Cultural Background

Funerary Patterns in Lebanon—From the Bronze Age to the Roman Period
By Signe Krag 2

Hellenistic Cities in the Levant
By Eva Mortensen 8

Hellenistic and Roman Sarcophagi in the Levant
By Philip Ebeling 12

Maron and the Maronites
By Niels Bargfeldt 19

Agora nr. 8 2011

Funerary Patterns in Lebanon—From the Bronze Age to the Roman Period

By Signe Krag

Fig. 1: The sarcophagus of Ahiram depicting mourning women.

During the Bronze Age inhumation burials were the common practice in Lebanon. The evidence is very limited, but it suggests that several types of burials were used at the same time, namely jar burials (with inhumed infants and small children), rock-cut tombs, pit graves, cist graves and hypogea with chambers and possible sarcophagi. The burial gifts seem to have been placed in the graves according to the sex of the deceased, as men are often buried with weapons and women are buried with domestic objects and jewellery. Furthermore, luxury items are placed in some of the graves, a fact which suggests the existence of a society with marked social differences. At Sidon we find evidence for the practice of animal sacrifice, and ovens that are placed at the graves suggest a belief in the afterlife of the deceased. On the sarcophagus of Ahiram from Byblos are depictions of mourning women which could tell us how the deceased was mourned. The evidence comes mainly from Beirut, Sidon and Byblos.

During the Iron Age both inhumation and cremation burials were in use. The burial types from the Bronze Age were largely still employed in this period, but new types also occured and these were cist and chamber tombs, shaft graves and cremations in amphorae. At the same time, the well-known pit grave became more complex. Again the burial gifts often seem to be placed in the graves according to the sex of the deceased, and stelae are sometimes found marking the graves. The amount of gifts increases in this period and luxury items are placed in some of the graves. In Achziv the chamber tombs have a hole cut in the ceiling, which indicates liquid offerings and an emphasis on the afterlife of the deceased. The cremation graves, which appear for the first time during the Iron Age, consist of urns deposited directly into an area of coastal sand, and at Tambourit they were deposited in a cave. The burning of incense is attested and the pottery suggests an emphasis on libations. Also talismen and magical items appear such as terracotta masks and figurines. The evidence comes mainly from Achziv, Khalde, Tyre and Tambourit.

Funerary Patterns in Lebanon

By Signe Krag

Fig. 2: A sarcophagus in a chamber of a hypogeum in Byblos.

Fig. 3: A stelae from Tyre depicting a human face.

During the Bronze Age as well as the Iron Age there was a strong influence from Egypt especially seen in the sarcophagi and burial gifts from Byblos. In general the Phoenicians always placed their deceased far away from their settlements. One settlement could often have more than one cemetery, but in each of them both inhumation and cremation could be used at the same time and even in the same grave. Most of the burials were individual, but several dead could sometimes be placed in the same burial vaults or chambers. The multiple burials suggest an emphasis on groups, whereas single burials suggest an emphasis on individuals.

During the Persian period many of the earlier burial types from the Bronze Age and Iron Age continued to be in use, but a strong influence from Greece was also present. The sarcophagi were largely imported from Egypt, Greece and Asia Minor. These were anthropoid sarcophagi, which were a mixture of Greek and Egyptian style, and sarchophagi with reliefs. From the archaeological evidence we know that color was applied to some of these sarcophagi. These would have been placed in hypogea or shaft graves. Again, the burial gifts seem to be placed in graves according to the sex of the deceased, and luxury items are only placed in some of the graves. Also the sarcophagi must have been available to only some people in the society. On the sarcophagus of weepers from Sidon we see mourning women, and the depiction could tell us how the deceased was mourned. At the sarcophagus of Tabnit from Sidon an inscription tells about the food and libation offerings to the dead, which suggest an emphasis on the afterlife of the deceased. There have been found traces after the practice of mummification, which show a strong connec-

tion to Egypt. The burning of incense is attested, and the pottery suggests an emphasis on libations. Also talismen and magical items appear. The evidence comes mainly from Sidon, Ram Az-Zahab, Sarepta and Amrit.

The evidence from the Hellenistic period is very limited. The types of burials in use were single pit graves, cist graves, shaft graves, communal, rock-cut chamber tombs with possible loculi, sarcophagi with decoration in painted relief and tower tombs. The reuse of graves became very frequent in this period, as fewer resources were used on the construction of graves and decoration. The burial gifts often seem to be placed in the graves according to the sex of the deceased and stelae are found marking the graves. The amount of burial gifts decreases in this period, luxury items are not very common and the sarcophagi must only have been available to few in the society. Talismen appear, and the pottery suggests an emphasis on libations. The evidence comes mainly from Beirut, Sidon and Hermel.

When the Roman culture began to influence the burial rites of Lebanon it had several results. There was the direct influence of Roman culture, the mixture of Roman and indigenous cultures, the continuation of older traditions and the influence by non-Romen foreigners. The types of burials in use were

Fig. 4: A funerary enclosure at Tyre with loculi and a sarcophagus placed at the second floor.

vaulted chambers with side loculi or burial pits, large burial cambers with decorated plastered walls, caves in the bedrock with chambers – possibly with coffins –, rectangular tomb buildings, funerary enclosures with loculus graves and possibly sarcophagi, freestanding sarcophagi, pit graves and also extensive reuse. Inhumation was mainly used through this period. Multiple burials now became more widespread, possibly because of Roman influence. Like the burial types the burial gifts were inspired from different areas and could be coins, glass and masks made to resemble faces. There is also a frequent appearance of talismen such as figurines, coins placed in the mouth of the deceased and other magical items. The burial gifts often seem to be placed in the graves according to the sex of the deceased, and the pottery suggests an emphasis on libations. Monumentalized necropoleis were located outside the citywalls along the main thoroughfares. The change in urban development affected the layout of the necropoleis and the construction of the graves as well. Overall there was a strong continuation of the older, indigenous culture with some Roman influences that varied in each area of Lebanon. The evidence comes mainly from Sidon, Beirut and Tyre.

Fig. 5: Greek sarcophagi placed along the main throughfare at Tyre.

Funerary Patterns in Lebanon

By Signe Krag

From the Hellenistic to the Roman period the influence from outside Lebanon became very strong. The influence came from Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, Mesopotamia, Syria and many other areas. The Phoenicians exercised extensive seatrade so already in the early periods Lebanon was influenced by different cultures. During the Persian and Hellenistic periods the Greek culture came to Lebanon. During the Roman period Lebanon became a part of the Roman province of Syria and was subject to Roman influence as well as influence from other parts of the province.

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Hellenistic Cities in the Levant

By Eva Mortensen

The Hellenistic period in the Levant was a time, where the power balance shifted back and forth between foreign empires and local rulers. After Alexander's death the diadochoi fought over the area for different reasons. The Ptolemies in Egypt considered it a defence line preventing invasions from the north, while those diadochoi aspiring to take over all of Alexander's empire saw Syria as the connecting link between the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia/Central Asia. In the ca 300 years, that passed, until the Romans took over, the area was primarily under alternating Ptolemaic and Seleucid control. Besides these hegemonies smaller powers gained footing, among others the Hasmoneans and the Nabataeans (timeline).

The struggle for power between these different kingdoms and empires of course had its impact on the cities. The settling Macedonians and Greeks also had a say in the changes that took place in the cities during the Hellenistic period. These changes, which the old Phoenician cities and other indigenous cities as well as the new- and re-founded cities were exposed to, originated to a large extent in the Greek *polis* model. The changes could for example involve an orthogonal lay-out of the city with buildings such as gymnasiums and stadiums as well as the introduction of Greek institutions as *boule* and *demos* and their associated buildings. Generally, though, it seems that the public buildings of the cities were modest in comparison with their later monumental Roman counterparts.

The cities of course responded differently to this transformation. Some cities, as the old Phoenician cities, adopted parts of the Greek culture (e.g. the coin tradition, Greek art) while maintaining aspects of their own culture (e.g. keeping their old city names, using Phoenician along with Greek in inscriptions and on coins). The Seleucid city foundations, especially in the north, adopted the Hellenistic orthogonal street grid and carried it to the Roman period. These "Hellenisation" trends were not welcomed everywhere, and in Jerusalem they caused a revolt and thereby a change in the power relations in southern Syria.

By far the most of what we know about the cities in this period comes from the written sources – often combined with numismatic evidence – whereas archaeological discoveries of the Hellenistic layers of the cities are scarce. This fact has primarily to do with the overlying Roman and Byzantine remains. From ancient writers and epigraphy we may learn about the physical appearance of a city, while numismatic on the other hand gives us valuable information about the political affiliations of the cities through the troubled period.

Hellenistic cities in the Levant

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Beirut

As far as the Hellenistic architectural remains are concerned, excavations in Beirut have shown some interesting results in the recent decades. In pre-Hellenistic times the Phoenician city grew around the citadel and was confined to the area around the harbour. Beirut was a dependency of Sidon with a client dynast ruling on Persia's behalf. In the early to mid 4th century BC the city saw a big phase of urban expansion – the street grid was orthogonal; that is a planned grid not respecting the topography of the Late Bronze Age. Therefore it might be that Beirut was a site for a Sidonian colony, a re-foundation. Unfortunately this is not attested in any of the written sources, so this can be no more than an educated guess. In the early 3rd century BC the city gained independency from Sidon, and there is only a minimum of building activity. We have remains of two semicircular towers, which were a part of the Hellenistic fortifications. One tower was added to the corner of the citadel (fig. 1), while the other tower was in the south-eastern corner of the occupied area (fig. 2). They might have been built at the time of the independency, or they might have been from the next phase of urbanisation, namely around 200 BC, when the city started growing again. This was part of the Seleucid urbanisation policy and for a while in the 2nd century BC the city was named Laodicea.

Fig. 1: The northernmost Hellenistic tower. Today it can be seen from Waygand street, where it is bridged over George Haddad street.

Hellenistic cities in the Levant

By Eva Mortensen

Regarding the archaeological remains from this period we have some from the souk. The souk is the area on the western side of the citadel. It has now been built over by a shopping centre, but remains of the Hellenistic houses are still visible and open to the public. Before the end of the 6th century BC this area was open land. In the first phase of building activity between 600 and 350 BC only the eastern part was occupied by buildings, but with the Seleucid expansion of the city the built-up area spread to the western part of the souk, again according to a grid lay-out. The excavations have shown that the area was a domestic and a shop- and workshop-area (fig. 3). The streets and the buildings of the souk were in use from the Hellenistic period and all the way through Roman and Byzantine times until the earthquake in 551 AD.

Fig. 2: The southernmost Hellenistic tower. Today it can be seen in the courtyard of the café Paul on George Haddad street near the intersection with Gouraud street.

Fig. 3: Remains of Hellenistic houses, shops and workshops, as preserved under the modern mall.

As for remains of Hellenistic public buildings we are rather shorthanded. From the epigraphy we know that Hellenistic Beirut had an agora and a temple to Astarte. Neither has been identified, but it seems possible that the later Roman forum was placed on the same spot as the old agora. One thing that the excavations have shown, though, is that Hellenistic Beirut lacked monumental public spaces and buildings before the 1st century BC. Here, as we know from Josephus (*BJ* 1.422), the city received halls, colonnades, temples and market-places from Herod the Great, who was generous to cities outside of his realm. This continued into Roman times, where the city was further embellished by other Herodian dynasts.

Hellenistic cities in the Levant

By Eva Mortensen

Strabo (16.2.19) tells us that the city was destroyed because of the Seleucid civil wars and that it was first restored when it became a Roman colony. This fits well with the hiatus in archaeological remains in the period from the middle of the 2nd century to the middle of the 1st century BC. On the other hand, coins tell us a different story – because the city starts minting already in the 120's, which must mean that the city was back on its feet.

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Hellenistic cities in the Levant

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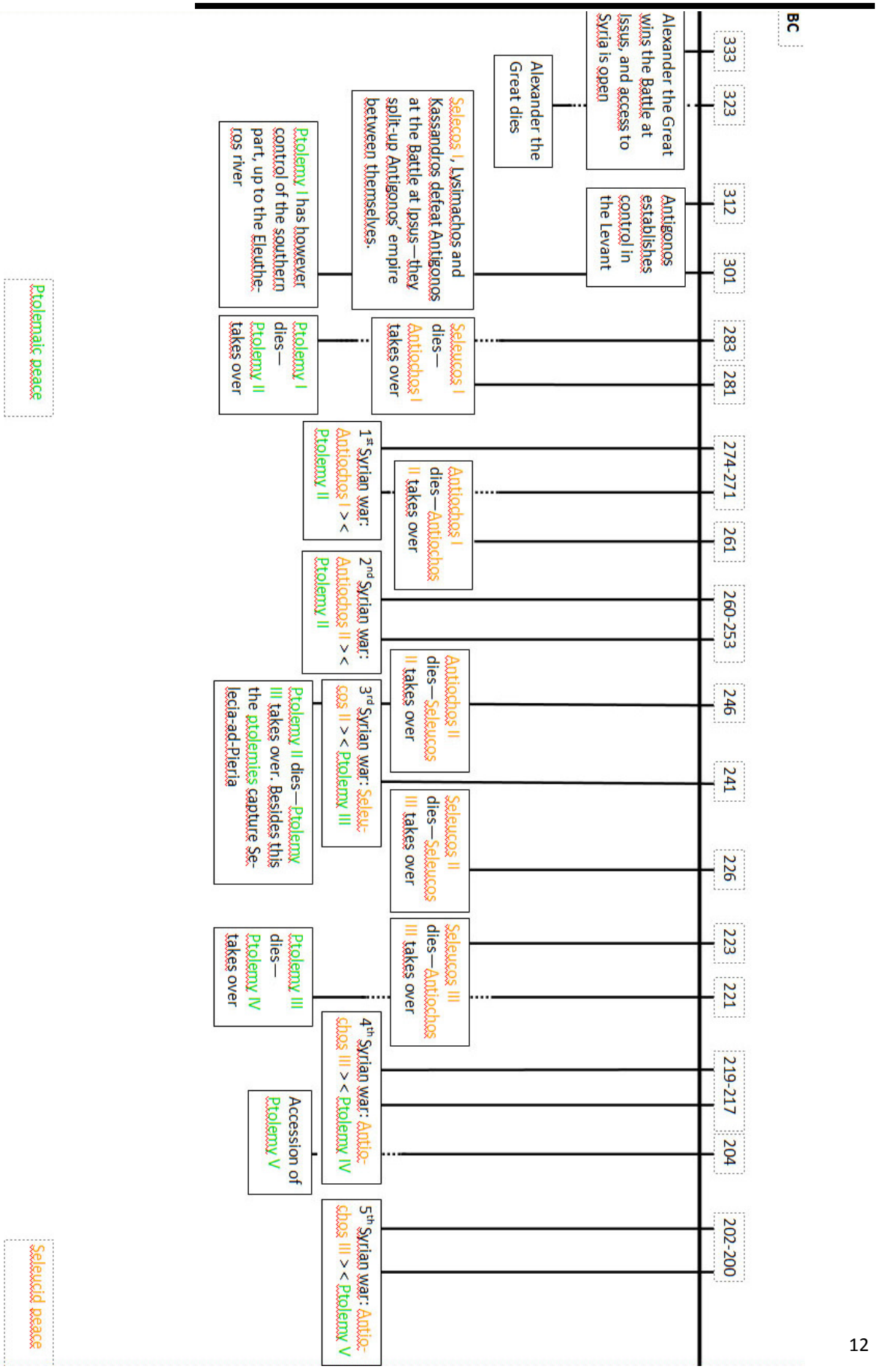

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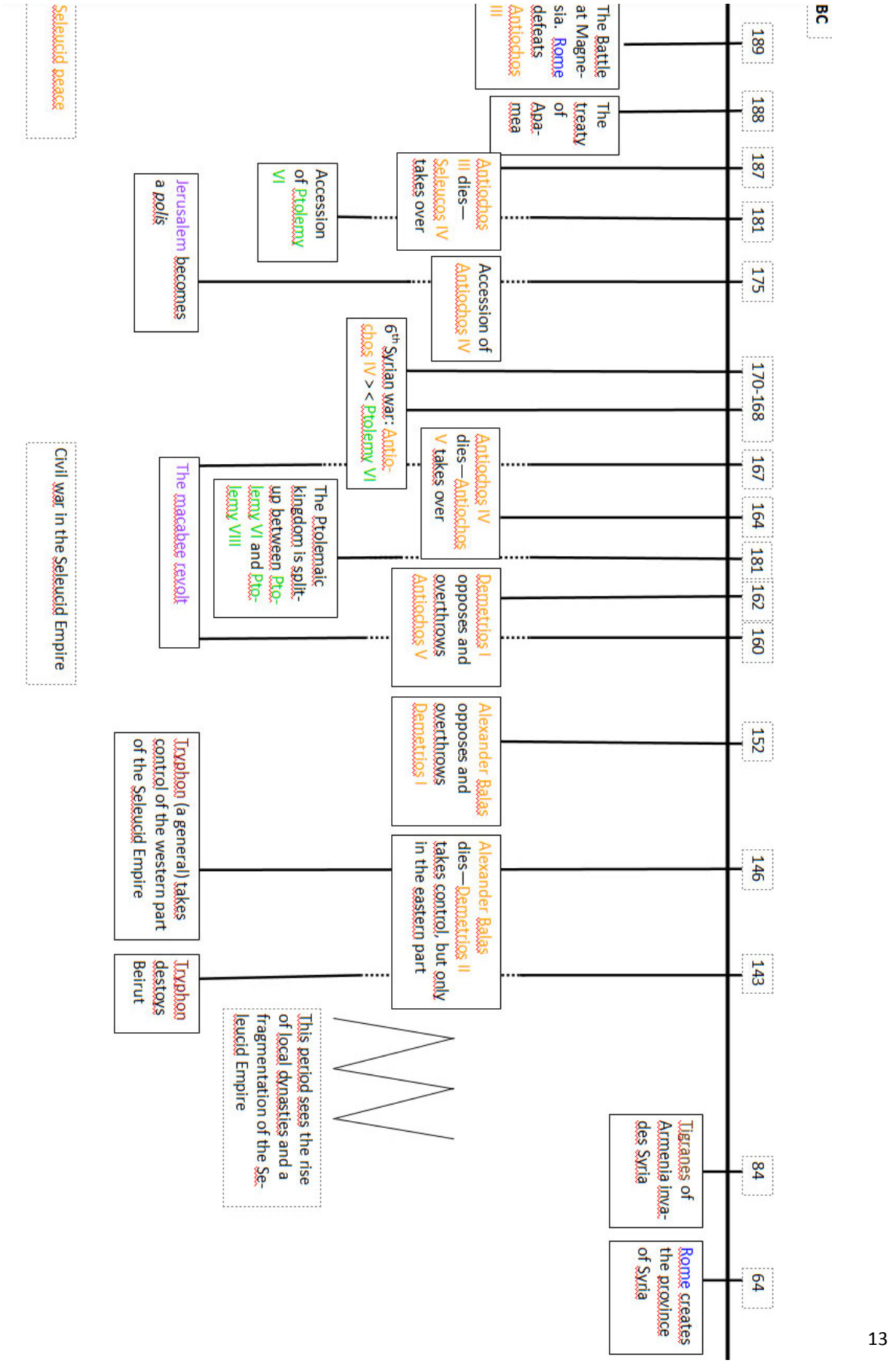

Hellenistic and Roman Sarcophagi in the Levant

By Philip Ebeling

Introduction

„Sarcophagus“ is a word Plinius used for a special kind of stone (lapis) from Assos (southern Troad/Asia Minor) and means „flesh eating“ from the Greek σαρκοφαγός. It is said about this stone that it eats bodies in 40 days and it doesn't leave anything but the teeth (Plinius, Naturalis Historia, 36. 27).
The change in sepulchral culture from cremation burial to inhumation (under the Caesars Trajan and Hadrian, around AD 120) people started using sarcophagi for burials. That caused a sarcophagus production in the Roman Empire. The highest production of Hellenistic/Roman sarcophagi seems to have been about AD 150 – AD 250 in the Roman imperial times. But there have been sarcophagi before: in Greece, Asia Minor, Etruria, Phoenicia, and of cause in Egypt, where their development probably started. When they came to ancient Rome, their shapes and usage had already changed, and the artisans of Rome, Athens, and Asia Minor crafted numerous new shapes and decorations.

Basics

Introduction to Sarcophagi

Materials for sarcophagi were wood, clay, terracotta, stone and lead. Every sarcophagus consists of two pieces: the box and the lid. There were three big centres of sarcophagus production in roman times: Rome, Athens, and Asia Minor (especially Dokimeion in Phrygia, which exported the most and had the highest influence on the other sarcophagus production sites in Anatolia). Each centre used different shapes, styles and motives. So there are three types of sarcophagi that can be distinguished easily: Municipal Roman, Attic and Asia Minorian. The placements of sarcophagi were different: inside of buildings or outside on cemeteries. The dimensions of sarcophagi are defined by their purpose (→ small person = small sarcophagus).

Sarcophagi in the Levant

Introduction to the Sarcophagi Found in the Levant

Sarcophagi have a long history in the Levant and the earliest Hellenistic/Roman sarcophagus found in the Levant is dated to the middle of the 5th century BC (the “Satrap Sarcophagus”), the latest is perhaps from the 4th century AD. But a lot of Roman sarcophagi were still re-used in the Crusader Period.

Hellenistic and Roman Sarcophagi in the Levant By Philip Ebeling

Most of the 300 remaining sarcophagi (as of 1977) were made between AD 150 and 250. Around half of them were imported from Attica, Rome, or Asia Minor, the other half were made locally. These are easily distinguished: marble sarcophagi are imported, because there is no marble in the Levant (this includes the sarcophagi from Assos as well. They are not marble, but they were exported, i.e. to the Levant). Limestone sarcophagi have produced locally. But there is a third group: the semi-finished goods (fig. 1). These sarcophagi were half-done in the quarries, exported and finished at their destination, where they could be fully carved by the local craftsmen to fulfil the clients' desires. But the majority of those semi-finished sarcophagi were not finished and just used as they came, which resulted in a lot of limestone copies being made of semi-finished marble ones.

Fig. 1: Four semi-finished sarcophagi in situ at the cemetery, excavated in 1964/65. The second sarcophagus from the left is one of four Assos-Stone sarcophagi on this cemetery. The other three are in Proconnesian marble.

This fact led to the discussion if it is still appropriate to call them semi-finished. There are many possible reasons why they have not been carved out as elaborately as the Municipal Roman, Attic or Asia Minorian examples: the tradition to bury a corpse as soon as possible, poverty, or just the simple option that the masses liked the quarry-state shapes. In the end, there is not enough archaeological or textual evidence to prove either one of those options.

The first imported, finished sarcophagi date to around AD 150, were mainly used in the coastal towns, and most of them were Attic. Soon after AD 150, import of Dokimeion sarcophagi starts, but there are just two examples from the 3rd century. When the sarcophagus production ends in Athens and Dokimeion (around AD 300), a small group of Municipal Roman sarcophagi can be seen in the Levant. Im-

ported sarcophagi were frequently copied by local craftsmen. Attic specialties are imitated often, but the local garland-sarcophagi are mainly influenced by Asia Minor. The semi-finished sarcophagi were mainly marble. They came from Caria and Ephesos, but the majority were imports of Proconnesos, a small island in the Propontis/Marmara Sea. But one can't easily generalise the sarcophagi in the Levant made through local production: The limestone copies or the marble ones that are finished show different, local stylistics from city to city. So one can see if a sarcophagus is made in Tripolis, Heliopolis, or Tyre, even when the motives and compositions are copied from Asia Minor (as is the case in the majority of Garland-sarcophagi). A unique style of sarcophagus decoration from the Roman province of *Syria*, used in the Levant too, is the so-called North Syrian style. This style is easily identified by the characteristic bull and ram heads or lion heads with a ring in their mouth holding the garlands on garland-sarcophagi instead of putti, nikes or gorgo heads, and the accentuation of the Hercules/Reef knots above them. Another specialty of Levantine sepulchral culture are the leaden sarcophagi. Lead was taken for sarcophagi in other parts of the Roman Empire as well, but the only productive fabrication was located in the Levant, but even here there were different centres (Berytus, Sidon, Tyre, Jerusalem). Their sarcophagus production started in the 2nd century AD, ended in the 4th AD, and their decorations show that they were made for pagans, Jews and Christians.

The Cities and their Sarcophagi

1. Sarcophagi at Sidon (Saïda): Sidon has the longest tradition of inhumation and sarcophagi. When in 1887 the Royal Necropolis of Sidon was discovered, the earliest Hellenistic sarcophagi were found. Next to the anthropoid sarcophagi, which combines Greek and Egyptian style (fig. 2), the four earliest sarcophagi were discovered: the Satrap sarcophagus, made in the middle of the 5th century BC, the Lycian sarcophagus from the end of the 5th century BC, the sarcophagus of the Crying Women from the middle of the 4th century BC, and the Alexander sarcophagus from the second half of the 4th BC (all of them can be seen in the Museum of Istanbul today).The majority of the sarcophagi made in Roman times in Sidon are local limestone products. A characteristic Sidonian group is the one that imitates wooden sarcophagi with lion heads (or sometimes gorgo heads or putti). Attic influence is seen on the long sides of unique sarcophagi with eagles, holding garlands, or antithetic lions. Municipal Roman influence is seen in one limestone sarcophagus with sea creatures on the long sides. The majority of the sarcophagi found in Sidon were made between the 2nd and 3rd century AD.

Hellenistic and Roman Sarcophagi in the Levant By Philip Ebeling

Fig. 2: Anthropoid sarcophagi combining Greek and Phoenician style, found in the Royal Necropolis of Sidon.

2. Sarcophagi in Tyre (Sour): A lot of proconnesian semi-finished sarcophagi can still be seen here in the huge necropolis (fig. 1). Often they were just glazed and reused in Christian times (some Christian crosses were chiselled in later). Finished Proconnesian sarcophagi sometimes show bull and ram heads, but also with putti and victories/nikes in the corners, which is characteristic for Asia Minor. Typical Tyrian work is identified by its thick, meaty garland leaves which stand out (comparable to pine cones) and a double bound ribbon at the upper ends of the garlands. The local limestone production copied the Syrian garland sarcophagi and the Proconnesian semi-finished goods. Fully carved imports are with some exceptions attic. Tyre imported many more finished sarcophagi from Attica than all the other Levantine cities (fig. 3).

3. Sarcophagi at Heliopolis (Baalbek): There are 58 examples left, all of them limestone. It was a local production without any export which created an independent group at Heliopolis. The decoration is often neglected on the 32 decorated examples (fig. 4), 26 of which are unadorned. All decorations are similar. But in fact, there are just two really finished sarcophagi. A finished one should have looked as described in the following: all of the four sides are decorated, but no side is accentuated. The long sides have two recessed fields with relief decoration, the short sides have one. In every case but two all long sides on a sarcophagus have the same motive. Motives for the long sides are peltae, garlands, discs, lion heads,

diamonds, and petals, for the smaller ones discs, diamonds, and petals, but crests too. Only discs can have different carvings (with two circles in them or petal-like lines); all other motives are canonised. The motives on those smaller sides are not always identical; in some cases there are two different motives on the same sarcophagus. (The so-called Adonis sarcophagus is an exception to almost all those characteristics; fig. 5).There are no hints to distinguish head and foot end. The chronology is almost impossible. There are neither relevant stylistic hints, nor inscriptions. The period from the 2nd - 4th century AD is suggested.

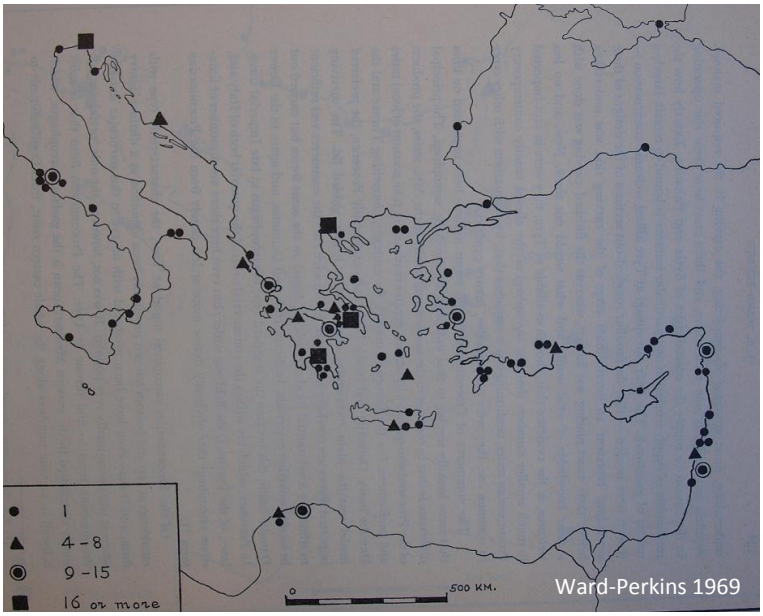

Fig. 3: Map showing the distribution of attic sarcophagi in the eastern Mediterranean sea.

4. Other Sites: Other important sites are Berytos (Beirut) or Tripolis (Tripoli), where four all-time masterpieces of sarcophagus production were found (the Hippolytos sarcophagus is in the museum of Istanbul today; fig. 6). Some scholars suggest Attic craftsmen were present in Tripolis.

Fig. 4: Sarcophagi from Baalbek. (top left) pelta decoration, (top right) petal decoration, (middle left) disc decoration, (middle right) garland decoration, (down) diamond decoration.

Hellenistic and Roman Sarcophagi in the Levant By Philip Ebeling

Fig. 5: Adonis sarcophagus from Baalbek.

Another Levantine specialty is the big group of unique sarcophagi or groups consisting of just ten or less pieces; Laodikeia (Lattaquia), De'Baal or Aleppo. A lot of examples, found in Sarepta, Ornithopolis and Leontopolis, to mention a few, are single pieces and can't be summarized in groups, because there are just some fragments left or there is just one sarcophagus found. It's often impossible to say if they belong to a bigger group or to give determine the date of their production.

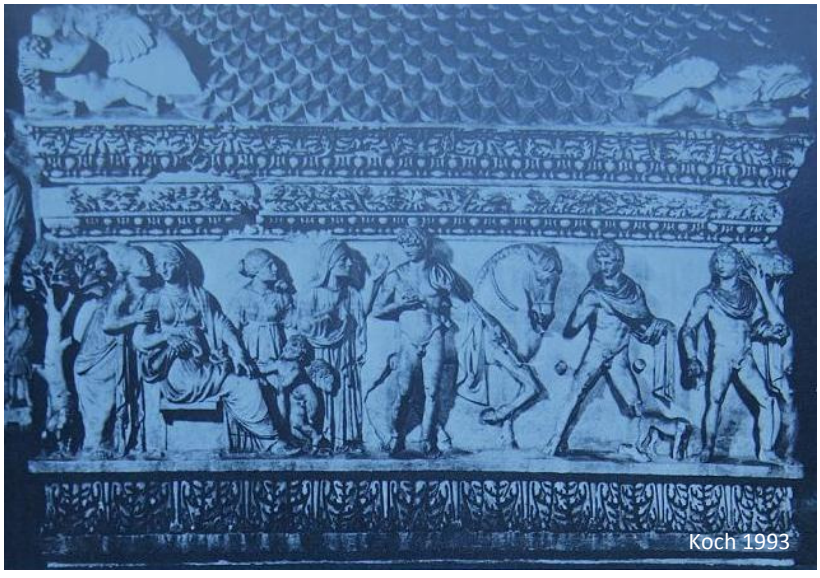

Fig. 6: Hippolytos sarcophagus from Tripolis. Scene: Hippolytos leaves to go hunting.

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Maron and the Maronites

By Niels Bargfeldt

The historic St. Maron and the early history of the Maronites are notably constructed to suit later times allegiances of the Maronite community and their own self-understanding as a distinct group within Lebanon. As a result of the on-going struggle for Lebanon and its ties to the political morass in the Middle East, even scientific publications on the Maronites and their history are never objective. This short article will try and deal first of all with the earlier history and not the conflicts and civil wars of the 20th century.

The saint that is accepted today as the eponymous farther of the Maronites is St. Maron from Cyrrhus. Cyrrhus lies in present day northern Syria on the border to Turkey. Maron, who died in 410 AD, lived as a hermit in the mountains in the vicinity of Cyrrhus, and we are told that he among other deeds consecrated an old ruined pagan shrine to God. The saint's deeds were described by his contemporary bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus. Maron lived an ascetic life, only seldom using the tent that he had set up in the re-consecrated shrine, as he preferred to sleep under the open sky. Though he lived a solitary hermit life, he healed the souls of numerous people and attracted a number of followers. He died after a short illness that only brought him closer to God. Upon his death, a feud erupted for his body between two competing communities, but at the end his earthly remains were carried off by the larger mob that laid it to rest in a sarcophagus in a newly erected church.

The acolytes of the pious Maron founded, according to Maronite tradition, the monastery of Mar Maron. Mar is the Syriac word for lord and is used for saints – Syriac being an offshoot from Aramaic.

Theodoret gives no account of whether or not Maron was a proclaimed Miaphysiste, and during his own lifetime it was less important than it was to become after the Chalcedonian schism in 451. Miaphysism was predominant in the east and in Egypt and is the belief that the true nature of Christ is only one – divine and human in one. This was in contrast to the beliefs of Chalcedonian council. Another important outcome of the council was that bishops gained authority over monasteries within their diocese. This meant a considerable strengthening of centralisation within the power structure of Christianity.

It seems that the followers chose to side with Rome and Constantinople against the Miaphysistes. A letter of correspondence between the heads of different monasteries in Syria Secunda and the Pope Hormisdas in 517-518 narrates the attack on monks by apparently non-Chalcedonians – 350 died in the raid. The gathering of monks had been on the way to the site of Simon Stylites. The letter from the enraged monks is signed by the heads of the monasteries and at the top figures an Alexander of Mar Maron.

As Christian dominion was lost to Islam in the 7th century, Christians continued to practice their

Maron and the Maronites

By Niels Bargfeldt

beliefs, but contact with the Holy See in Rome dwindled. Medieval written sources of both Christian and Muslim origin offer hints to the existence of Maron's followers and their monastery or monasteries, but no coherent historical framework presents itself.

According to Maronite tradition, the monk Johan Maron became the first Patriarch of the Maronites in the 7th-start 8th century. He had moved with his flock to Kfarhay in the mountains between Tripoli and Byblos in the aftermath of a round of persecution (see map). In some historic writing he is confused with St. Maron himself and is hailed as the farther of the Maronites, and in some way he can be understood as such – as he is the first Patriarch. This means that at some point a move had taken place from the acolyte monks of Maron to a Christian society with its own patriarch.

From these early times, no archaeological remains give testimony to St. Maron, the Maronites, or a monastery of Mar Maron, and from the literary sources it is not possible to give an exact location of the first monastery, which allegedly was destroyed towards the end of the 1st millennium. However, the monks mentioned in the letter to Pope Hormisdas were from a place in the diocese of Apamea in Syria Secunda – most likely somewhere north of Apamea. The only physical remains of a monastery that might be linked to the Maronites in this first era is a hermitage at the source of the Orontes river, south of Hermel – Deir Mar Maroun (see map "*Sites visited on the Excursion"* and fig. 1) – but this could just as well belong to any of the numerous early Christian sects.

Fig. 1: The hermitage south of Hermel – Deir Mar Maroun

Maron and the Maronites

By Niels Bargfeldt

By the time the crusaders arrived on the scene, the Maronites had moved south to the Lebanon Mountains and established themselves as a clan-based pastoral-nomadic society – prone also to brigandry. For the most part the clans chose to side with the Franks, after their arrival in 1099, and offered their religious allegiance to the Pope, as opposed to the Patriarch in Constantinople (Rome and Constantinople being in schism since 1054). From then on, the Maronite patriarchs where confirmed by the Pope and provided with sigils of office from the Holy See in Rome.

This period is above all narrated by William of Tyre, archbishop of Tyre in the late 12th century. With Christian overlords the brigandry of the clans became ordered and sanctioned by God and William describes them as "a stalwart race, valiant fighters, and of great service to the Christians in difficult engagements which they so frequently had with the enemy". The chieftains – muqaddams - of the Maronite society thus became the subordinate class of feudal lords to the Franks. Though the clans we hear about are stalwart Christians, it seems that there was little unity among the Maronite clans. No doubt the statues of the pro-Frankish muqaddams fell when the Franks were expelled, but with the advent of the new Muslim regimes other muqaddams seems to have gained influence. It is apparent that even though the clans in essence remained Christian communities, some at least in periods showed secular allegiance to the Mamluk Sultanate.

One important centre of the Maronite community, which it still is today, is the Kadisha Valley – a World Heritage site (fig. 2). Here many of the notable Maronite monasteries (such as *Deir Mar Antonius*

Fig. 2: The Kadisha Valley.

Maron and the Maronites

By Niels Bargfeldt

qozhaya) came to be placed as well as the summer residence of the patriarch. The seat of the Patriarch had formerly been further south at Mayfuq until 1440 when it was moved to Kannubin in the Kadisha Valley. The thriving centre also took in refugees from other Christian communities in the region, at least until they felt threatened by the rising number of newcomers.

Through history the Maronite communities seem to have suffered most when there was a change of master –this was the case again when the Ottomans took control in 1516. However, once the overall power structure was in place, they settled in to relative calm – aside from ever on-going infighting amongst the clan leaders. External threats and infighting sometimes saw Maronite chieftains siding with heterodox Muslims such as the Druze or taking up refuge among these - notably at the court of the Emir Fakhr al-Din Ma'n at his palace at Deir el Qamar (see map and fig. 3). The Emir is still hailed today as an important early unifying Lebanese nationalist.

Maronite historic identity and their understanding of themselves as a distinct group truly started to form with the writings of Bishop Jibra'il ibn al-Qila'i in the 16th century and above all with the Maronite history by Patriarch Istfan ad-Duwayhi in the 17th century. Together with the massacres of the mid 19th century against Maronites (and others) this self-understanding played an important role in the sectarian constitution of the modern Lebanese state and the civil wars that engulfed the country in the second half of the 20th century.

Fig. 3: Deir el Qamar today.

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