

New antiquities discovered in Sidon to be put on display

By Mohammed Zaatari

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SIDON, Lebanon: Antiquities have been discovered at an archaeological site in Sidon and will be on display during an exhibition next month in the southern city.

A coin dating back to the era of Abbasid Caliph al-Mansour and a head made of colored glass from the Phoenician era were discovered this year at the Freres College site, which was once part of an ancient wall that surrounded the city of Sidon in the Middle Ages.

The antiquities were discovered in excavation works that have been carried out so far at the site.

In 1998, the Culture Ministry's Directorate General of Antiquities gave permission to the British Museum to carry out excavations in a plot of land expropriated in the 1960s by Maurice Chehab, then Director General of Antiquities, for the purpose of research and methodic excavation without the pressures of developers.

'The history of Sidon represents the history of all Lebanon'

Objects discovered at the site since 1998 will be displayed in "Sidon: Best of 15 years," an exhibition featuring 43 of the most representative objects found in the area.

The exhibition will take place at the headquarters of the Directorate General of Antiquities in the Bawwabet al-Fawqa neighborhood of Sidon between Sept. 3 and Nov. 3. The event will be held under the patronage of the DGA, which is affiliated with the Culture Ministry. The Lebanese British Friends of the National Museum will organize the event, which was funded by the Philippe Jabre Association.

The Freres site illustrates the historical continuity of a city from the end of the 4th millennium B.C. through the medieval period.

"We want to give residents of Sidon an idea about the objects that were found



Local and foreign archaeologists have worked at the site for the past 15 years.

during excavation works over the past 15 years [in the college site]," said the British Museum's Claude Doumit Serhal, who supervises excavation works.

"Of course we won't display there the 1,400 objects that we are preparing to exhibit in the Sidon Museum [to be established in the future], but our aim is to make the people of Sidon know what happened over the past 5,000 years," she told The Daily Star Wednesday.

Serhal said local archaeologists and

their British colleagues have worked very hard over the past 15 years at the site. "We are rewriting the history of Sidon and shedding light on it."

Serhal said the work shed light not only on the history of Sidon, but also the heritage of the entire country. "The history of Sidon represents the history of all Lebanon, the history of the Mediterranean ... it is the history of people who stuck to their land and did not abandon it over thousands of

years," she said.

She said that parts of the wall discovered date back to the era when Sidon was occupied by the Crusaders.

Serhal said that the exhibition covers an era stretching from the year 4,000 B.C. to the Abbasid era, which lasted from A.D. 750 to A.D. 1258.

"Our ancestors are just like us" is a drawing competition organized by the international paper mills and stationers Fabiano.

As part of the competition, school children will visit the site to learn about how their ancestors lived and then find commonalities between current and ancient traditions before drawing a scene depicting their interpretations.

The exhibition offers an early glimpse of the future Sidon Museum, which will house 1,400 objects excavated from the site.

Entrance to the exhibition is free and is accessible to all.