







## Jabal Moussa: archeological survey

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Pottery sherds (© J.Jamhuri)

## An archaeological location

An archaeological field survey was undertaken in the Jabal Moussa area on 22 August 2009 at the request of the Association for the Protection of Jabal Moussa (“APJM”) in order to identify potential archaeological sites. This short report on potential but as yet uninvestigated locations will hopefully provide an idea on how and why certain locations are deemed archaeologically viable. Locals familiar with the territory were included in the investigative team as they would know best where the sites of interest were located. Only one previously visited site, namely el-Ghine, had been excavated in the 1960’s by the Department of Antiquities under Emir Maurice Chéhab, then Director of the Department.

A primary factor in establishing the archaeological validity of a site is the initial field walk, which includes not only looking for artefacts but also topographical indications. This is fairly straightforward on regularly ploughed fields with little vegetation because by turning the soil regularly artefacts eventually are moved to the surface. Erosion and soil loss on uncultivated and lightly vegetated soil such as the type found in the village region of **Brokta** also cause artefacts to rise to the surface.

The old Roman road used by pilgrims going up from the coast to el-Ghine and then on to Yahchouch and to the Temple of Astarte at Afqa is a known route that will be explored during a separate survey of the area. The aim this time was to find fresh unexplored new sites for which no records have been found to date.

Major indicators of possible archaeological remains are the *dwelling*s of the settlements/villages of el-Ghine, Mdar and Brokta and the presence of a large amount of storage jars which would suggest the existence of an oil press, and the *burials* found in Hatchet near Yahchouch and in the Adonis Tomb.



The most important part of the survey is the analysis. The types of questions typically asked of survey data include: what is the evidence for first occupation of an area; when was this area occupied; how are sites distributed; where are sites located; what evidence is there for a settlement hierarchy; what sites are contemporary with each other; how has the modern landscape interfered with the visibility of archaeological remains; how many people lived in this area (at any given time); why did people choose to live in this area; how has the landscape changed over time; what changes in settlement patterns have there been?

The analysis therefore included careful examination of all the evidence collected during the field survey, consisting mainly of pottery sherds, which is presented here on a preliminary basis. All sites were occupied in the Roman period, with a possible earlier installation in the Late Iron Age at Brokta. Mdar thrived in the Byzantine period.



Sarcophagus (© J.Jamhouri)

# The findings

## **El-Ghine:** Roman

- Crater, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD
- Amphora, Late type comparable to Beirut amphora type 6, Late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

## **Brokta:** Roman, with a possibility of one Persian Period amphora.

- Amphora, late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD
- Amphora, Cypriote, late 5<sup>th</sup> century AD
- Amphora, 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC
- Amphora, Phocian red slip, 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD
- Cooking pot, 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD
- Cooking pot, 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century AD
- Bowl, 6<sup>th</sup> century AD
- Crater, Late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD
- Crater, 5<sup>th</sup> century AD
- Crater, 5<sup>th</sup> century BC
- Mortaria, 1<sup>st</sup> /2<sup>nd</sup> century AD

## **Adonis/Astarte relief near burial:** Roman

- Amphora, Late Roman, type 5

## **Hatchet, Burial:** Roman

- Dish, Phocian, red slip, 1<sup>st</sup> half of 6<sup>th</sup> century AD

## **Mdar:** Byzantine

- Storage jar, 6<sup>th</sup> century from the Palestinian coast, 6<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> century
- Amphora, 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD
- Amphora, Tyre type, 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> century AD

The potential of this area has just been touched upon and further investigations will be needed to identify more sites in this region which remains archaeologically largely unexplored to this day.



