

# BEIRUT

## THE PHOENICIANS' ROUTE

# بيروت

## مسار الفينيقيين

**INTRODUCTION**  
 Beirut, the capital and the largest city of Lebanon, has hosted successive historic periods of major powers and civilizations in the Mediterranean and West Asia. It has layers of Phoenician, Roman, Byzantine, Mameluke, Ottoman and French Mandate periods.

Today, archaeological highlights include a Phoenician port, several Roman remains of a hippodrome, baths and temples.



### HISTORICAL MAPPING



The site between Martyr's Square and Maarad Street axes, is an area of archaeological ruins revealing some of the complexity of Beirut's rich cultural history. It is surrounded by different places of worship. Following a landscape competition, the "Garden of Forgiveness" is envisioned to be a place of calm and reflection, of understanding and tolerance.

The Cardo and Decumanus Maximus, the two main streets of Roman Berytus, were discovered here. Their shaded colonnades became busy markets on festival days.

At other times, the streets would have been frequented by Law School students and citizens passing to the Forum or visiting temples and churches.

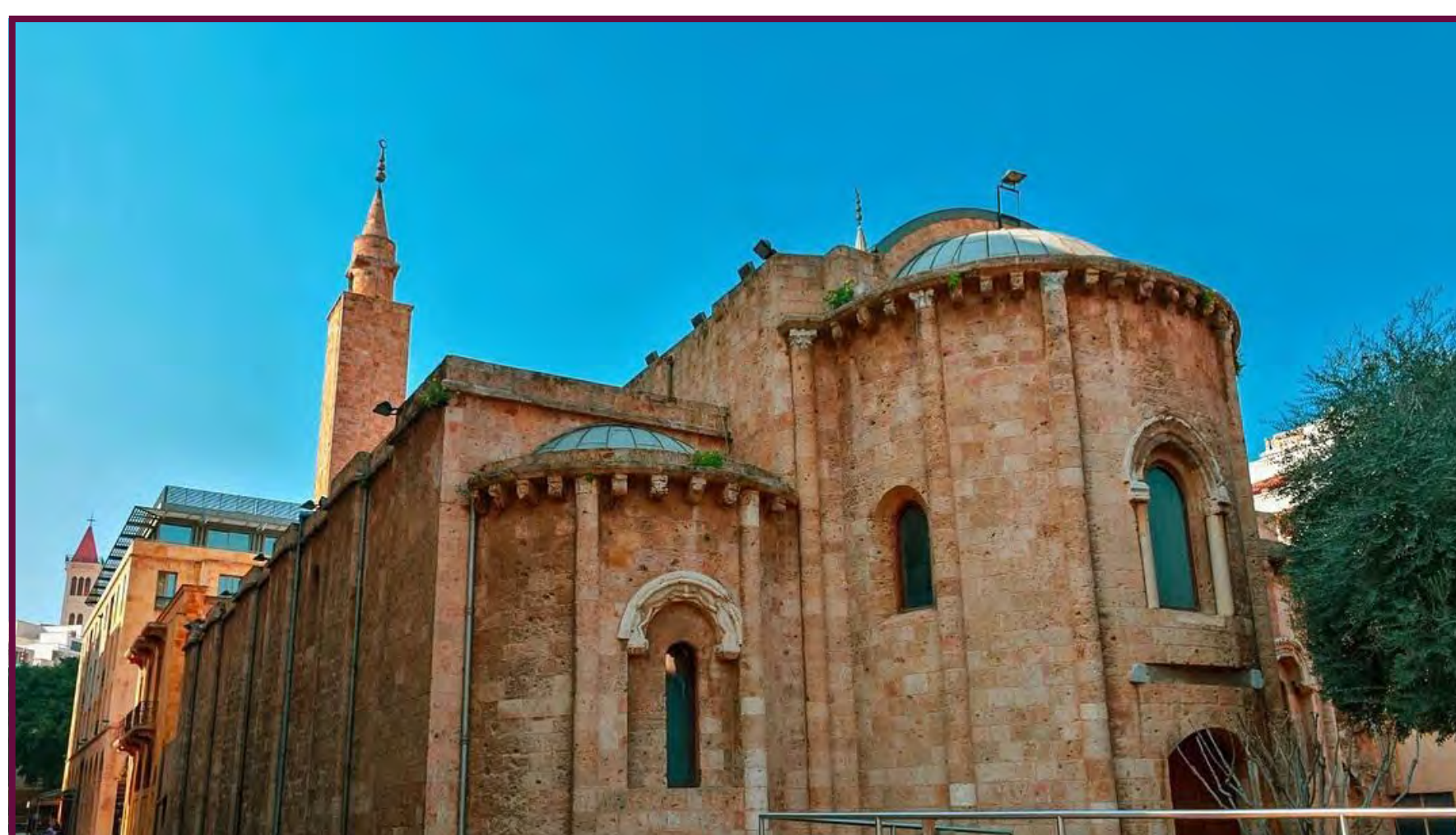
During excavations, sacred platform dating from Phoenician-Persian times were found below the crossing of the Crado and Decumanus Maximus.

#### The Garden of Forgiveness



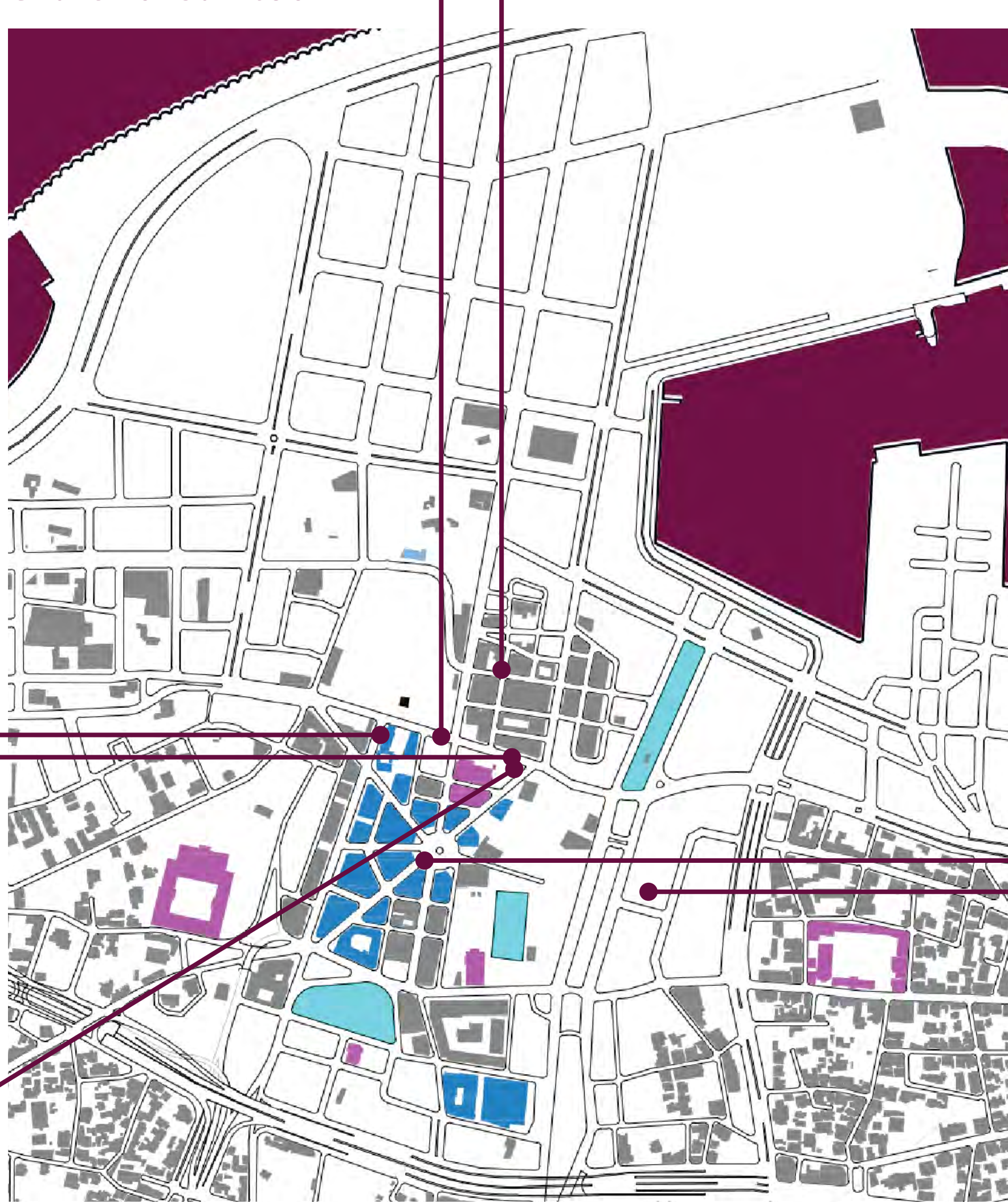
Beirut Souks reconstruction revives aspects of the ancient street network that stems from the pre-Roman times. The conservation and consolidation of the Phoenico-Persian Quarter and the Moat and City Wall were completed. Elements of the ancient harbor walls are to be incorporated in Khan Antoun Bey Square.

#### Phoenico-Persian Quarter

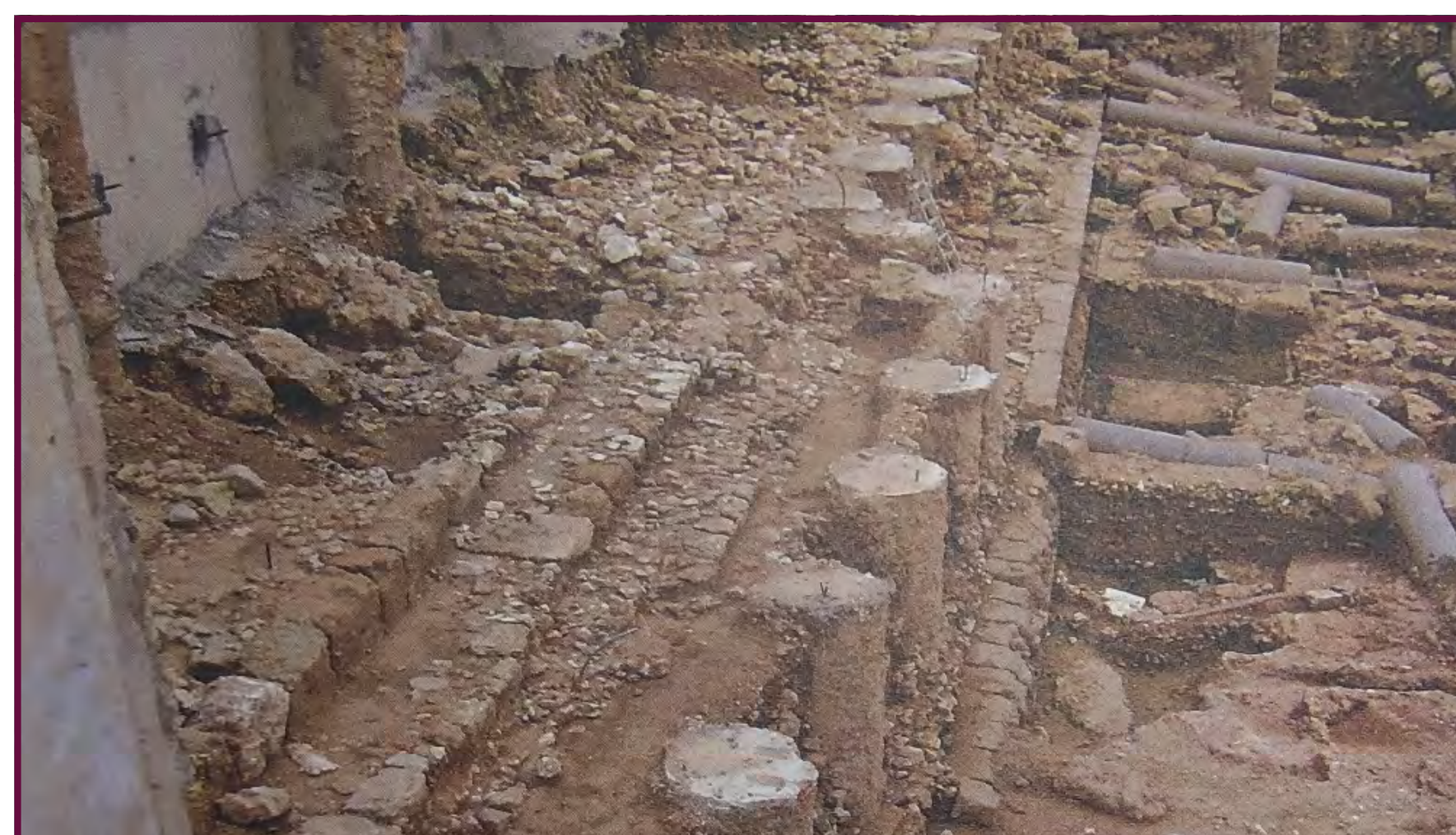


The Al-Omari Grand Mosque was the old Crusader Church of Saint John. Built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, it was transformed into the city's Grand Mosque by the Mamelukes in 1291. Damaged during the Civil War, the mosque's refurbishment was completed in 2004.

#### Church of Saint John



- Legend**
- Greek - Roman Period 333 B.C. - 300 A.D.
  - Ottoman Period 1516 - 1917 A.D.
  - French Mandate 1920 - 1943 A.D.
  - Lebanese State 1943 - Present



Excavations in the Wadi Abou Jamil area yielded vestiges of the ancient Hippodrome where chariot races took place, as well as the theatre where plays were performed, and gladiators fought. The first phase, the Hippodrome was 42 meters wide and they were wider to 88 meters at a later stage. Remains of the rows starting gates of both phases were built in a slightly concave alignment ensuring equal distance for all chariots to the beginning of the spina, or central barrier.

Parts of the Hippodrome, unearthed on lot 1370 Mina El-Hosn, have been classified by the Ministry of Culture, and Solidere is preparing an international landscape design competition for a hippodrome park, which will implement on behalf of the ministry.

#### Roman Hippodrome



Roman Berytus has four major thermal bath complexes that were meeting places for all citizens, the remains of the current Roman Baths are located between Banks and Capuchin streets.

The bathers moved from warm to hot baths, through rooms of varying temperatures. Located under the floor, the heating system (hypocaust) allowed the air, warmed by wood fires in adjacent vaults, to circulate between pillars of terracotta disks heating the marble floor. Water from the boiler fed the marble-tiled pools in the hot room (caldarium) and a large stone basin (labrum) contained cool water for the bather's use.

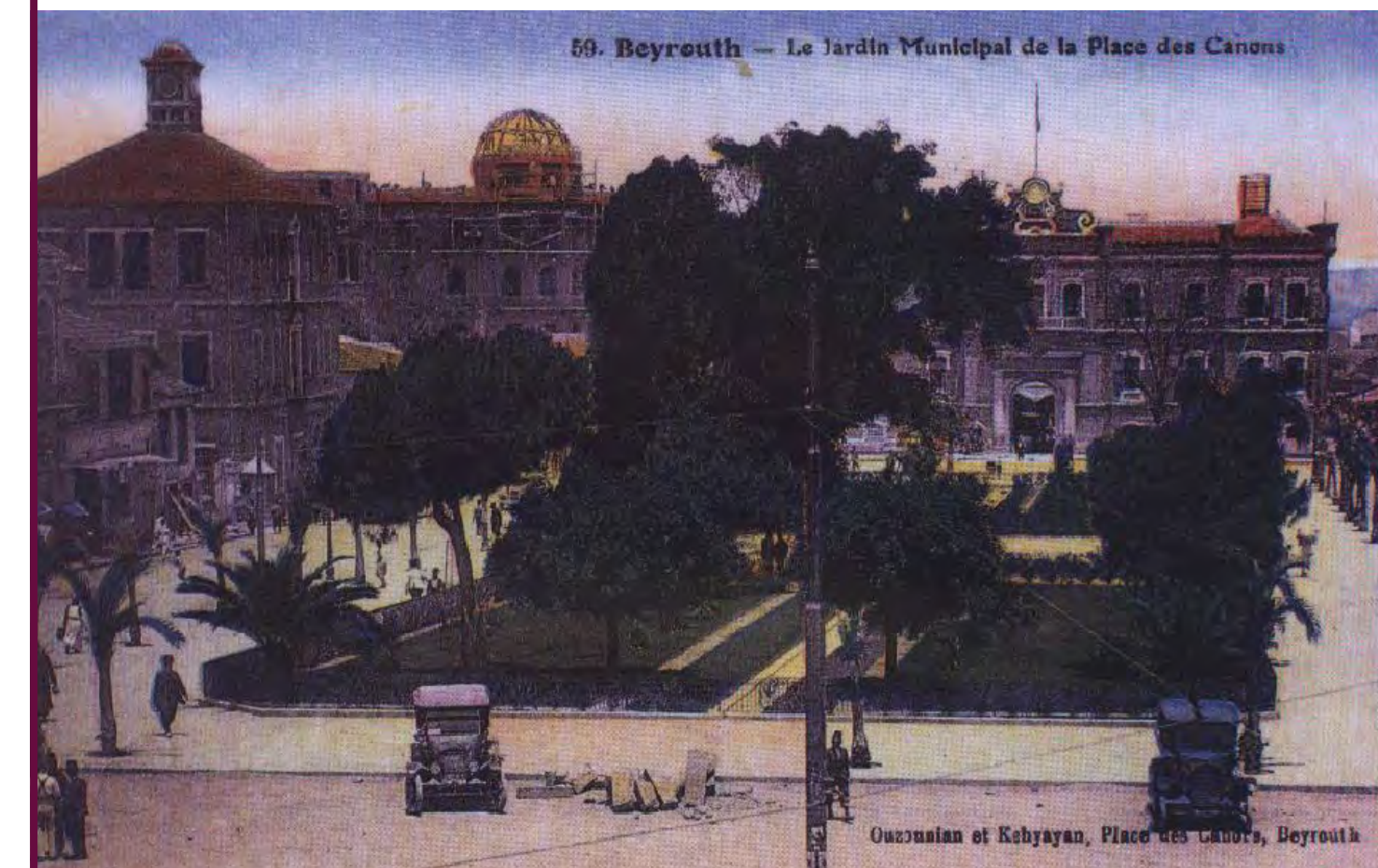
#### Roman Baths



1773: initially Sahat Al-Burj



1860: renamed Place des Canons



1908: Freedom Square



1931: Martyr's Square

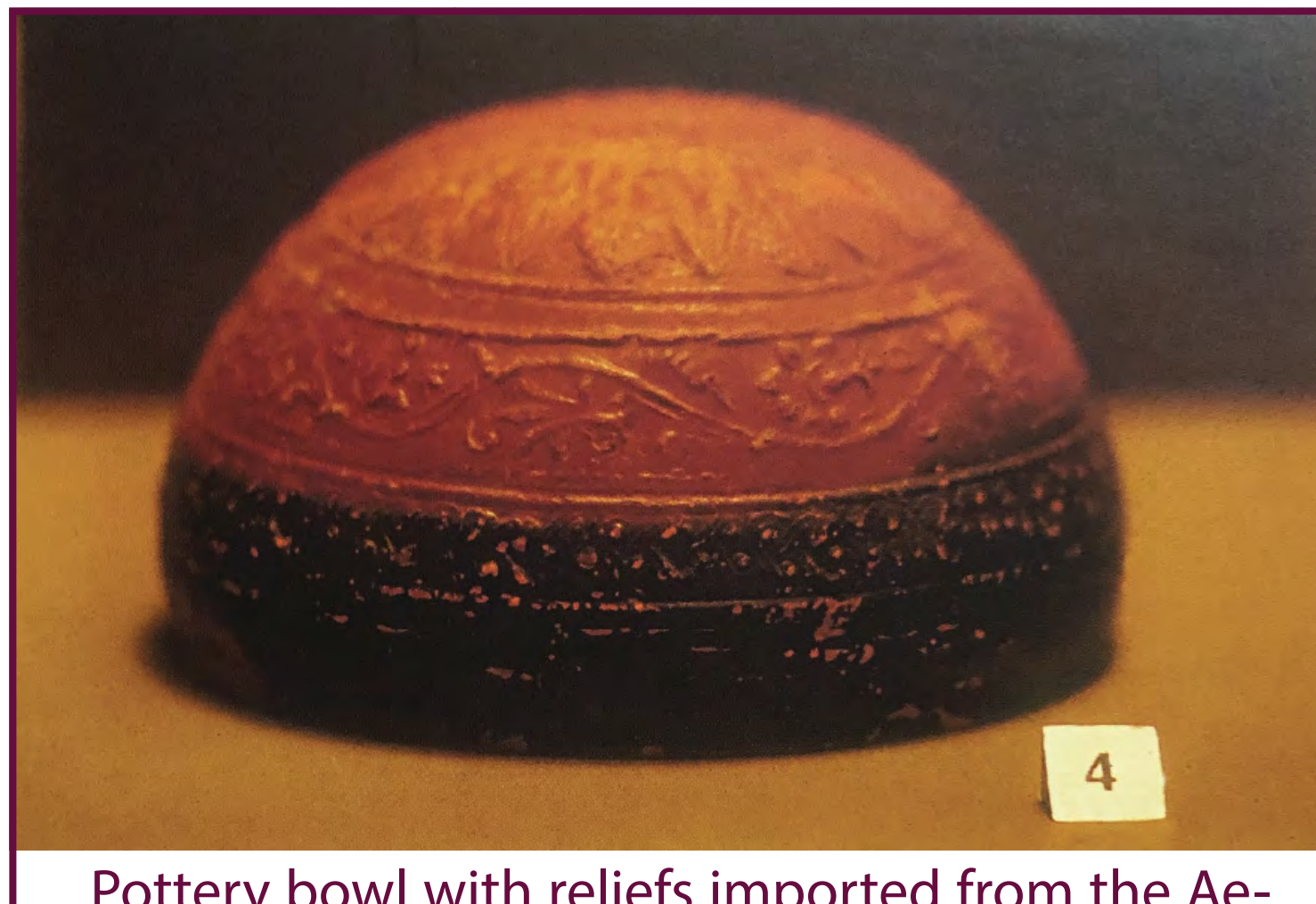


Zawiyat Ibn Arraq

The Ribat of Ibn Al-Dimashqi in the Souk area of Beirut City Center continues to be venerated to this day.

It is the only late Mameluke period edifice to have survived the war and tear of centuries and has been restored recently. This small domed sanctuary is mentioned by the 16<sup>th</sup> century Arab historian Ibn Tulun who describes it as a Ribat or hospice built by the religious authorities and the Sufi Ibn-Dimashqi for his followers. This building was used as a private madrasah where Islamic law, jurisprudence and theology were taught.

### ARTIFACTS



Pottery bowl with reliefs imported from the Aegean trade relations between Greece and the city-state of Beryte during the Hellenistic Age. It is found in the National Museum of Beirut.

#### Pottery Bowls



#### Storage Jars



Jar handle stamped with the name "Beryte" that originally was part of a receptacle containing wine or olive oil. It is found in the National Museum of Beirut.

#### Jar Handle Stamped With the Name "Beryte"



Silver tetradrachm minted in Antioch (241-13 B.C.): Diademed head of Tryphon. Silver tetradrachm minted during the reign of Perseus, king of Macedonia (second century B.C.): Diademed head of Perseus.

#### Michel Edde Collection

### CHRONOLOGY OF MAIN EVENTS



3000 - 1200 B.C. - Bronze Age

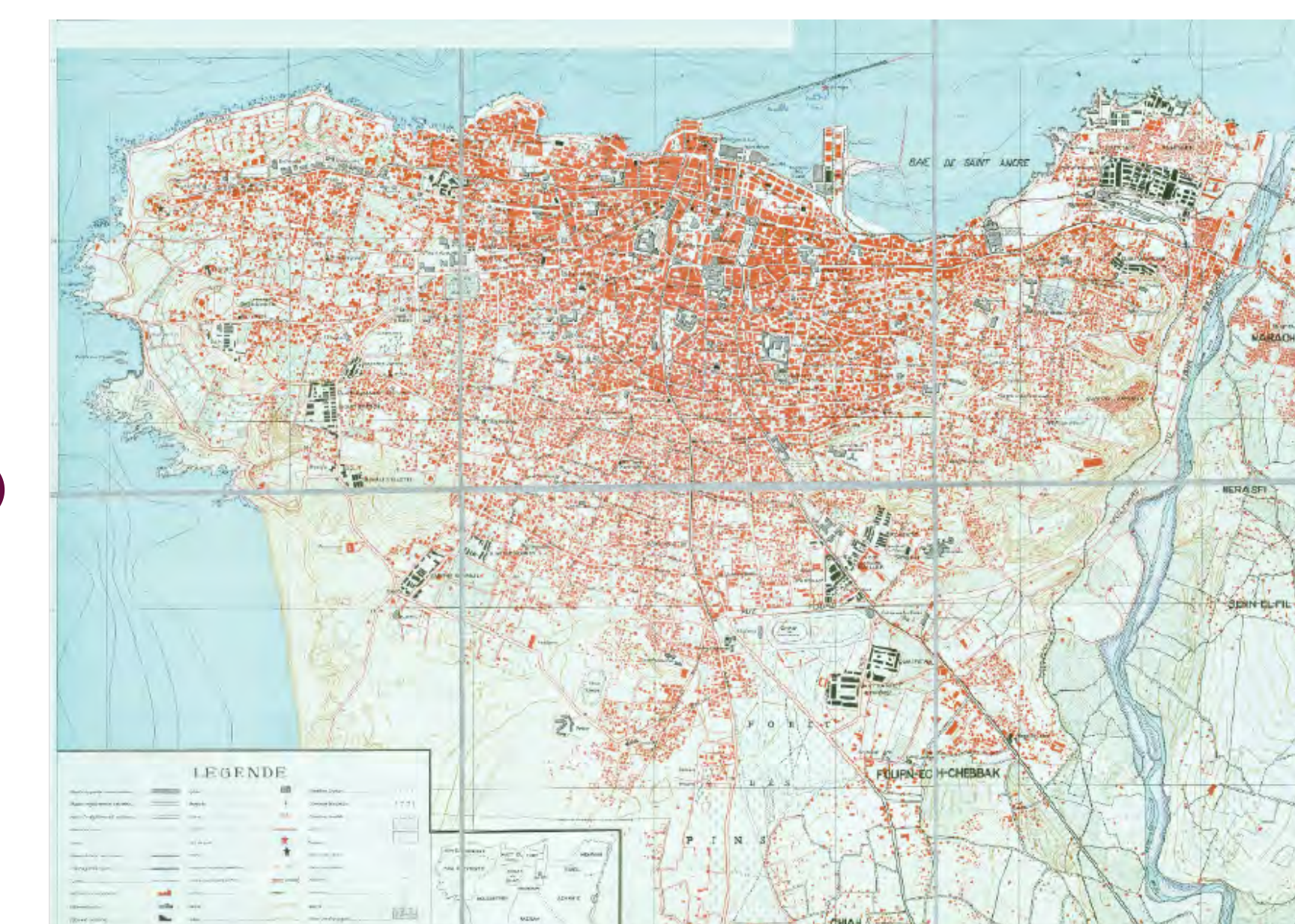
64 B.C. - 635 A.D. - Roman and Byzantine Period



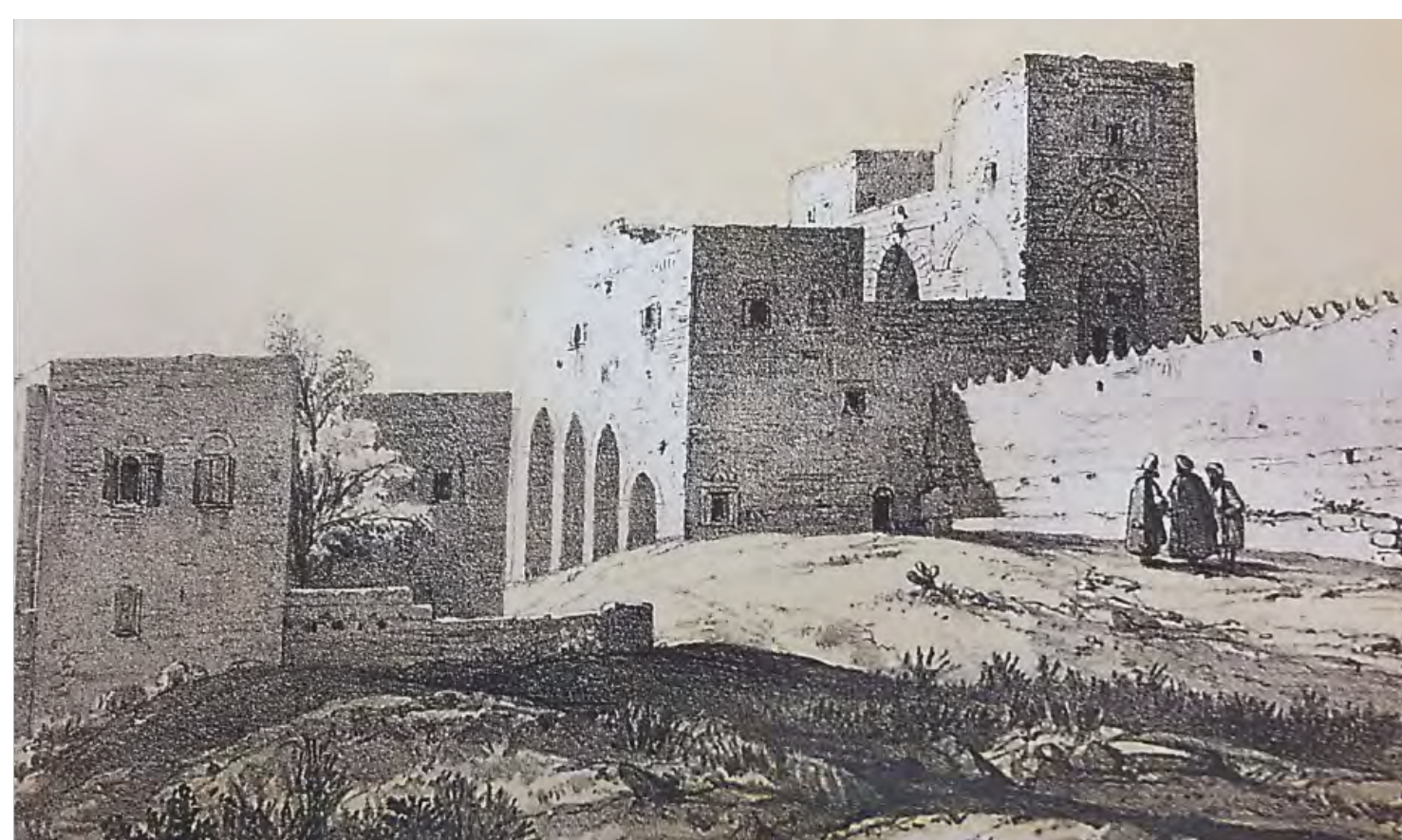
Bab Derkeh (1837)

1516 - 1917 A.D. - Ottoman Period

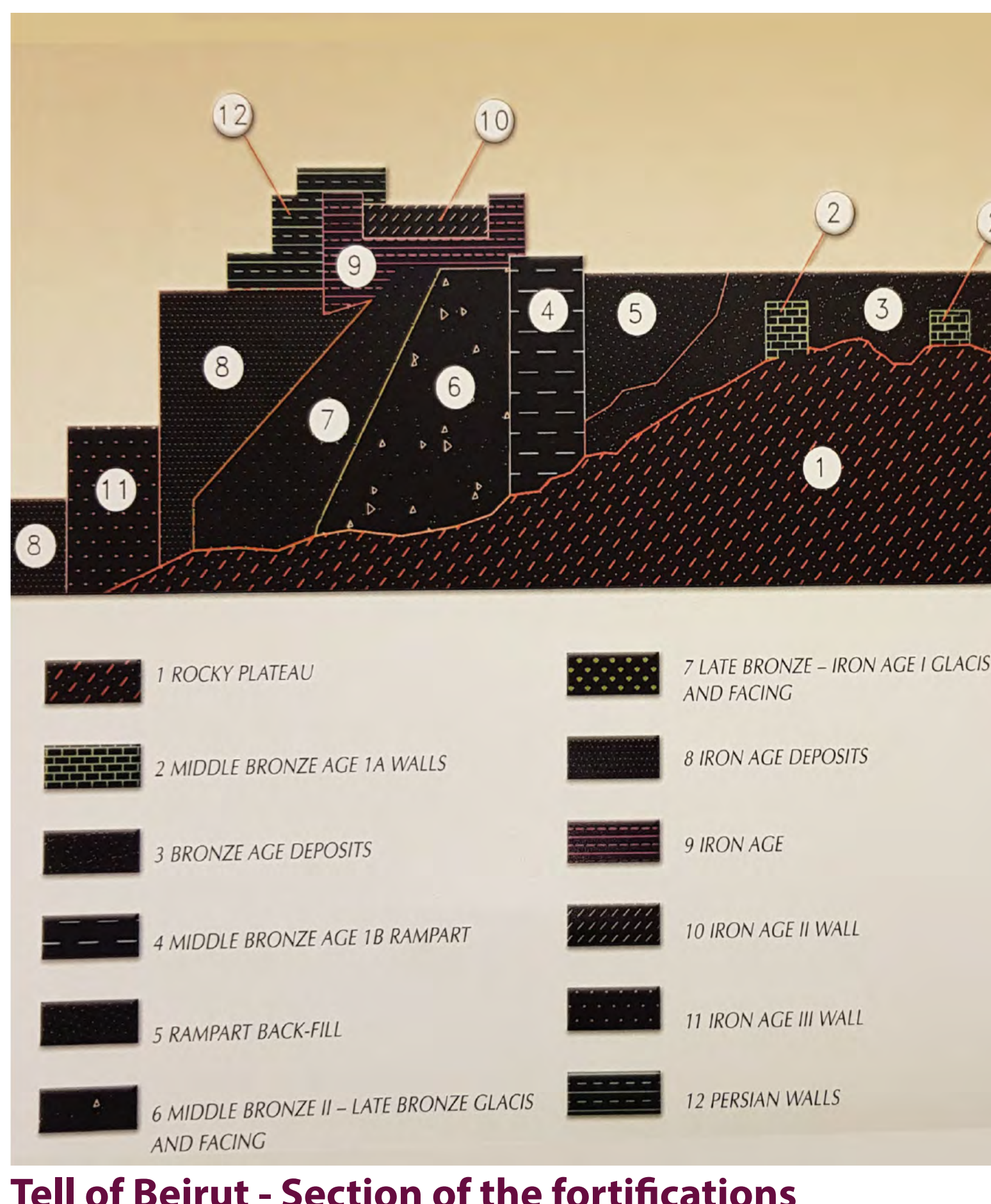
1943 - Lebanese State



### BEIRUT TELL



Inner view of the fortification of Beirut



Tell of Beirut - Section of the fortifications



Bab Derkeh - 1837

### EVALUATION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

Around 2500 B.C., Canaanite Biruta was a small town, overlooking a natural bay where ships sought shelter. During Phoenician times, the city established two harbors and extended trade links throughout the Mediterranean and beyond. In Roman times, the sacred and administrative center was relocated from the Tell to the Forum, beneath today's Etoile Square. In the Umayyad period, the northern part of the Tell regained strategic importance with the construction of fortifications overlooking the harbor. The fort, transformed into a castle in the Crusader Period, was fought over for centuries.

Shelling by the Russian fleet in 1827, and the British fleet in 1840, gave the final blow to the damaged castle which was never rebuilt.

Archaeologists' discoveries have left their marks in the urban design of the area, and the remains were integrated within Castel Square and Belvedere Park landscape. The City History Museum, to be the starting and ending point of the Heritage Trail, will celebrate major finds and bring to life the story of the growth and development of the city from ancient times to the recent past.

