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ARCHAEOLOGY OF MEDIEVAL LEBANON: AN OVERVIEW

TASHA VORDERSTRASSE

Introduction

This article will present an overview of the archaeological work done on medieval Lebanon from the 19th century to the present. The period under examination is the late medieval period, from the 11th to the 14th centuries, encompassing the time when the region was under the control of various Islamic dynasties and the Crusaders. The archaeology of Lebanon has been somewhat neglected over the years, despite its importance for our understanding of the region in the medieval period, mainly because of the civil war (1975-1990), which made excavations and surveys in the country impossible and led to the widespread looting of sites (Hakiman 1987; Seeden 1987; Seeden 1989; Fisk 1991; Hakiman 1991; Ward 1995; Hackmann 1998; Sader 2001. In general, see Fisk 1990). Furthermore, many collections within Lebanon itself could not be visited for the purpose of study and even collections outside Lebanon remained largely neglected. The end of the civil war, however, marked a time of renewed interest in the country’s archaeology, particularly in the city of Beirut. Also, the identification of large numbers of Christian frescoes in the region meant that churches and their paintings were studied in detail for the first time. Although much had been lost during the civil war, it was clear the archaeological heritage of Lebanon remains critical to our understanding of the archaeology of the Levant. As a crossroads for Christians, Muslims, and Jews in the late medieval period, the region that is now Lebanon was of great importance in the 11th to 14th centuries. It provides us not only

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with valuable archaeological information, but also with a historical context for better understanding the monuments and their material culture. This study will first examine the historical background of medieval Lebanon, in order to place the archaeology in its context before looking at the cities, villages, smaller settlements, and surveys that have been conducted in the region. This article concentrates on published work; while much of the material that has been excavated remains to be published and sometimes in publications that are difficult to obtain, it is hoped that this article will provide a useful overview that will stimulate new areas of research and highlight the various archaeological projects that have been conducted in the country over the past hundred years.

Historical Background of Late Medieval Lebanon

The modern state of Lebanon encompasses several late-medieval period regions in the eastern Mediterranean. Thus, the coastline lay in the hands of the county of Tripoli to the north and the Kingdom of Jerusalem to the south. The Seljuk Turks, Zengids, Ayyubids and later the Mamluks controlled the eastern part of the country. The Zengids’ rule was marked by struggles with the Crusaders as well as internal factional infighting (Gaube 1998: 310). In the end, the Mamluks conquered the entire region and brought it under their control. The Crusaders governed a region that was populated by Melkite (Byzantine), Syrian Orthodox, and Maronite Christians (Immerzeel 2004b: 13). They governed areas located along the coast and this consisted of the southern part of the county of Tripoli and the northern part of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The county of Tripoli, located in the northern part of modern Lebanon, took shape during the 12th century; it was governed independently until it came under the control of the Prince of Antioch Bohemond III’s son, Bohemond. It was expected that Bohemond would govern Tripoli while his elder brother Raymond would become Prince of Antioch. Raymond, however, died before his father, and after Bohemond III died, Bohemond Count of Tripoli, moved to try to simultaneously control the principality of Antioch and the country of Tripoli, thus disinheriting Raymond’s youngest son (Vorderstrasse 2006: 98-99 and bibliography).

The art of the Christian communities of late medieval Lebanon has been well preserved and is beginning to be documented in
increasing detail. Lebanon forms a unique repository for the culture of the minorities living under Islamic rule and it is now being studied in considerable detail. As an example, it is clear that a variety of individuals were active in commissioning and producing wall paintings. The style of wall paintings can be divided into two categories: those with Byzantine influences mainly in the north (where Greek inscriptions are also concentrated) and those with a more local, Syrian influence in the west (where Syriac inscriptions are found). Only one site has produced Latin inscriptions, the church of Mart Marina in Qalamun. There is also a 13th century double-sided icon from the Monastery of Kaftun, which is an illustration of the local Byzantine style. This type has been previously attributed to Western artists when they studied at the Monastery of St. Catherine in Sinai (Hunt 2000: 78-126; Hélou 2003a; Hélou 2003b; Cruikshank Dodd 2004; Immerzeel 2004a: 50-51; Immerzeel 2004b: 8, 15, 24-26; Hélou with Immerzeel 2006). Syrian Orthodox art from the 11th-14th centuries can be seen in manuscripts and frescoes. During this so-called “Syrian Renaissance”, Christian art flourished under both Muslim and Christian rulers (Immerzeel 2004b: 14).

In addition to wall paintings, there are other studies, which have recently appeared: one of the most important of these is the publication of the illustrated Arabic Christian manuscript of the story of Baarlam and Joseph. Previously, this manuscript was attributed to the Ottoman period, but Smine has shown convincingly that it is a 13th century manuscript (Smine 1993: 174; de la Croix and Zabbal 2004: Cat. X, B34; Hélou with Immerzeel 2006: 53, no. 1). Only a few illustrated Arabic Christian manuscripts have survived (for other examples see Hunt 2000, 184-189, 195-197) and therefore this manuscript is particularly important. Although it was found in Lebanon, it may not have been produced there. Nevertheless, it testifies to Lebanon’s important artistic heritage.

Cities in the Late Medieval Period

It is perhaps surprising how little work was done on the archaeology of Lebanon, when one considers the importance of the region during the Middle Ages. The best-known medieval archaeological work done in Lebanon has been undertaken in cities such as Beirut, Baalbek, and Tripoli. While there have been surveys
that have examined architectural remains of many buildings in these cities, in particular the castles and medieval fortifications, there has been little actual excavation work. While excavations have been done at Tyre, this remains almost entirely unpublished (see below). Until the recent work done in Beirut in the 1990s, much of what was known about medieval cities in the country came from the German excavations in Baalbek (which have still not yet been fully published) and the excavations by Salamé-Sarkis in Tripoli. As the recent work done in Beirut continues to be published, we are beginning to have a better idea of what happened in this city. It is hoped that the situation in Lebanon may allow for excavations at Sidon and Byblos/Giblet.

The cities will now be examined from north to south, starting with those in the county of Tripoli, then the Kingdom of Jerusalem, and finally cities under Islamic control.

**Tripoli**

Prior to the arrival of the Crusaders in the region, the city of Tripoli and its surrounding areas were under the control of the Fatimids. The city became an independent principality in around 1095, when the Shi’ite clan in Tripoli, the Banu Ammar, set themselves up as an autonomous principality. Tripoli fell to the Crusaders in 1109, after a lengthy struggle that lasted for five years. It became the county of Tripoli and was merged with the Principality of Antioch when Bohemond, the son of Bohemond III, Prince of Antioch, seized control of the principality from his nephew. Indeed, Bohemond IV, who did not trust the Antiochenes to support him, spent most of his time in Tripoli, as did his successors. Antioch fell to the Mamluks in 1268, but the city of Tripoli remained under Crusader control until 1289, when it fell (Runciman 1952: 60; Runciman 1954: 407; Jidejian 1980: 41-43, 58; Salam-Liebich 1983: 5-7; Vorderstrasse 2006: 98-99).

Tripoli has the distinction as being one of the best-published medieval sites in Lebanon and is at the moment also the best-published Crusader site, thanks to the detailed publication of the excavations at the site of the Castle by Salamé-Sarkis, which took place between 1971 and 1975. He conducted excavations at four different areas of the site: Château of Mt. Pilgrim, at the St. Jean Church south of the Chateau, at one of the islands off the coast known as the Île des Lapins/Île des Palmiers, and at the Church of St. Élie of Bqûfa-Ehden.
This excavation revealed churches and other buildings, as well as a large amount of material culture, including coins, inscriptions, and pottery dating to both the Fatimid and Crusader periods (Salame-Sarkis 1975; Jidejian 1980: 37-38, 59; Salamé-Sarkis 1980; Vorderstrasse 2006: 103-104, 105-111). Salamé-Sarkis’ work also shows the benefits of using an integrated approach to the material; his book combines both the archaeological and the abundant textual evidence to present a complete understanding of how the site functioned.

**Byblos/Giblet**

Byblos/Giblet was located at the southern end of the Crusader county of Tripoli. It was also controlled by the Banu Ammar before the city fell to the Crusaders in 1102; in 1109, Betrand, the son of Raymond of St. Giles, handed over the city to the cathedral of Genoa. In practice, this meant that the city was in the hands of William Embriaco, a member of the Genoese Embriaco family who became lords of the city. It surrendered to Saladin in 1187 after the battle of Hattin, but was returned to the Embriaco family until Bohemond VII, Prince of Antioch and Count of Tripoli, took the castle in 1282. He only held it for seven years before it fell once again into Muslim hands after the fall of the city of Tripoli in 1289 (Jidejian 1968: 141-144; Kennedy 1994: 64-65).

The site has one of the best-preserved surviving urban castles (Kennedy 1994: 64), but the archaeology of the site in the medieval period is unfortunately unknown, aside from the standing architecture at the site. This is not to say that the site of Byblos/Giblet has not been excavated. Indeed, Montet first excavated the site between 1921 and 1924. Further excavations took place from 1926 until the 1930s. There are almost no artefacts, however, that were published that could be dated to the medieval period (Montet 1928; Dunand 1939: 33; Dunand 1965; Jidejian 1968: 5, 141), despite the fact that the excavators were conducting their work near the Crusader castle itself and therefore should have had to dig through medieval material. Furthermore, they noted that the Byzantine levels at the site (which they briefly discuss) were very badly disturbed because the Crusaders had dug through them as well as the Islamic levels in an attempt to reach the Roman masonry, which they could use for the construction of their castle (Dunand 1939: 51; Jidejian 1968: 4). As for the archaeologists they were above all interested in the Egyptian artefacts that were found at the site and
concentrated their efforts on the pre-Hellenistic city, but they did note the presence of later materials when they were found. This points to the fact that the excavators did not find medieval levels and that the medieval city was much reduced in size if compared to Classical city, (which would not be surprising).

Beirut

In the high medieval period, Beirut was part of the northern edge, and the northern seaport, of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The town was captured by the Crusaders in 1110 and fell to Saladin in 1187. They regained it ten years later and then held it under the barons of Ibelin who also controlled Arsuf and Jaffa until the Mamluks arrived in 1291. They did not conquer the city, but rather it capitulated after the fall of Acre (Fuess 1997: 85-86; Antaki 2001: 324-325, 327. 331; Boas 1999: 45). As the capital of modern Lebanon with a population living directly on top of the medieval and ancient city, it was difficult to conduct work on Beirut apart from limited excavations until the city was destroyed during the civil war. Prior to this, few excavations had taken place; one was in 1941, when the excavators found the remains of a small painted chapel (Lauffray 1946-1948: 8. 10; Pringle 1993: 111).

After the civil war, the town centre was in ruins. Its subsequent redevelopment was accompanied by a large amount of archaeological work in the city’s centre: during the period between 1993-1996, 15 different excavation teams were active. It is interesting to note, however, that as was the case at Byblos (see above), the excavators do not report finding substantial medieval buildings, although in this case they did discover plenty of medieval material culture as well as the castle. It would appear that the area that is now in the centre of Beirut was on the periphery of the city, although still within the fortification walls, and consisted of ruins and workshops, such as Potteries and glassworks. There has been some discussion of the pottery, glass, and coins found in this area but these still have to be published in detail (Ward 1995: 70; Arnaud, Llopis, and Bonifay 1996: 114-115, 126, 128; Aubert 1996; Bouzek 1996, 135-136; Butcher 1996: 210-211; Curvers and Stuart 1996: 232-233; Evans 1996: 218-219; Mongne 1996; Perring, Seeden, Sheehan, and Williams 1996: 199; Rackham 1996: 225; Saghieh 1996, 26, 36, 38, 50; Sayegh 1996: 265-267; el-Masri 1997; Van der Steen 1997; Marchesi, Thiriot, and Valluri 1997: 354; Perring 1997-
Tyre

Another port along the coast of the northern Kingdom of Jerusalem, Tyre was not an easy city for the Crusaders to capture. After sieges in 1102 and 1111, it was finally captured in 1124 with the help of the Venetian fleet. Tyre was then strongly fortified, which meant that unlike other cities, it never fell to Saladin. Therefore, it served as a staging-post for the reconquest of the coast by the Crusaders during the Third Crusade (Boas 1999: 53). Tyre was an important centre in the medieval period and Chéhab has extensively studied its medieval history, but this does not correspond with what is archaeologically known about the site (Chéhab 1975, 1979; Boas 1999: 53). In the 19th century, the site was investigated several times, including by Ernest Renan, who visited the city in 1860 and excavated to a depth of eight meters, and Nepomuk Sepp, who in 1874 attempted to find the tomb of Frederick II Barbarossa, who was said to have been buried in Tyre (P. Bikai 1992: 27). The site was investigated by de Lasseur in the 1920s; she mentioned medieval remains and a glass industrial area but nothing in detail was ever published (de Lasseur 1922: 4, 6, 11). She also investigated an area in 1922 but it is not entirely clear where this site was located (P. Bikai 1992: 27). In the 1940s, Chéhab excavated the site but never published his results (P. Bikai 1992: 31-32; Jennings and Aldsworth with Haggarty and Whitehouse 2001). The site has been excavated by Patricia Bikai, who published the pottery from the city (although this did not include the later periods). In her book she provided a summary of the excavation, noting that the site had 7 major levels of occupation including the Roman and later remains. The latest remains were Arab or medieval pits and the floor of a cistern (Jidejian 1969: 136; Bikai 1978: 14; P. Bikai 1992: 33). Recently, the glass industrial area was investigated and it is suggested that it dated between the 10th and 12th centuries (Jennings and Aldsworth with Haggarty and Whitehouse 2001). Very little about the site has been published since the initial book on the pottery of Tyre and this contains little archaeological information other than a brief report on a Crusader
church found there (Bikai 1971; Bikai and Bikai 1987; Bikai 1992: 76).

The lack of archaeological information about Tyre is not reflected in the textual record, where it is well documented. The textual evidence indicates that there were a large number of villages and hamlets in close proximity to the city, which differed in size from three to thirty-eight families (Boas 1999: 62-63). Furthermore, Chéhab produced his incredibly detailed work on the city of Tyre that included an in-depth discussion of the history of the site, descriptions of the site in different languages, and study of the individuals who lived there (Chéhab 1975, 1979). This means that the material from Tyre still has to be put into its documentary context.

**Sidon**

In the Crusader period, the city of Sidon was never as important as some of the other ports in the Kingdom of Jerusalem, such as Tyre, Jaffa, and Acre (Eiselen 1907: 82). Sidon surrendered to the Crusaders and the combined Norwegian-Venetian fleet in 1110. In 1187, Saladin took the city and in 1192 granted half the town and its revenues to Reginald of Sidon. In principle, it remained under a Muslim-Frankish condominium, although travellers' reports indicate that it was under Muslim control. Then, in 1229, it was granted entirely to the Franks. The town was eventually sold to the Templars and in 1291 it was evacuated after the fall of Acre (Jidejian 1971: 101-107; Pringle 1998: 317).

The archaeology of medieval Sidon is not particularly well known. The Sea Castle (built between 1227 and 1228) of the city has attracted the main attention and conservation work has been undertaken on the site, which resulted in an architectural study (Pringle 1998: 323). In the 19th century, the site came to prominence when a number of Phoenician burial sites were discovered, which led to an interest in excavating the site both officially and clandestinely. The site was investigated by Georges Contenau in 1914 and 1920; he made several soundings in the Land Castle; excavations were conducted by Dunand in 1924 and it was extensively surveyed in 1963-1964. There was also an underwater survey of the site. The more recent excavations have reported finding “Mamluk” era pottery (Jidejian 1971: 4-5, 10-11; Doumet-Serhal 1998-1999, 181). The excavations of Contenau and Dunand at the site did not reveal any medieval levels, but
merely burials that the excavators termed as “Arab” (Dunand 1967: 30). Doumet-Serhal mentions finding medieval pottery but her excavations primarily discuss the Bronze Age. Once again, this parallels the situation at Beirut, Byblos, and Sarepta where it appears that the excavators were digging in part of the town that did not have any medieval remains. While there is no medieval material from Sidon, this does not mean that there are no artefacts from the site. Manuscripts from the library of the cathedral of Sidon (Ecclesia Sidoniensis) dating from the 12th and 13th centuries have been identified in the Vatican, the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris, and the Bibliotheca Laurenziana in Florence (Gasnault 1967; Maier 1967; Maier 1968a; Maier 1968b). The manuscripts from the Bibliothèque nationale are not illustrated (Lauer 1940: No. 1794 and Lauer 1952: No. 2902), but those from Florence are (Plut. 14.1, Plut. 17.42, and Plut. 18.24). This group was already identified by Garrison who noted that they were a part of a group, although he read the inscription as “Grado” in his discussion of the miniatures in Plut. 18.24 and called the manuscript the “Homily of St. Piero a Grado.” He identified all the manuscripts as either being Pisan, Lucchese, or Florentine (Garrison 1955: 62, 64, 98).

Sarepta

The site is located between Tyre and Sidon and was known as Sarafand. It was occupied by the Crusaders as early as 1099 (earlier than some of the earlier cities), and it came under the lordship of Sidon. In 1187, it was taken by Saladin but half of it was eventually ceded to Reginald of Sidon. It is said to have been entirely in Christian hands between 1211 and 1212. It is unclear when the city fell, but it seems to have happened between the 1260s and the 1290s (Pringle 1998: 281). Excavations at the site of Sarepta began in 1969 and continued up to 1974 with no excavations in 1973 (Pritchard 1978: xi; Pritchard 1988: 1). No medieval remains were reported to have been found and it is possible that the excavators never found them. It is clear that considerably more archaeological work needs to be done at the site in order to assess the extent of the medieval city.

Tell ‘Arqa

Due to the fact that the main Crusader cities were concentrated
along the coast, it is therefore perhaps not surprising that archaeologists have concentrated the majority of their efforts there rather than on sites inland. The site of Tell Arqa, however, is an exception. Tell ‘Arqa was besieged by the Crusaders in 1099 and conquered by them in 1108. The site was excavated in 1972-1974, 1978-1981 and then interrupted by the war. Excavations resumed in 1992 and a report on the excavations from 1992-1998 has now appeared. Arca itself was not located in the course of the excavations, although the fortifications were found, in addition to a cistern. It has been suggested that the medieval settlement may have been concentrated on a part of the mound rather than on the entire site, which could explain why it was not found. The site itself was investigated in the 1970s by P. Thalmann, who was primarily interested in Bronze Age remains, but he did publish the later material that he discovered. The majority of the objects found, in addition to the fortifications, were pottery, although a few coins and other objects were attested (Leriche 1983: 111, 132; Hakim and Salamé-Sarkis 1988; Thalmann 2000: 31-33; Vorderstrasse 2006: 104-111). Once again, one finds a situation similar to what was encountered at Beirut, Sidon, and Byblos. Despite the fact that we know from the texts that the site was inhabited, few signs of habitation were found. It is clear that the site must have shrunk considerably from its original size, and as Thalmann suggested, only occupied part of the mound (Thalmann 1978: 30).

Baalbek

In 1075, the Seljuk Turks began their rule of Syria, which included Baalbek. Their reign was characterized by various families and factions controlling Baalbek until 1139 when Zangi ibn Áqsunqur conquered the city, appointing Naj al-Dîn Ayyûb, the father of Salâh al-Dîn as governor of the town and its surrounding region. In 1260, the Mongols invaded, causing heavy destruction to the city. The Mamluks then defeated the Mongols and Baalbek came under their control (Soberheim 1925b; Gaube 1998: 308, 311; Chéhab 1998: 224). Baalbek is one of the most famous sites in Lebanon, primarily because of its well-preserved Roman ruins. It was these that initially attracted people to the site, and Baalbek was a popular tourist destination in the Levant during the 19th century, with Kaiser Wilhelm II as its most famous visitor. At the end of the 19th century, the scientific studies of Baalbek began; it was investigated by the Germans from 1899 till 1905.
The first German expedition to Baalbek was a short one, lasting less than a month (27 December, 1898 till January 16, 1899) with R. Koldewey, W. Andrae, and the director of the Khedival Library, B. Moritz examining the site. The second expedition (September 10, 1900 till November 3, 1905) was somewhat more detailed and was directed by O. Puchstein and B. Schulz, with a team that included the semiticist M. Sobernheim (who is primarily known for his work on Arabic inscriptions), architects H. Kohl, D. Krencker, T. von Lüpke, and G. Schumacher, and the photographer D. Meydenbauer. The German excavations did not neglect the Islamic city and carefully excavated and recorded the ruins of the buildings before removing them to reach the Roman remains. They also thoroughly investigated the Arab citadel with its mosques, houses, and water system (Reuther 1925; Sobernheim 1925a; Sobernheim 1925b; Sader and Scheffler 1998: 4-5; Scheffler 1998b; Kästner and Baher 1999: 88; Voisin and Delpech 1999-2000: 35).

The publication of the excavations of Baalbek has remained problematic. The initial German excavation did not produce any publications, but W. Andrae's nine watercolours and drawings have now been published. Two of these are of the medieval remains at Baalbek (Scheffler 1998a), while the final report did not appear until the 1920s. This was partially due to the fact that Puchstein had died in 1911 and therefore the task had to be undertaken by Theodore Wiegand (Kohl 1925; Reuther 1925; Sader and Scheffler 1998: 6-7; Sarre 1925; Soberheim 1925a; Soberheim 1925b). One difficulty in the study of the material from Baalbek is that half of the material is in Berlin and the other half in Istanbul, which has received little attention. (Hanssen 1998, 159-160; Gaube and von Gladiss 1999). The glazed pottery located in Berlin has now been published (Daiber 2006).

The Lebanese Directorate of Antiquities continued to undertake excavations and restoration work, but this remains unpublished (Hakiman and Rifai 1998; Sader and Scheffler 1998: 6-7). In 2001, German excavations with the Direction Générale des Antiquités have once again started in order to understand the development of the city from the Bronze Age to the late-Ottoman period. The ceramics of the more recent excavations (also from the Lebanese Directorate of Antiquities, although without any stratigraphic information) have now been published. The pottery dates from the 11th to 15th centuries and fits in well with the material from the German excavations stored in
Berlin. The ceramics are a range of Syrian fine paste ceramics with production starting at the end of the 11th century when Baalbek was annexed to the Seljuk Empire, till the end of the 15th century. The number of shards increases at the end of the 12th and mid-13th century, corresponding to the Zangid and Ayyubid periods, but is primarily Mamluk (Van Ess et al 2004: 109, 135-136, 138; Daiber 2005: 112).

The German excavators observed that relatively few Islamic monuments were preserved, leading Reuther to suggest that the earthquake of 1170 had destroyed what remained of the Umayyad and Seljuk monuments and that the Mongol invasion destroyed the Ayyubid monuments (Reuther 1925: 99; Gaube 1998: 317). This is plausible but it may simply be explained by the fact that the city's monuments were re-used later as building material or that the city simply did not conform to Reuther's idea of how the city really was. Another argument against the idea that the Mongols caused heavy damage to the Ayyubid monuments is the fact that a number of Ayyubid structures survived, although the palace may have effectively been destroyed (Gaube 1998: 319).

The most important monument of medieval Baalbek was the citadel; the residents of the city had transformed the temple of Jupiter into a fortified area; the Ayyubids built a palace and other constructions (Kohl 1925; Gaube 1998: 317). Another building of importance is a large mosque, which was probably already in use during the Umayyad period even though the inscriptions date from the 13th century and inform us that building activities had taken place in the Ayyubid period. Unfortunately, the building was not carefully investigated. There are other buildings, but once again they are not very well preserved (Gaube 1998: 320-321). There is very little information from the site prior to the reign of Zangi, which means that our understanding of Baalbek at the beginning of the Crusader period, is somewhat limited (Gaube 1998: 308).

Yanouh and the Nahr Ibrahim

The site of Yanouh and other sites along the Nahr Ibrahim valley have been investigated since 1999. The site of Yanouh was apparently the fortress of Moinetre, which controlled access to and from the Mediterranean coast and was therefore in a very strategic position. It
appears in texts between 1109 and 1236 as the gateway between the Crusader and Islamic territories. The majority of pottery at Yanouh is medieval and dates from the 13th and 14th centuries and is similar to types found at Tripoli, Tell ‘Arqa, Beirut, and Acre. In addition, medieval glass has also been found at the site. Elsewhere in the Nahr Ibrahim valley, a number of small churches were also investigated. This includes the Chapel of the Forty Martyrs, which was originally an Early-Byzantine foundation, abandoned in the 8th century. The site was reoccupied in the 10th or 11-13th centuries before being transformed into a vast cemetery. At Tadmor, a chapel and house of the 12th and 13th centuries were found (Gatier et al. 2001: 114, 116, 118-119; Gatier et al. 2002: 249, 251; Gatier et al. 2004: 160, 162-163, 168. 171, 180-181, 198-202). This is an interesting project because it does not simply involve archaeological investigations at one site, but also at other sites along a particular valley, which provides a useful regional overview that is so often missing.

**Ej-Jaouzé**

The IFAPO mission conducted a study of the site of Ej-Jaouzé in the Zaarour region of Mount Lebanon in 2003. This village had never been studied before and is located in a poorly-studied area. It is a rural settlement with occupation in the Roman-Byzantine and medieval periods. It participated in regional commerce but apparently did not use money, as none was found. The ceramics of the medieval period were the vast majority of the material found and dated from the 12th to 14th centuries (Nacouzi 2004: 211, 243; Pieri 2004: 252-253).

**Cave Archaeology: “Liban souterrain”**

Lebanon’s topography has meant that archaeologists have a unique opportunity to investigate settlements in caves. The majority of the material found has been published either in the journal *Liban Souterrain* or in *Spéleorient.* The most famous of these cave sites is ‘Āṣīl-Ḥadat, which is located in the north of the country in an area to the

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Unfortunately, I was not able to obtain Vols. 1-4 of *Liban souterrain*, but I would like to thank M. Immerezel for providing me with a copy of volume 5 and the *Momies du Liban. Speleorient* is published on-line and the articles can be downloaded.
southeast of Tripoli. The cave is important because of the discovery of mummies. The researchers found a cave with eight naturally-mummified bodies with their clothes still largely intact, as well other artefacts, such as pottery, coins (both Crusader and Mamluk), and documents (in both Syriac and Arabic). The individuals, all women and babies (except for a man’s head), apparently fled to the cave in 1283 when the Mamluk leader Baybars was on a campaign against the Patriarch of Hadâj. It is hypothesized that the men were busy fighting against the Mamluks while the women stayed and died in the cave. The cave contained interesting artefacts related to the daily life of the individuals in this region and are exceptional for their excellent state of preservation: the clothes of the individuals were in very good condition and even the paint on one of the wooden spoons was still intact. The preliminary reports on this material have appeared, but the final publication of this important find is still lacking (Had. 90-44) (Abi ‘Aoun 1994; Abi ‘Aoun and Baroudi 1994a; Abi ‘Aoun and Baroudi 1994b; Abi ‘Aoun, Baroudi, Ghaouche, and Khawaja 1994; Abdo Badwi 1994; Baroudi 1994a; Baroudi 1994b; Baroudi 1994c; Rizk and Tannous 1994a; Rizk and Tannous 1994b; Rizk and Tannous with Baroudi 1994; Sawaya 1994; Cornu and Kallab 1995: 123, 125, 127, 132).

The material in this cave is interesting because it shows that the population in this area came from a multi-lingual milieu, as the presence of both Syriac and Arabic documents demonstrates. Numismatically, the individuals also possessed both Crusader and Mamluk coins, pointing to a mixture of currency in this period (Ali ‘Aoun and Baroudi 1994a). The documents do not prove that the women were literate (they may have been storing the documents for safety), but it suggests that at least some of the villagers in this region were. There was a mixture of documents including a Syriac talismanic document, which has been interpreted by the translators, as being used by the women in the cave in the hope that they would survive. The text dates to 1283, the year of the siege, (Rizk and Tannous 1994b: 146) which makes this interpretation quite logical. Another Syriac text is a page from a codex (Baroudi 1994c) and another is a hymnography (Rizk and Tannous 1994a). In addition, Arabic documents were found in the cave that may constitute an archive. Five of the pieces relate to different aspects of the Mamluk presence in the region; one text (90-62) mentions the rais Bûlus, who was probably responsible for
collaborating with the Mamluks in the region. A contract deals with an orchard, house, and promenade and dates to 1251-1252. The authors of the text state that it is not clear whether it is a sale or lease contract (Rizk and Tannous with Baroudi 1994), but given the date the document was written, it is likely to be a sale. They would have kept the document until it could be passed on to the next owner of the property. This can be seen in the small Arabic papyrus archive from Tebtunis and in other archives from earlier periods in Egypt (Vorderstrasse forth.).

While the discoveries of the mummies in the cave have been relatively well publicized, the other cave discoveries have not received as much attention. The reason for this is undoubtedly that while the material found is interesting, it is not as spectacular as what came to light in the cave of ‘Ásî-I-Hadat. Abdel-Nour and Salamé-Sarkis published a brief overview that discussed this particular cave as well as other inhabited ones in north Lebanon; this constitutes the main information about cave settlement available to most scholars (Abdel-Nour and Salamé-Sarkis 1991). More detailed studies, including some on the pottery and other objects found in various caves have appeared in the journal *Liban souterrain*. Unfortunately, this journal is difficult to obtain outside of Lebanon and the articles are almost all in Arabic (although it is illustrated and the titles of each article are in French). This lack of easily-accessible publications means that the occupation of the caves in the medieval period has yet to be fully appreciated by international scholars.

**Churches and Castles**

In addition to excavations of cities, towns, villages and caves, there have also been excavations that have taken place at individual churches and castles. The church of Maad, which primarily dates to the Crusader period and contains wall paintings, was excavated in 1947 and in the 1960s by the Director-general of Antiquities, but no report on this excavation was produced (Hélio 1999-2000: 141-142). Therefore, we know very little about this site.

Archaeological investigations have recently begun at the castle of Toron, located 24 kilometres southeast of Tyre; it is one of the major medieval fortifications in Lebanon. Despite its importance, the castle was never scientifically investigated. The castle was founded in
1205/1206 by the Flemish knight Hugh of Falconberg, who had been granted the territory of the Galilee. Hugh needed a fortified base located between his residence in Tiberias and Fatimid Tyre. When Hugh died, Humphrey of Toron received the castle from Baldwin of Jerusalem and his family held it for nearly the entire Crusader period. Therefore, unlike other sites examined here, the castle of Toron is an entirely new Crusader foundation. By the 1120s the site was an important seigneury. It surrendered to Saladin in 1187, but eventually returned to Crusader control, but was eventually captured in 1266. The castle has recently been investigated; its donjon was the largest ever built by the Crusaders and offers analogies with many western types. There have been other surveys of castles, but this one looked at the pottery in order to determine the settlement (Piana and Curvers 2004: 333-335, 337-351).

**Surveys**

It is perhaps due to the problems of war that Lebanon has not been the subject of many surveys. Prior to the civil war, a number of surveys were conducted but were primarily concentrated on the pre-Hellenistic periods. One of the most important was the publication of the Beqa Valley Survey, conducted by L. Marfoe, but this concentrated on the pre-Hellenistic materials (Marfoe 1995; Marfoe 1998). It is unfortunate that such a detailed survey did not include a discussion of the later-period occupation. As such, it represents a missed opportunity: had Marfoe collected medieval shards as well as those of the earlier periods, we would have been in a much better position to understand the region.

Since the end of the civil war, however, there have been a number of surveys, none of which have been fully published. The three relevant surveys are the 1997 Akkar survey done in the north of the country by K. Bartl, the 1998 survey in the area south of the city of Tyre, and the Polish-Lebanese survey of the Sidon area, begun in 2004. The survey of Bartl was in northern Lebanon, but the material has not been published in any detail (Bartl 1998-1999; Bartl 1999). She has noted, however, that a total of 41 sites were surveyed in the plain. In the Fatimid period (11th century), four sites were occupied. There was a dramatic increase in the 12th-13th century period, when the number of sites rose to 11. It is clear that it was a densely-occupied plain in this period, dominated locally by the site of Tell ‘Arqa and regionally by the city of Tripoli.
In 1998, a survey was conducted in an area south of the modern city of Tyre. Only a summary of this survey exists and there is no mention of any medieval material. In 2004, a joint Polish-Lebanese team began to survey an area near Sidon due to the projected building of a dam. The survey examined all periods, including the 20th century, but their short overview of their work did not address evidence from the medieval period (Jakobiak and Neska 2005, 441-442).

Conclusion

It is clear when one looks at the state of archaeology of medieval Lebanon, that much work remains to be done even though considerable progress has been made, particularly during the last decade. Prior to the resumption of archaeological activities after the Lebanese civil war, the main medieval material came from Baalbek and Tripoli. Other sites that had received considerable archaeological attention, such as Byblos, Sidon, and Sarepta did not seem to have many medieval remains. It has been assumed in the past that the lack of medieval remains in Lebanese excavations was due to the disinterest of the excavators or to the fact that material were not kept (van der Steen 1997: 124), but this does not seem to have been the case. While it is true that excavators at Tyre, in particular, found medieval remains but did not publish them, other excavations yielded very few. This is backed up by the new archaeological data from Sidon and Beirut. Therefore, it is clear that Crusader cities in Lebanon had contracted considerably from settlements of the earlier periods. Even at sites such as Tell ‘Arqa, where there is no modern settlement, the excavators have yet to locate the Crusader town, even though they know it was there. The amount of material has increased since the 1990s as Beirut has been investigated thoroughly for the first time and new work has begun at other, lesser-known sites. The problems of publication still exist and Baalbek and Tripoli remain the best-published sites, just as was the case even before the start of these new investigations. What this tells us, however, is the tremendous potential of Lebanon for medieval archaeology and that there are interesting issues that need to be investigated. At sites such as Tell ‘Arqa, where one is not limited by the

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presence of a modern settlement, it would be interesting to attempt to find the medieval city (if it exists). The new investigations at the Castle of Toron show that there is also considerable work to be done on medieval fortifications.

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