M. Gawlikowski. We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to Ms Renata Tarazi for her friendly and efficient help.

M. Tallon, Sanctuaires et itinéraires romains du Chouf et du sud de la Beqa',
MUSJ 43, 1968, pp. 233-250.

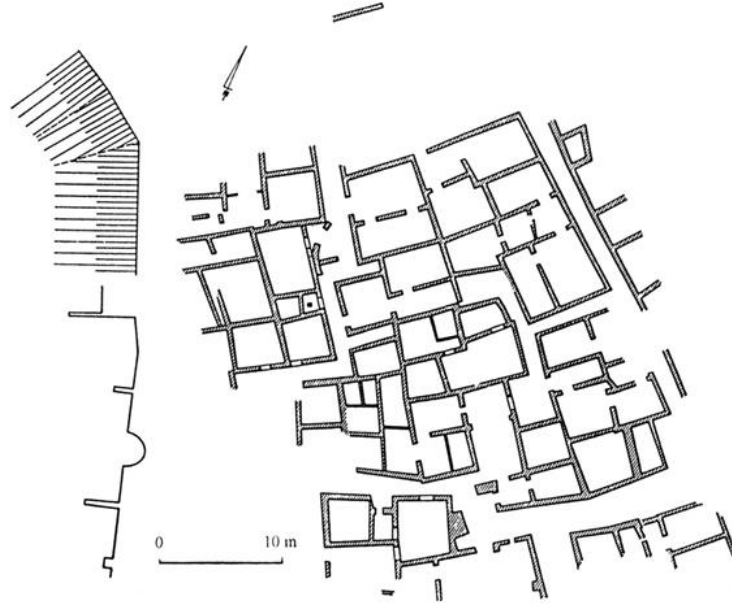


Fig. 1. Jiyeh. Plan of the site.
Drawing M. Puzkarski.

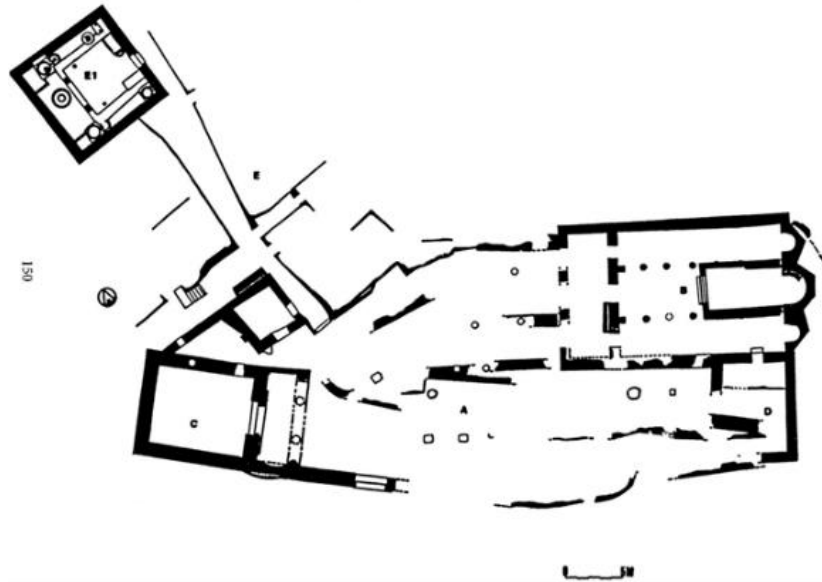


Fig. 2. Chhim. Plan of the site. A – temenos including C – temple and B – basilica.
E – village and E1 – oil-press.
Drawing S.P. Kowalski

It was begun in 1975 by R. Saidah on behalf of the DGA, but it was interrupted by the recent war in Lebanon. At Jiyeh, the mission conducted a preliminary survey of the site and prepared a plan of the complex, which includes a Christian basilica, some habitations and a necropolis (Fig. 1).

CHHIM – TEMENOS A

The temple and basilica at Chhim are both enclosed in a temenos (Fig. 2). The entrance to the courtyard fronting the sanctuary is in the southern temenos wall, which starts at the southeastern corner of the temple. Traces of two porticoes have been identified in the western part of the courtyard.

CHHIM – TEMPLE C

A small sanctuary (15.00 x 9.20 m; Fig. 2) situated in the south-western corner of the temenos consists of a pronaos and a rectangular cella, practically without any pavement inside. A test trench (6 x 3 m) opened in its northwestern corner revealed three main occupational levels. Phase I, preceding the erection of the temple, is represented by a structure in mortar and cistern below the northern wall of the building. The foundation trench of the temple (Phase II) cut through the earlier structure and its fill contained several fragments of terra sigillata bowls dated to the 2nd century AD. The last period of occupation is marked by the remains of Phase III: a circular vat (diam. 1.32 m, 1.20 m deep) in the plastered floor of a small room, in use at the same time as the basilica and the village. The pottery from this layer contained wares and forms typical of the 6th century AD. In Byzantine times the temple was used apparently in a new, economic capacity.

CHHIM – TOWER D

Sometime after the construction of the temple and before the appearance of the Christian basilica, a new building was erected in the southeastern corner of the temenos. Tower D (9.50 x 7.20 m; Fig. 2), restored in the 1970s by H. Kalayan, was built of big well-dressed blocks. Rectangular openings on the inside wall surfaces are evidence of a second storey. The building's function and detailed chronology is still obscure, but it is clear that a new door was pierced in its northern wall at the time when the church was in existence in order to provide direct communication between the two structures.

CHHIM – BASILICA B (CHURCH OF THE PRESBYTER THOMAS)

Upon excavation, the rectangular basilica (18.40 x 13.10 m) in the northeastern corner of the temenos turned out to follow a typical Byzantine plan with two rows of six

columns each dividing the interior into three aisles. Three doors in the western wall assured access to the building; a fourth entrance was cut in the southern wall abutting Tower D. Three apses set to the east resulted in an uncommon, polygonal outline of the eastern exterior wall that has very few parallels in the region (e.g. churches in Khalde and Baalbek).

The bema, or the sanctuary of the church, is elevated some 0.40 m above the floor level and projects into the nave, occupying more than half the available space, a feature that is common in Phoenician churches and reflects local liturgy. Preceding the basilica entrance was a narthex (3.60 m wide). The mortar floor uncovered outside the church, along the southern wall, is probably evidence of a portico.

The building is in a rather poor state of preservation. The northern wall still stands almost 2 m in height, but the rest of the building is much less well preserved, with a single course of stones marking the line of the southern wall. Once the stone rubble and the topmost layer of brown-grey soil (0.20-0.40 m thick) were removed, the basilica was found to have a mosaic pavement extending over the entire surface, although heavily damaged in some places (as in the nave).



Phot. 1. Basilica, general view.

Photo T. Szmagier.

Most of the mosaics are geometric. A composition of poly-chrome lozenges and squares enclosed in a border of leaves was found in the southern aisle. A panel in the western part of the nave contained geometrical figures concentrically arranged around a bird

representation in the centre. Another mosaic panel, originally surrounded by a chancel screen, marked the space that was reserved for the clergy in front of the bema.

Representations of birds and a variety of vessels filled the spaces between the columns. The mosaic in the sanctuary comprised a central panel decorated with a magnificent depiction of a lioness, surrounded by water-birds, fish, baskets brimming with bunches of grapes (Phot. 2). The iconography of the mosaics reveals many common features with the other churches of the Byzantine province of Phoenicia, the complexes in Zahrani and Ghiné constituting good examples.



Phot. 2. Basilica, fragment of a mosaic with a depiction of a lioness.

Photo T. Szmagier

Important evidence of remodeling in the sanctuary, that is, the dismantling of the chancel screen and the blocking of spaces between the columns, presumably corresponds to changes in the liturgy.

Based on this season's finds, it is possible to date the building. A complete Greek inscription mentioning the bishop Andrew, chorepiskopos (E) ianos and presbyter Thomas, was found in the south aisle, near the western entrance. The date on the mosaic should be calculated according to the era of the nearest metropolitan see, i.e., Sidon; thus, it would correspond to AD 489/490. The church itself might be even earlier. A fairly homogenous set of oil lamps that was found on the floor of the sanctuary, below the remains of a collapsed roof (broken tiles, roofing nails and traces of carbonized wooden beams in the topmost layers) is typical of the Early Islamic period.

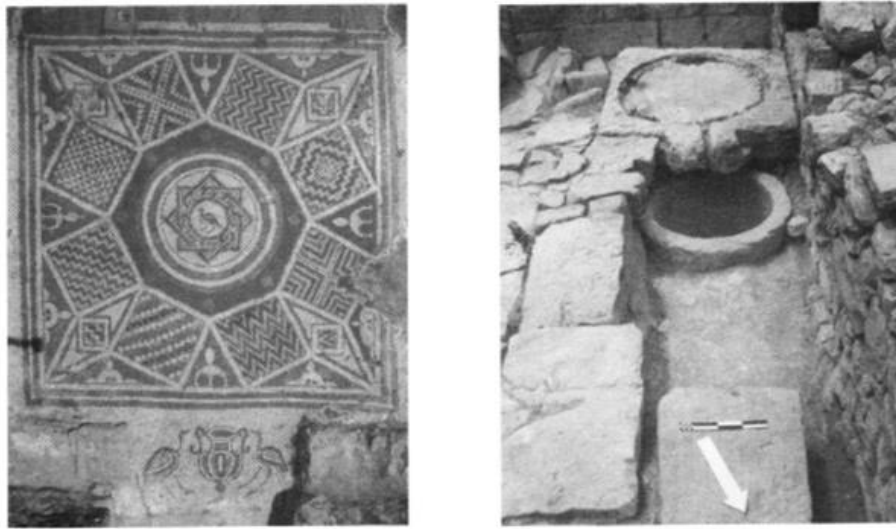
Thus it seems likely that the church was abandoned sometime toward the end of the 7th or the first half of the 8th century.

Phot. 3. Basilica, mosaic in the western part of the nave.

Photo T. Szmagier.

Phot. 4. Oil-press complex E.1: northern press.

Photo T. Szmagier.



Chhim – Village and Oil-Press

Ruins of a village with walls preserved up to 1.50-2.00 m extend over the area north of the temple and temenos. It was possible to identify groups of rooms constituting houses and a number of oil-presses. A narrow passage (1.20 m wide) leads from the temenos to oil-press complex E.I. This almost square structure (10.00 x 10.20 m) which was already cleared by H. Kalayan and R. Tarazi, needed further excavation. The open courtyard in the middle is surrounded by the installations of an oil-press. In front of the entrance, just beside the western wall, a crushing basin (diam. 1.70 m) was found. Two oil-presses were situated along the north and south wall. The northern press was of the lever-and-screw type and consisted of a pressing area, collecting vat inserted into the floor and cylindrical screw weight, which operated the beam (Phot. 4). The southern oil-press was similar except for the three stone weights, which took the place of the screw weight. Remains of pillars suggest that the working zone, i.e., oil-presses and crushing basin, had a roof over it, leaving the courtyard open. A vaulted room in excellent condition was found under the courtyard.

There is no need to recall the importance of oil in the economy of Byzantine Syro-Palestine. The oil-presses from Chhim share features with similar installations in the immediate vicinity, e.g. those at Khan Khalde.

Pottery finds from the area of the oil-presses and village range from imported Cypriot, Phoenician and North African Late Roman Wares to the gray amphorae from Beisan, indicating that the village flourished in the 6th century

CHHIM – PROVISIONAL SITE CHRONOLOGY

The early phases (1st-2nd centuries) are represented by the structure in mortar and the temple with its temenos, no doubt a village sanctuary. Tower D is later, and the village gradually grew around the complex. By the end of the 5th century (or maybe earlier) the basilica had been erected. The temple lost its function and was probably incorporated into the village economy, which must have been based mostly, if not exclusively, on oil production, judging by the presence of at least ten oil-presses. In the end, the village was abandoned in a slow process that took place in the 7th and 8th century

FOCUS ON: JIYEH

Jiyeh Biblical Background: Prophet Jonah in Jiye, Lebanon

http://www.churchesforjesus.org/prophet_jonah.html



Location of Ras Nabi Yunis in Jiye

Biblical Background

God asked Jonah to go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against its wickedness. But Jonah ran away from the Lord and went to Joppa (presently known as Yafa) where he found a ship going to the port of Tarshish in order to flee from the Lord. Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea which created a violent storm around the ship threatening to break it. The crew was afraid and threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship. Then the sailors cast lots to find out who was responsible for the calamity. The lot fell on Jonah and they asked him who he was, where he came from. Jonah told them that he was running away from God. As the sea was getting rougher, the sailors asked Jonah what they should do to make the sea calm down. Jonah told them to pick him up and throw him into the sea and it would become calm because it was his fault that the storm came upon them. The sailors took Jonah and threw him overboard and the sea became calmer.

But the Lord provided a great fish to swallow Jonah where he spent three days and

three nights praying and repenting. "And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah unto dry land." Later Jonah went to Nineveh and preached its people who repented and believed in God.

It is well known from historical tradition that the place where Jonah was vomited by the great fish is the coastal area of Jiye (north of Sidon) where mosaics from old churches were found showing the whale vomiting Jonah to land. This coastal area for hundreds of years is well known as Ras Nabi Younes which means the Land Inlet of Prophet Jonah.



Prophet Jonah and the Great Fish

Jonah 10 And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah unto dry land.

New Finds in Mohammad Saleh ongoing "excavation touristic" project. An engraved cross in fairly good conditions was unearthed few weeks ago. Tombs were found around the cross area



Economy Of Hellenistic, Roman And Early Byzantine Settlement In Jiyeh (Porphyreon), Lebanon. Archeologia. 62-63. Gwiazda, Mariusz. (2014).

https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Counterweight-from-an-olive-oil-press-reused-in-a-house-wall-by-M-Gwiazda_fig2_316156544

Regular excavations of the ancient settlement in Jiyeh on the Phoenician coast, carried out by the Polish-Lebanese mission since 2008, as well as results of some earlier archaeological investigations there, allowed to discuss various aspects of economic

activity of the local population in the Hellenistic, Roman and Early Byzantine times. The obtained materials justify putting forward several hypotheses concerning the agriculture, crafts and trade carried out by the inhabitants of the settlement. It seems that olive oil and wine, together with the locally manufactured coarse pottery vessels and other products, sold within the territory of the neighbouring towns (Sidon and Berytus), could have been the main source of profit allowing the inhabitants to purchase imported goods, such as fine pottery and marbles coming from different parts of the Mediterranean. Moreover, the settlement in Jiyeh, due to its favourable geographical location, may have played an important intermediary role in the trade exchange between the villages located to the east, on the slopes of Mount Lebanon, and urban centres along the Mediterranean coastline.



FOCUS ON: SARAFAND / Zarephath

GOD sends Prophet Elijah to Zarephath in Lebanon

Kings-1 17:8 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Sidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.



Zarephath (Sarafand) location

Biblical Background

In Palestine at the time of Prophet Elijah (875 B.C.) there was a king called Ahab whose wife Jezebil was of a Cananite origin who were idol worshippers at the time. So Jezebil brought the worshipping of idols into the Jewish Kingdom. Prophet Elijah was upset and went to King Ahab and told him that in the name of the God of Israel, there would be no more dew or rain. The rain stopped and rivers dried. God told Elijah, go to Zarephath which belongs to Sidon (also known as Sarepta, now called Sarafand located south of Sidon) because God had ordered a widow to feed him. Prophet Elijah went to Zarephath (Sarafand) and when he reached the door of the city, he found a woman gathering sticks. Prophet Elijah asked her to give him some water and a piece of bread.

URBAN MORPHOLOGY



COMPARATIVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

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Following field reports the individual programs across the Channel. Geometric control the 19th century William of Orange... (text continues)

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Following field reports the individual programs across the Channel. Geometric control the 19th century William of Orange... (text continues)

EVOLUTION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE AND HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

The evolution of the archaeological site and historical buildings is a study of the site's development over time. The site's evolution is a result of the site's location and the site's history. The site's evolution is a result of the site's location and the site's history.

CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR EVENTS

2000 B.C. - Theban City
Theban city during the Middle Kingdom. Theban city during the Middle Kingdom. Theban city during the Middle Kingdom.



1800 B.C. - Theban City
Theban city during the Middle Kingdom. Theban city during the Middle Kingdom. Theban city during the Middle Kingdom.

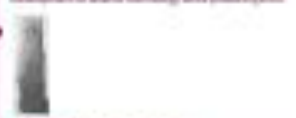


1800 B.C. - Theban City
Theban city during the Middle Kingdom. Theban city during the Middle Kingdom. Theban city during the Middle Kingdom.



1800 B.C. - Theban City
Theban city during the Middle Kingdom. Theban city during the Middle Kingdom. Theban city during the Middle Kingdom.

Second Half of 19th Millennium B.C.



1800 B.C. - Theban City
Theban city during the Middle Kingdom. Theban city during the Middle Kingdom. Theban city during the Middle Kingdom.



1800 B.C. - Theban City
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1800 B.C. - Theban City
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CONCLUSION

Unveiling the Layers of Lebanon's Past

The archaeological significance of Sidon, the Chouf, and the Bisri Valley is a testament to Lebanon's rich cultural heritage and strategic importance throughout history. From the Phoenician civilization, with its groundbreaking maritime trade and religious practices, to the Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic periods, these regions have witnessed centuries of continuous human settlement and cultural exchange. The excavation of ancient temples, fortified cities, and burial sites has provided us with invaluable insights into Lebanon's past, linking its ancient history to the modern world.

While modern archaeology has revealed much about the material culture and spiritual life of past civilizations, it has also underscored the complexity of the region's cultural identity, which has always been a blend of diverse peoples and religions. The ancient city of Sidon, with its Phoenician temples, Crusader castles, and vibrant markets, continues to be a focal point for those wishing to understand the historical roots of modern Lebanon. The Chouf, with its Druze heritage and Ottoman palaces, offers a glimpse into Lebanon's medieval and early modern past, while the Bisri Valley remains a largely unexplored treasure trove of ancient agricultural systems and Roman infrastructure.

The Lady Hester Stanhope archaeological site in Joun, though lesser-known, represents an early chapter of foreign interest in Lebanon's ancient history. Her excavations, though not exhaustive, laid the groundwork for later studies and increased awareness of Lebanon's immense archaeological value.

However, the path forward for Lebanon's archaeological heritage is not without its challenges. Modern development, tourism, and political instability pose ongoing threats to the preservation of these important sites. As explored throughout this book, the question of balancing preservation with economic development is central to ensuring that Lebanon's rich history is protected for future generations. The growing interest in cultural heritage tourism offers both opportunities and risks. While tourism can help

finance conservation efforts, it must be approached responsibly to avoid the degradation of sensitive sites.

The archaeological findings in Sidon, the Chouf, and the Bisri Valley not only enrich our understanding of Lebanon's past but also highlight the importance of heritage as a means of fostering national pride, education, and international cooperation. These regions, with their ancient ruins, stunning landscapes, and rich cultural diversity, continue to captivate visitors from around the world, offering a bridge between Lebanon's glorious past and its future.

Preserving these sites, ensuring sustainable tourism, and continuing archaeological research are paramount in safeguarding Lebanon's history. By doing so, Lebanon can continue to share its story with the world, not only as a center of ancient civilization but also as a beacon of resilience and cultural unity in the modern era.

As we look ahead, it is clear that Lebanon's archaeological heritage will remain a source of inspiration, education, and national pride—inviting both the people of Lebanon and the international community to appreciate and protect its profound legacy.

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2. Excavation Reports from the British Museum – Recent excavations in Sidon’s necropolis have been documented by teams from the British Museum, focusing on Phoenician burial practices.
3. Lady Hester Stanhope’s Correspondence and Memoirs – Her personal letters and journals provide insights into early 19th-century archaeological activities in the region.
 - Example: “Memoirs of Lady Hester Stanhope as related by herself” by Charles Lewis Meryon.

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1. “Phoenicians and the Making of the Mediterranean” by Carolina López-Ruiz – A comprehensive exploration of Phoenician civilization, including Sidon’s role in ancient maritime trade.
2. “The Druze: History, Faith and Identity” by Samy Swayd – A crucial source for understanding the cultural and historical significance of the Chouf region.
3. “The Archaeology of Lebanon” by Helga Seeden – Offers a detailed overview of Lebanon’s archaeological history, covering Sidon, the Chouf, and the Bisri Valley.

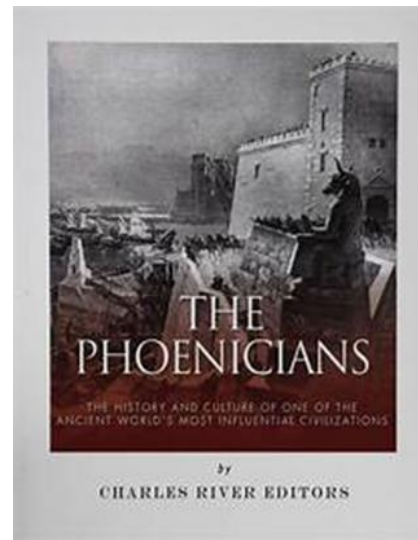
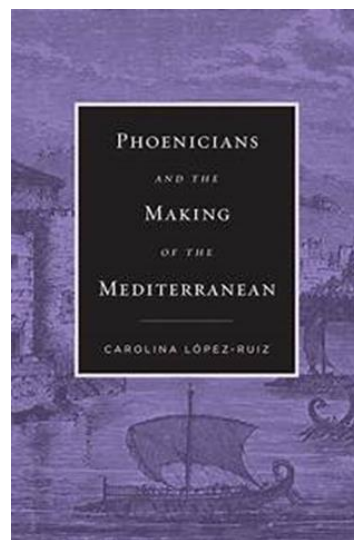
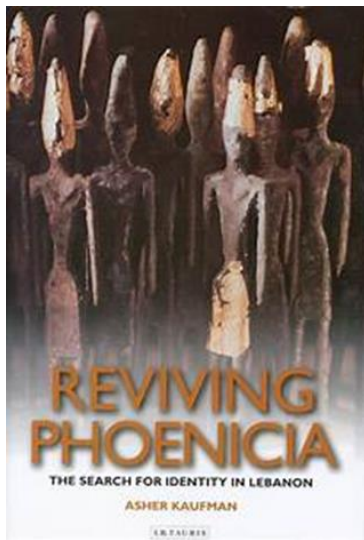
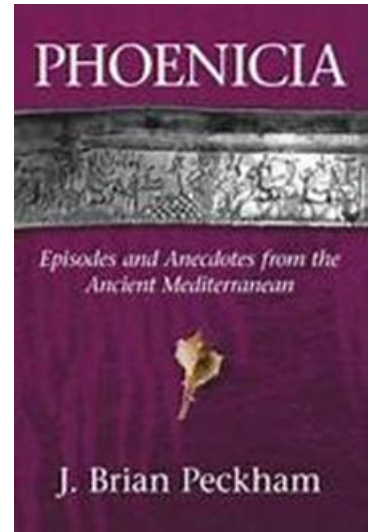
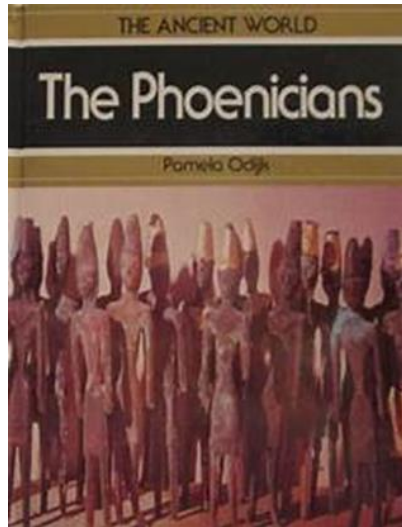
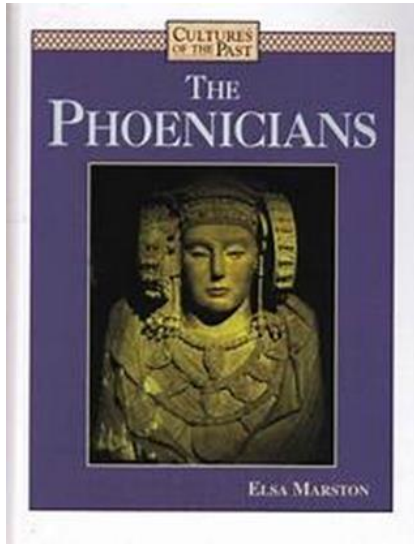
Journal Articles

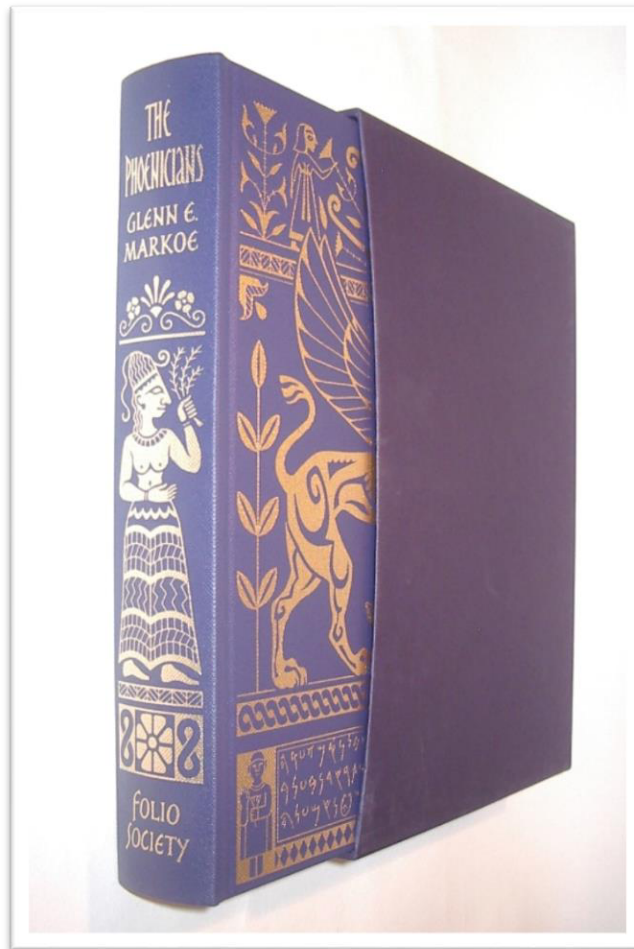
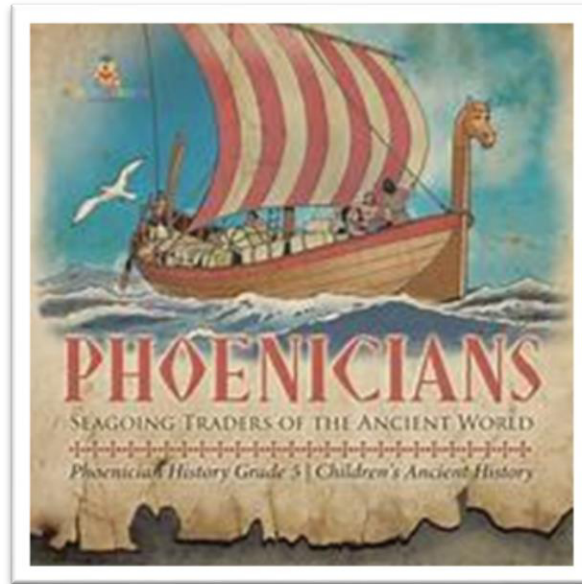
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3. National Museum of Beirut – Holds artifacts from Sidon and other regions, with curated catalogues and exhibition guides.

MORE RELEVANT LITERATURE





END OF THE DOCUMENT