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Hanan Charaf

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**THE JOURNAL OF EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN
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is a peer-reviewed journal published by The Pennsylvania State University Press. *JEMAHS* is devoted to traditional, anthropological, social, and applied archaeologies of the eastern Mediterranean, encompassing both prehistoric and historic periods. The journal's geographic range spans three continents and brings together, as no academic periodical has done before, the archaeologies of Greece and the Aegean, Anatolia, the Levant, Cyprus, Egypt, and North Africa.

As the journal will not be identified with any particular archaeological discipline, the editors invite articles from all varieties of professionals who work on the past cultures of the modern countries bordering the eastern Mediterranean Sea. Similarly, a broad range of topics will be covered including, but by no means limited to:

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PORPHYREON THROUGH THE AGES

Tomasz Waliszewski

Mariusz Gwiazda

The Fading Archaeological Heritage of the Lebanese Coast

ABSTRACT

Ancient Porphyreon (Jiyeh/Nebi Younis) was a large rural settlement located on the coast of modern-day Lebanon, near the Phoenician city of Sidon. This article presents the initial research results of the stratigraphic data, extending from at least the eighth century BC to the seventh century AD, and explores how Phoenician village functioned. Analysis proves that it played a significant role in the local economy—on the one hand, providing for the city of Sidon and, on the other, mediating the exchange of goods with rural settlements, scattered across the mountainous hinterland. Uncovering the mysteries of this coastal settlement is extremely important, especially in light of the increasing threat to the archaeological heritage of Lebanon.

KEYWORDS: Phoenicia, rural settlement, Iron Age, Persian period, Greco-Roman period, Sidon

In about half an hour we passed over a small projecting point called Ras El Jeddra, and in a hour, we came to a similar tongue of land, called Ras el-Nebbionis, where there were some ruins of former buildings . . . (Buckingham 1825: 435)

The Phoenician coast between Beirut and Sidon is interspersed with numerous shallow bays from which mountainous promontories arise, similar to Ras el-Jedrah or Ras Nebi Younis mentioned by James Silk Buckingham when he traveled through the region in the early nineteenth century. The area is associated with the prophet Jonah who is believed to have been washed ashore here after being thrown overboard. This spot has also been described by European travelers such as Consul Clairambault who mentioned the existence of a village mosque associated with the prophet's *weli* ("tomb") and a khan for caravans to access to drinking water (Chahine 1989: 179) in 1767. Aside from Nebi Younis (Jonah), the archaeological site is also tied to Jiyeh, the name belonging to a settlement located to the north.

The ruins mentioned by travelers caught the interest of Frenchman Ernest Renan, who, between October 1860 and October 1861, led the first scientific archaeological exploration of Phoenicia. He was the first to associate the site with the town of *Porphyreon* mentioned by ancient writers (Renan 1864: 513) and discovered walls covered in paintings as well as a chapel filled with mosaic floors. From that moment onward, explorations of this rich archaeological site continued, divided into stages due to the dramatic events that Lebanon witnessed during the twentieth century.

In the spring of 1914, French archaeologist Georges Contenau conducted research at Jiyeh and discovered an