

MAGHDOUCHE

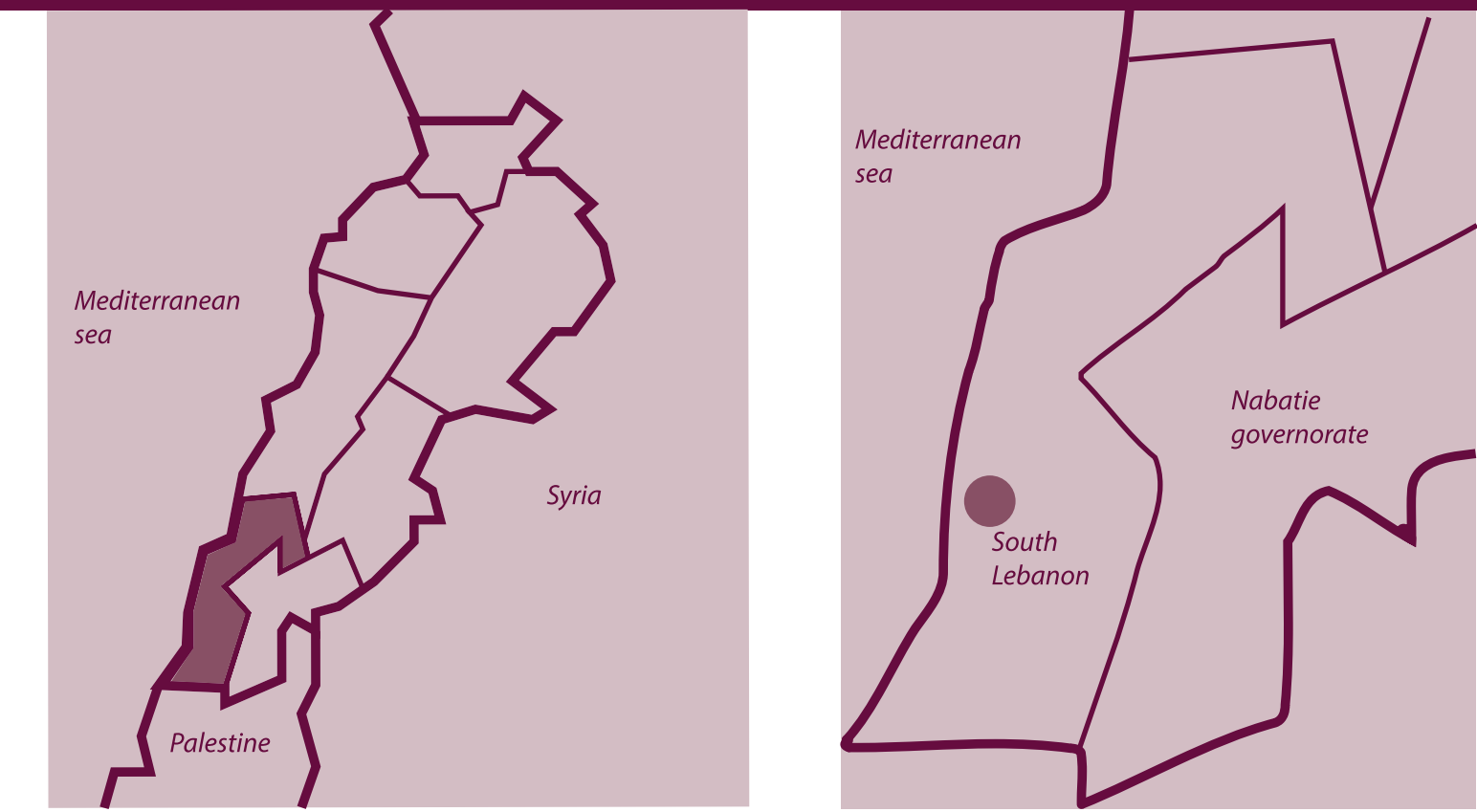
THE PHOENICIANS' ROUTE

مغدوشة

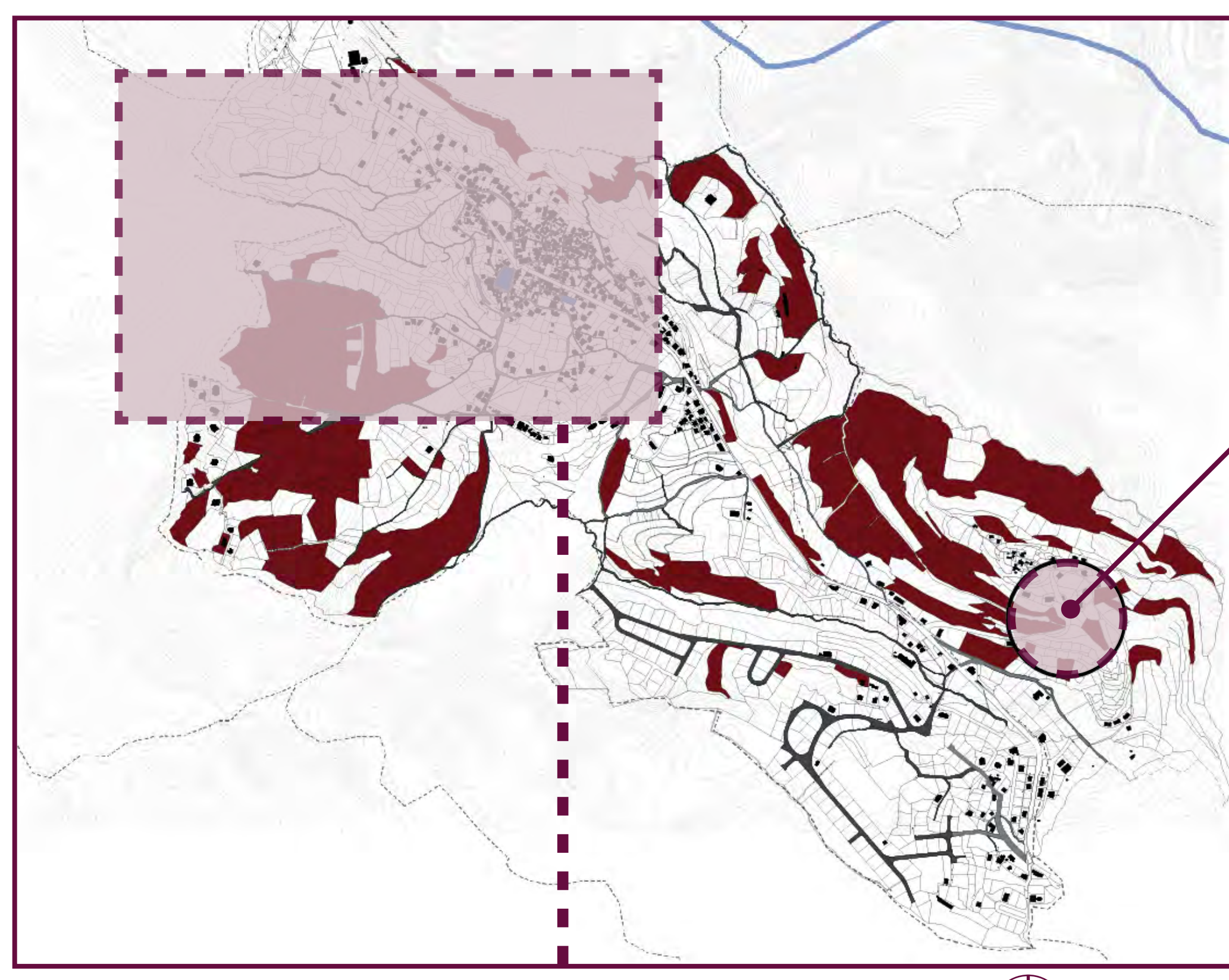
مسار الفينيقيين

INTRODUCTION

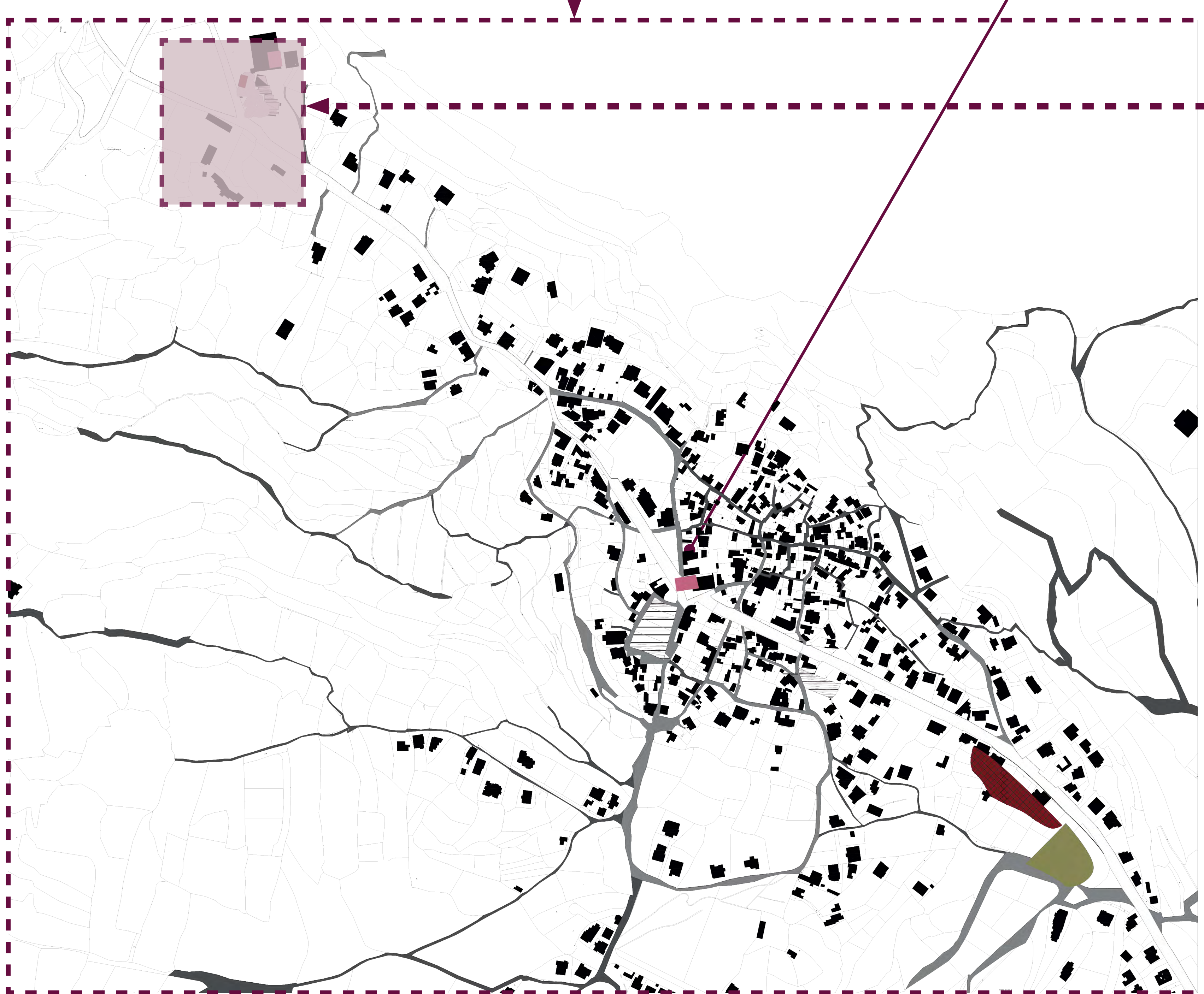
Maghdouche, a Lebanese town located in the Caza of Sidon, occupies a hill that is 200 meter above sea level, and 8 Km south-east from the city of Sidon. It was a part of the conquests that took place in Lebanon. The most prominent transformations that Lebanon has known in general, and Maghdouche in ancient history, was the rise of Christianity. Maghdouche housed the cave where Virgin Mary awaited Jesus Christ while he was preaching in Sidon. During the Phoenician conquest, the cave was a temple for Astarte, a goddess. This temple was transformed into a sanctuary for virgin Mary during the Hellenistic Age by the emperor Constantine. It is the only prominent trace of the Phoenicians in Maghdouche. The town was known, not only for its religious importance, but also as an agricultural hub. The main agricultural product was olive oil, which was exported to Egypt. During the Roman conquest, Maghdouche was an important part of the Roman road connecting Egypt to Damascus. The cave, known as "Lady of Mantara" gave Maghdouche the opportunity to enter the map of the world religious tourism.



HISTORICAL MAPPING



Scale 1/35000



Scale 1/1000

Legend

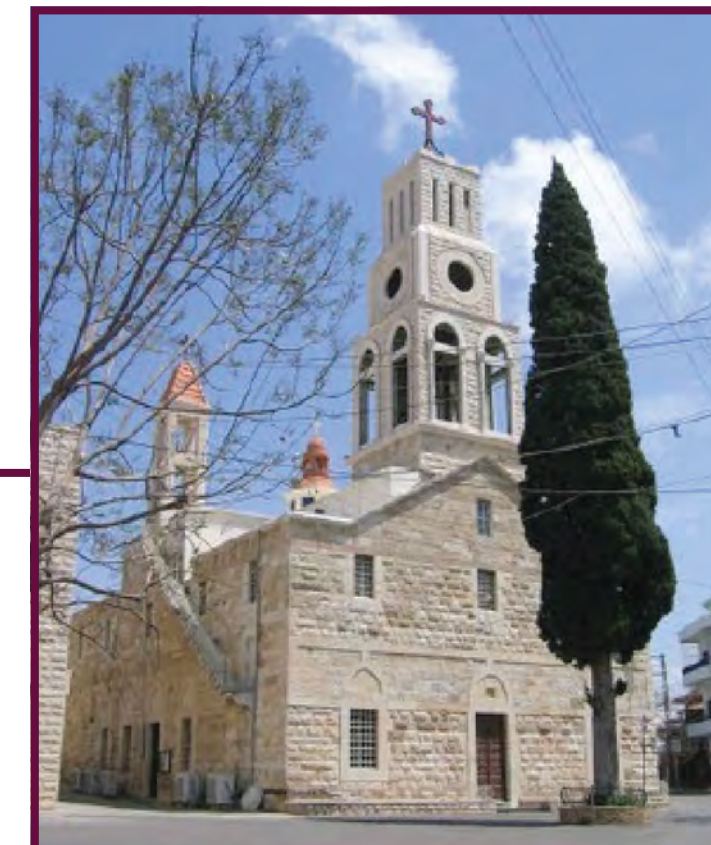
Main Road	Neolithic Age 24,000 – 3000 B.C.	French Mandate 1920 – 1943 A.D.	Public Spaces
Secondary Road	Byzantine Period 300 – 635 A.D.	Lebanese State 1943 - Present	Burried Ruins
Tertiary Road	Ottoman Period 1516 – 1919 A.D.		



Olive Tree Plantation

Olive Oil production is rich in Maghdouche since its soil type and plain earth permits it.

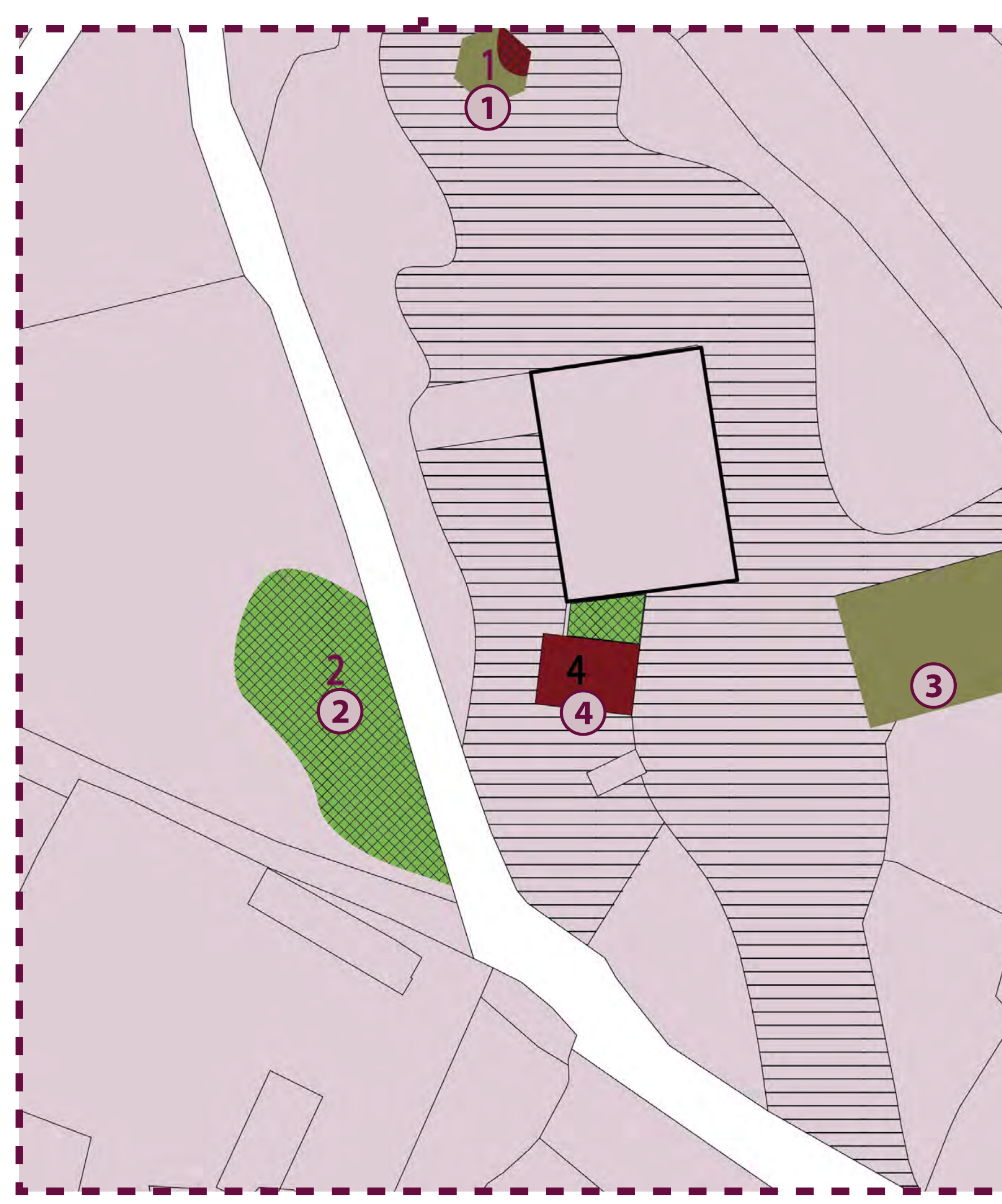
It might date back to the Phoenician Golden Age when they used to produce olive oil and trade it with Egypt.



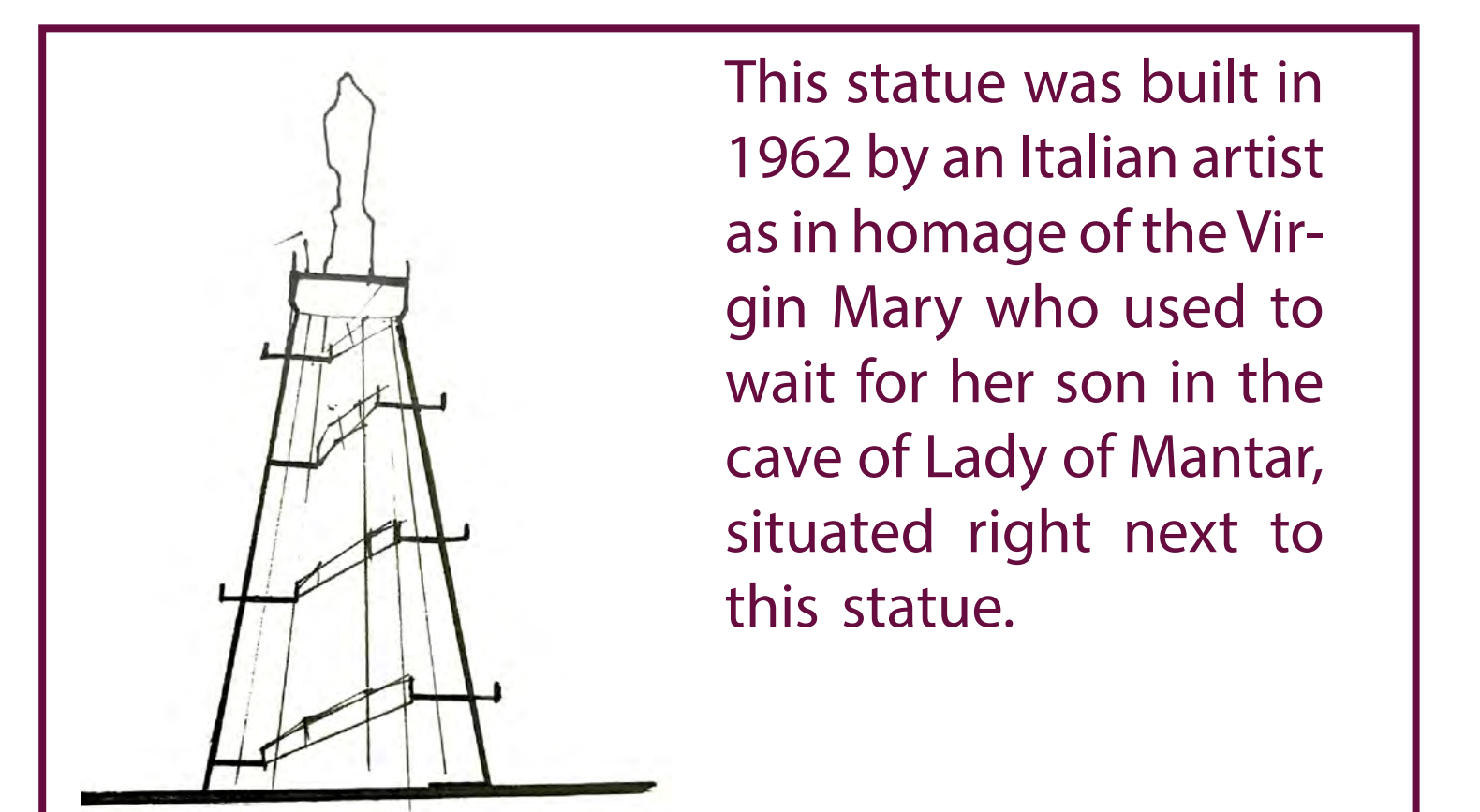
Catholic Church - 1885

The Catholic Church is an important landmark in which several occasions are celebrated such as funerals, Christmas corals and weddings etc...

In front of it is "Al-Saha" in which several festivals happen.

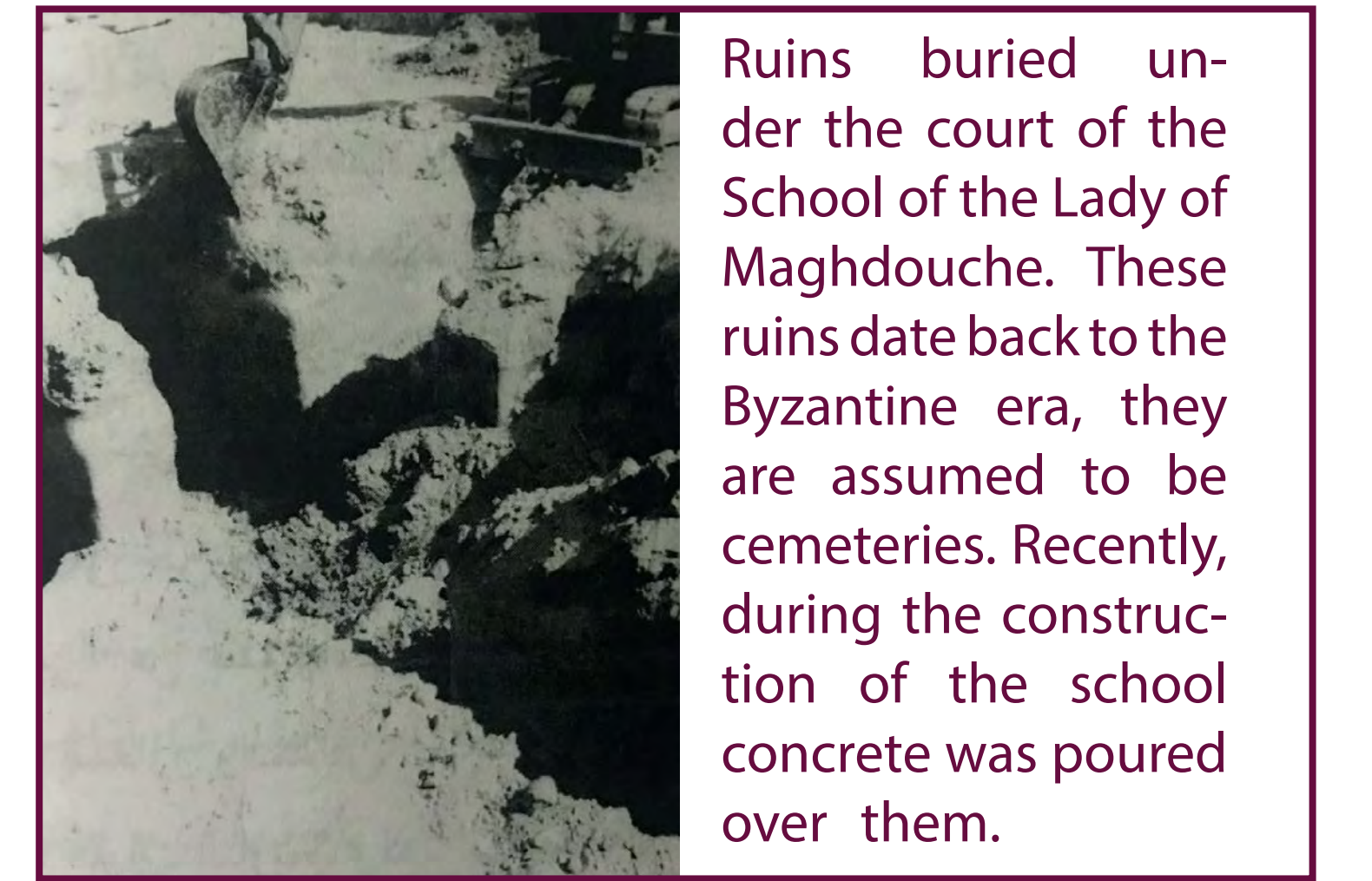


Al-Mantara Blow Up Plan



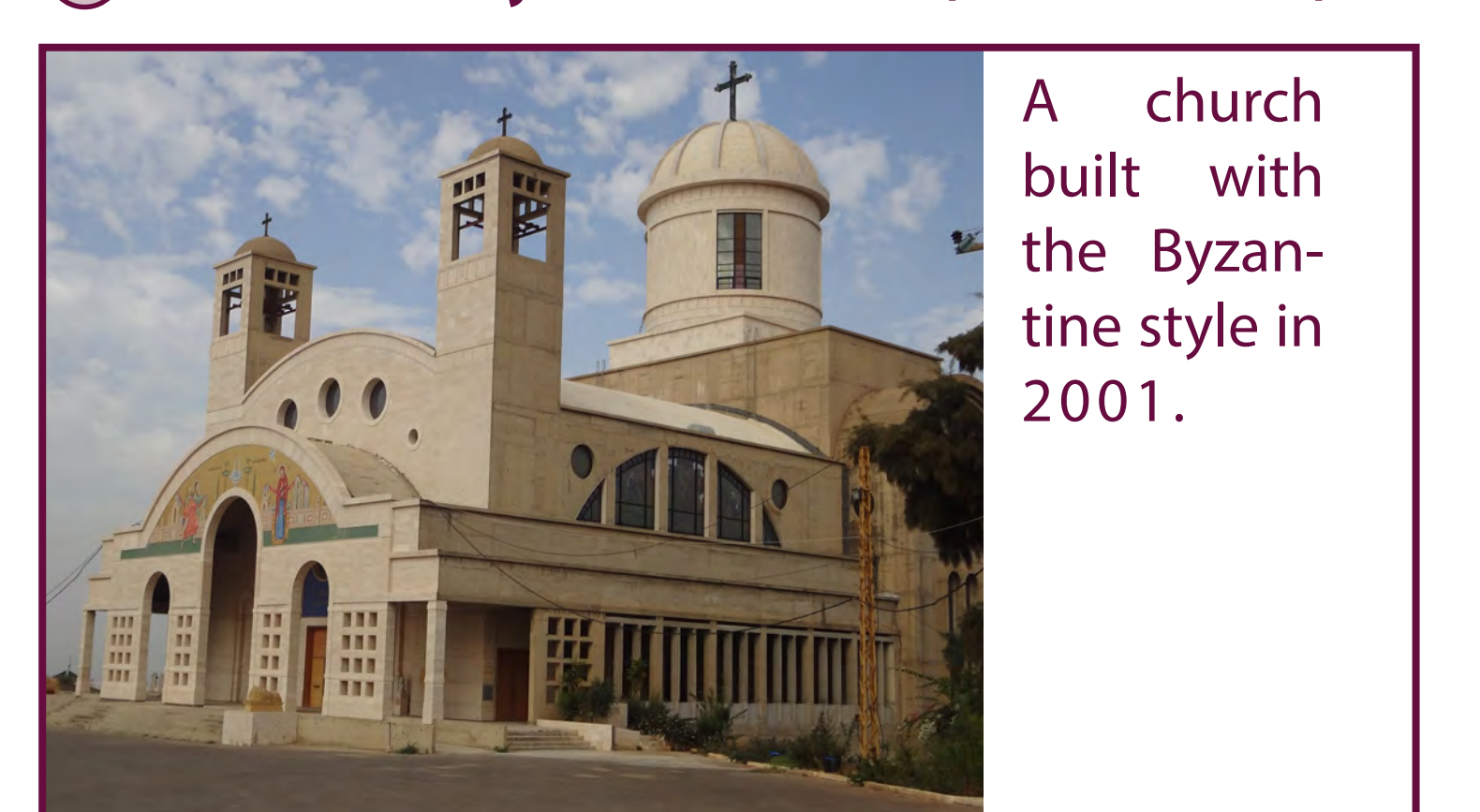
Al-Mantara Statue - 1962 A.D.

This statue was built in 1962 by an Italian artist as in homage of the Virgin Mary who used to wait for her son in the cave of Lady of Mantara, situated right next to this statue.



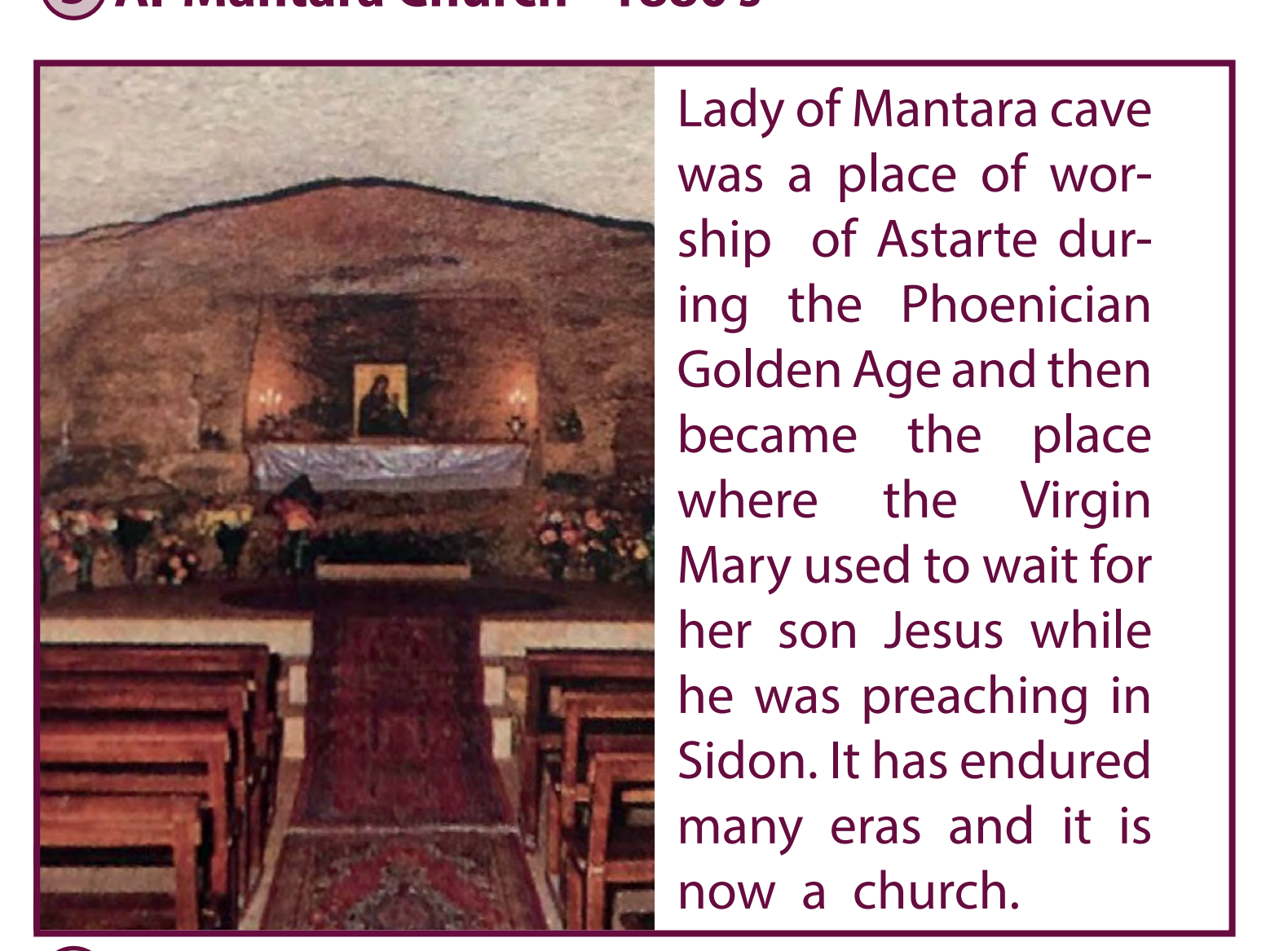
The Burried Byzantine Ruins (635-300 A.D.)

Ruins buried under the court of the School of the Lady of Maghdouche. These ruins date back to the Byzantine era, they are assumed to be cemeteries. Recently, during the construction of the school concrete was poured over them.



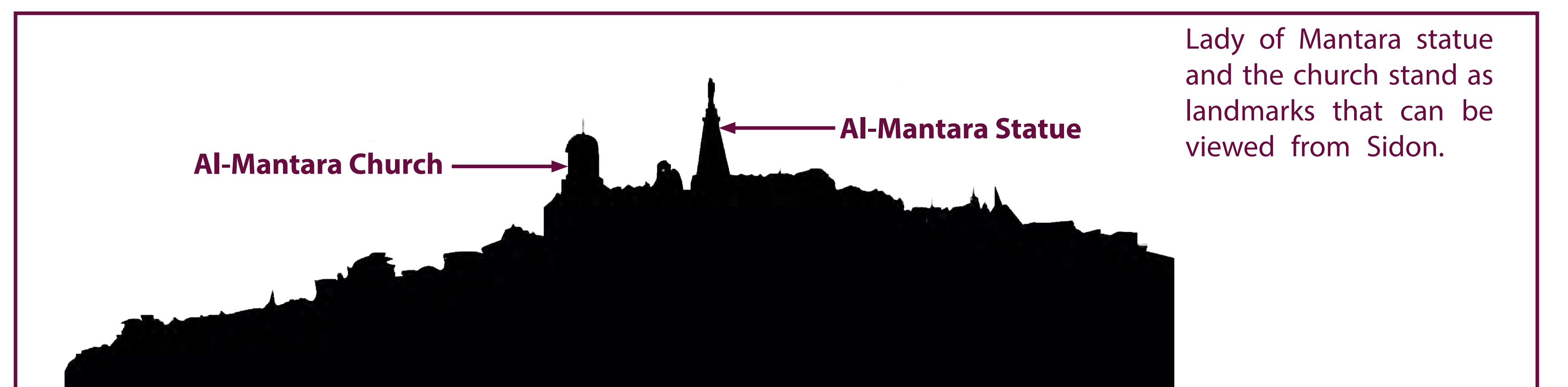
Al-Mantara Church - 1880's

A church built with the Byzantine style in 2001.



Al-Mantara Cave 1200 B.C. - Now

Lady of Mantara cave was a place of worship of Astarte during the Phoenician Golden Age and then became the place where the Virgin Mary used to wait for her son Jesus while he was preaching in Sidon. It has endured many eras and it is now a church.



Al-Mantara Church

Al-Mantara Statue

Lady of Mantara statue and the church stand as landmarks that can be viewed from Sidon.

THE MANTARA CAVE

The Lady of Mantara cave is now transformed into a church and has a rich historical background and witnessed many eras throughout history. In fact, in the Golden Age, Phoenicia used to be the place of worship of the goddess Astarte. Afterwards, this cave became the place where Virgin Mary used to wait for her son Jesus while spreading his message in the coastal area of Sidon. This cave was then neglected, but after the arrival of Constantine in the fourth century A.D., this cave got transformed into a church and became a place of attraction and of religious miracles.

In 1726, during the Ottoman Period, this cave was then re-discovered, and it was a place where the soldiers of Ibrahim Basha Al-Masri hid from the Ottoman in 1831.

Finally, nowadays, it is a church that entered the map of the World Religious Tourism.



Temple of Astarte built by her son Echmoun



First Century A.D.

Virgin Mary awaited Jesus Christ in the cave while preaching in Sidon.

338 - 306 B.C.

Constantine reached the area of Sidon and transformed the cave into a sanctuary for the Virgin Mary.

1721 A.D.

Rediscovery of the cave and became a place of attraction and religious miracles.

1880's

The priest Kyoumji ordered to renovate the temple-cave and enclosed it with the 3 arches volume.

Nowadays

The cave now stands as a religious monument and a main touristic attraction in Maghdouche.

CHRONOLOGY OF MAIN EVENTS

1200 - 333 B.C. - Phoenician and Canaanite Period

- Marked by the cave.
- During the Phoenician era, the Persians resided in Maghdouche, especially the King Echmoun Azar who built the Temple of Astarte for his mother in Maghdouche.

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

- The invasion of Sidon by Emperor Constantine.
- Maghdouche is part of the Roman Road connecting Damascus to Egypt and other Roman colonies.



1516 - 1917 A.D. - Ottoman Period

- Re-discovery of the Lady of Mantara Cave.
- Building of Basilic and Byzantine Church.
- The soldiers of Ibrahim Basha Al-Masri took the cave as a place of refugees from the Ottoman power.

1943 - Lebanese State

A Bronze statue done at the time of Priest Basiliou Khoury, who had an important role in the growth of Maghdouche. 16/05/1963.

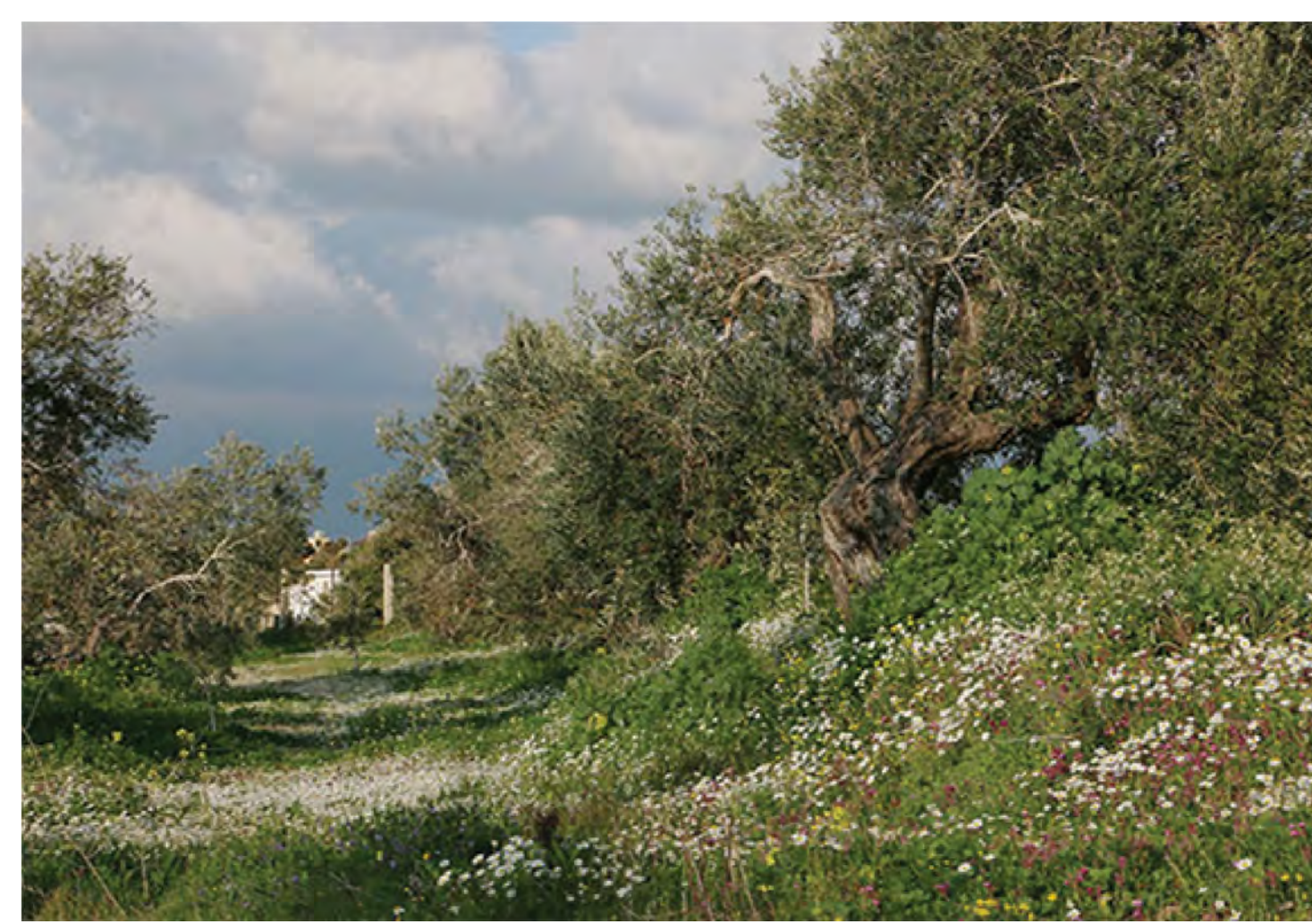


1975 - 1990 - Civil War

When the conflict between the Palestinian refugees (Ain El-Helwi Camp) and A Lebanese Party (Harakit Amal) started, the people of Maghdouche ran away for several years. Upon the end of the war, in 1990, they came back to their hometown and this statue was installed as a memory to such event.



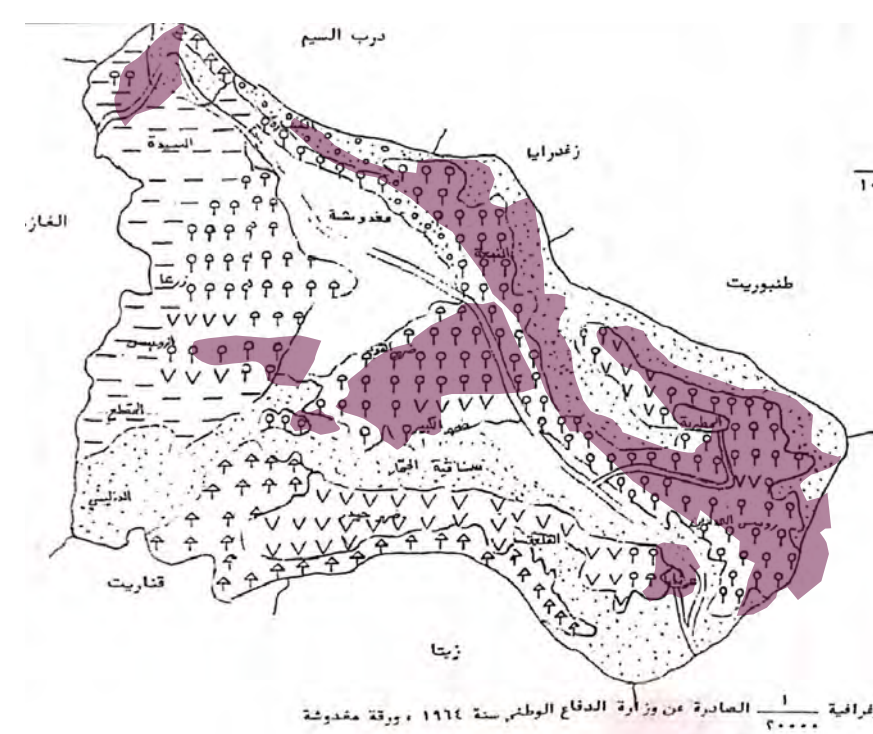
OLIVE OIL PRODUCTION



Olive oil production is rich in Maghdouche since its soil type and plane earth permits it. This production might date back to the Phoenician Golden Age when they used to produce olive oil and trade it with Egypt through the coast of Sidon.

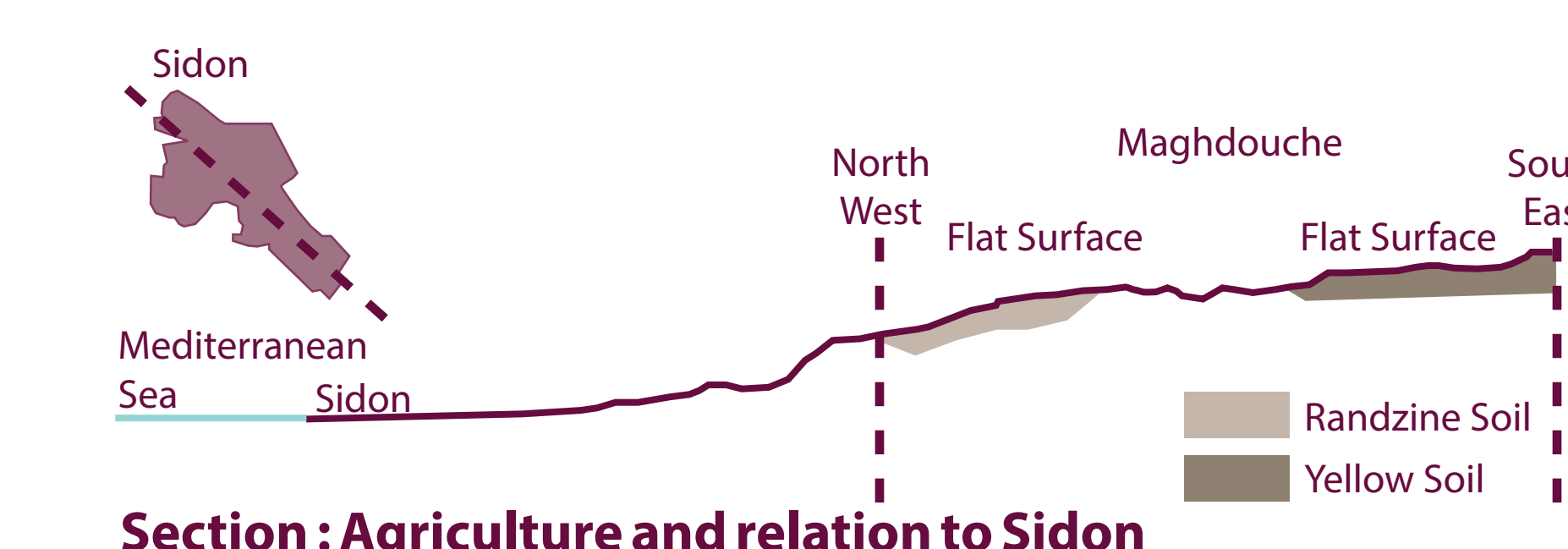


A wooden chunk is put in the middle of a plate where the olives are placed, and a stone rotates around it. In the middle of this stone, there is another wooden chink, parallel to the one in the middle that helps people move the stone in order to squeeze the olives and produce oil.



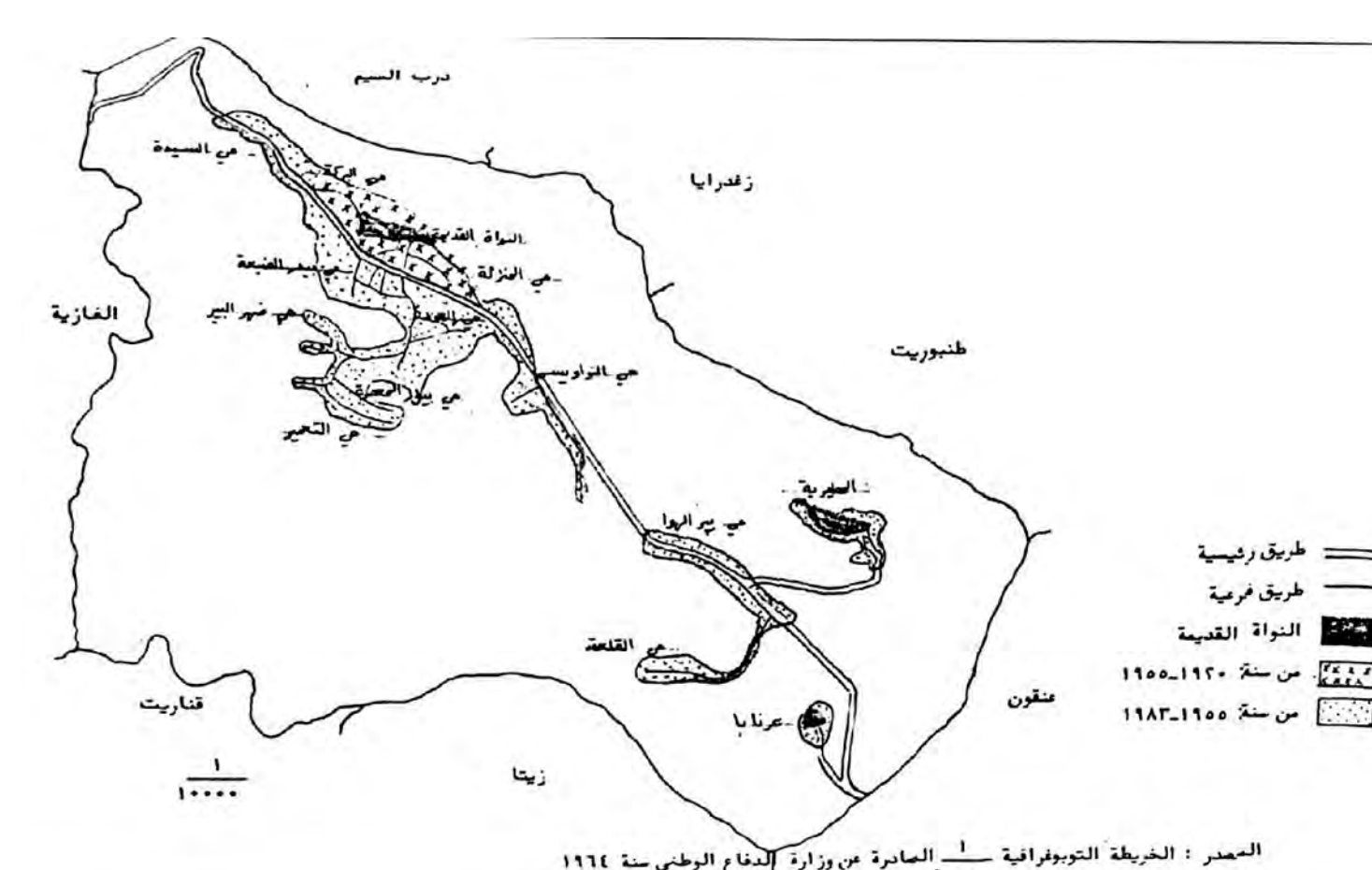
Spread of olive plantation in Maghdouche in 1964

Maghdouche is known for its rich soil and flat surface which allows the plantation of different types of trees especially olive trees. Olive trees are very abundant in Maghdouche due to the presence of the rendzina soil that ensures a good environment for rainfed agriculture.

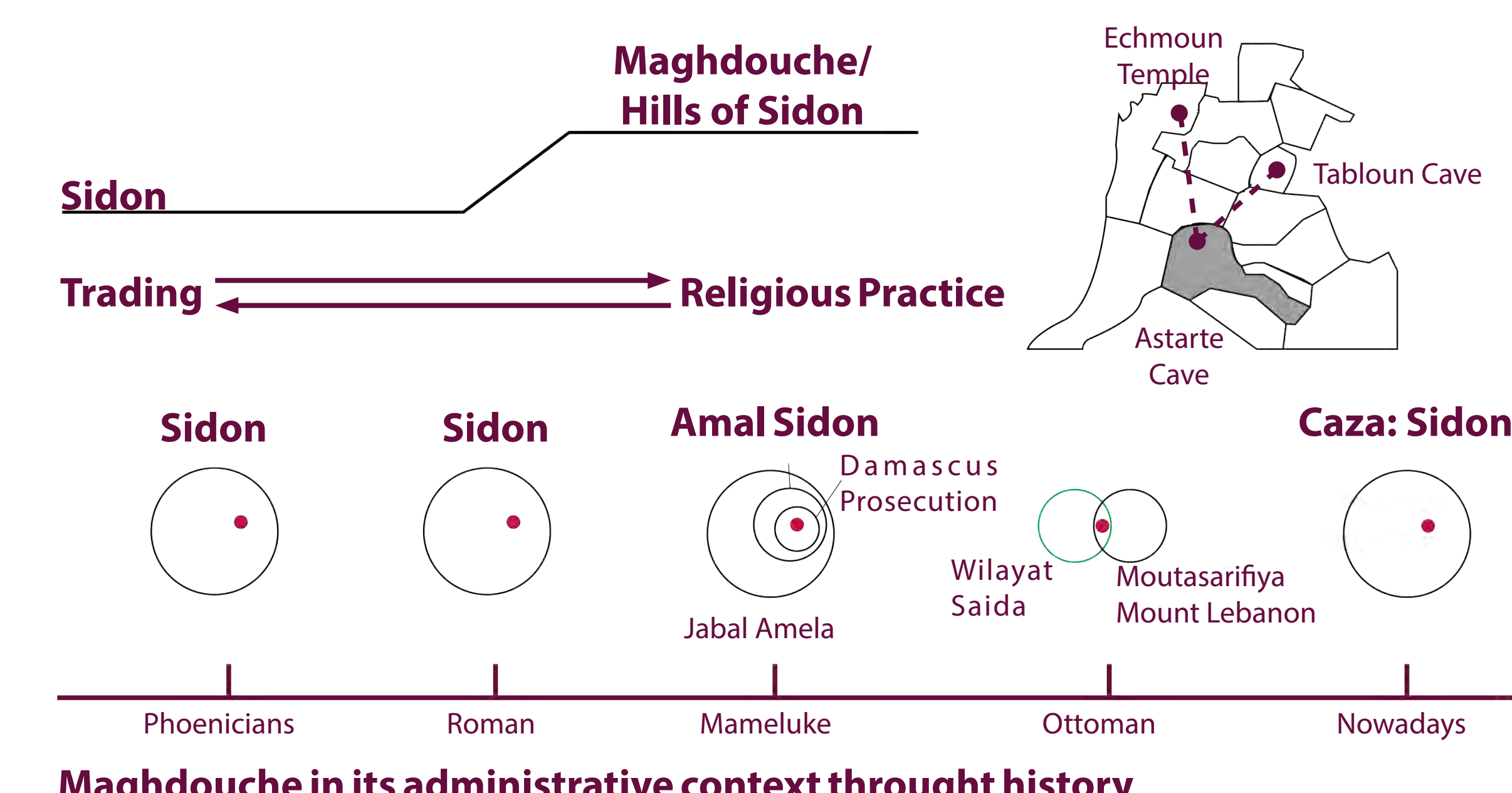


Section : Agriculture and relation to Sidon

URBAN EXPANSION AND RELATION TO THE SURROUNDING



The town expanded around the old city core, until the construction of the main road connecting Maghdouche to the surrounding. Since then expansion took place along both sides of the road.



During the Phoenicians period, Maghdouche was a religious stop. They used to visit Maghdouche to serve the Phoenician goddess. Meanwhile, they used to trade in Sidon the olive oil they produced in Maghdouche.

There is a connection between the temple of Astarte in Maghdouche and the temple of Echmoun in east Sidon along with other temples in other villages through underground tunnels.

EVALUATION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

Historical monuments in Maghdouche, such as Roman, Phoenician and Byzantine, are neglected and not well preserved. For instance, the Necropolis region was inhabited through history by Phoenicians and Romanians. Recently, pots and lanterns dating back to Byzantine and Romanian eras, were thrown away, lost and/or stolen. Furthermore, the ruins found while building the Basilic Church were filled with earth to build the stairs of the church.

Additionally, the Byzantine ruins found under the school of the Lady of Maghdouche were also buried along with a lot of ruins coincidentally found by families that are strongly neglected. Therefore, these ruins are prone to privatisation and the lack of awareness of the people of Maghdouche will lead to the disappearance of this important historical heritage.

However, the cave of Lady of Mantara was highly preserved throughout history due to its religious importance and entered the map of the World Religious Tourism.

In conclusion, all historical monuments should be preserved equally in order to remind people of their historical background and for it to be a place of rich heritage.

