# Computer-based interactive presentation of the archaeological excavations in the souks of Beirut

The presentation is conceived as an interactive supplement to the exhibited objects providing additional information in models, photographs, maps and text. It will be displayed with any readily available recent version of world-wide web browsers, augmented with VRML and possibly QuickTime plug-ins. The documents will be coded in html with text content provided by the Department of History and Archaeology at the American University of Beirut (AUB) for versions in French and English. Depending on the target equipment at the exhibition, the presentation will be adaptable for either mouse or touch-screen pointing.

## MODEL

The site of the excavation will be presented as maps, aerial photographs and an interactive 3D VRML model. These will all contain "hotspots" linking to detailed maps, site drawings, photographs and objects. The model will be navigable with a series of preset "views" in addition to interactive "walkthru" navigation on part of the user. Items such as residual buildings, individual objects and mosaics will be clickable linking to further information and illustrations.

## OVERVIEW IMAGES

Maps of the general area, overview and detailed maps of the site and various excavation locations will be used as reference areas to give an idea of the whole of the souks.

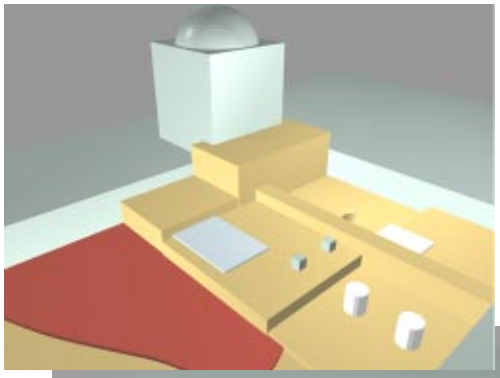
## MOSAICS

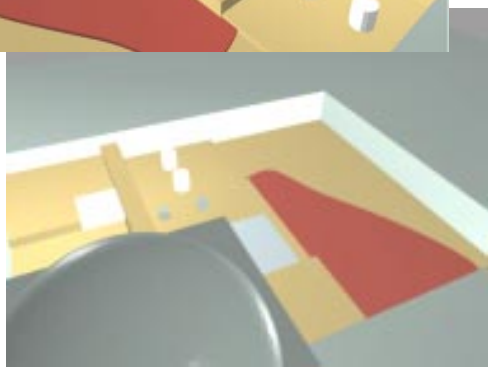
As supplemental information to the exhibited mosaic panel composite images of the insitu finds as a whole will be linked to both model and overview images. These will in turn be clickable to reveal detail photographs from the various mosaic sites, accompanied by explanatory texts.

## GLASS, POTTERY AND OTHER OBJECTS

Individual object finds will be linked in to their original sites in the overview images and to and object index. While all will be illustrated with detail pictures, some selected objects will be rendered as VRML models that can be explored either through a series of animated, preset scenes or by the user. Some objects may also be presented as interactive QTVR "movies" which can be handled by the user, showing the object from all sides.

*Illustrations top to bottom:*
*Composite mosaic floor insitu, mosaic inscription from "The House of Jealousy", aerial photograph of the city center before demolition. Site map in background.*





## SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES

It is proposed to include a separate, but interconnected collection of photographs of the souks area taken before the buildings covering the archaeological site were demolished. The images will be annotated and linked to a special map indicating the image direction with the map of the excavations superimposed.

## LANGUAGE AND TECHNOLOGY

The presentation will be produced in French and English. If the available material merits, some audio might also be linked to special items pending further planning. The presentation will be coded in hypertext mark-up language (html) for display with readily available recent versions of WWW browsers and plug-ins for VRML and QuckTime VR. We are concerned that the presentation not be dependent on proprietary software and special hardware, but that it can be run directly from a local disk, a CD ROM, local intranet server or even over the Internet, depending on the target audience.

## INTERFACE AND ACCESSIBILITY

The presentation will have a modest, unassuming graphic character, adorned only with simple headers and footers for identification and recursive navigation with central emphasis on informational content. Depending on overall context, graphics may be adapted to other accompanying presentational material at the exhibition if required. The user interface and functionality will provide access to overview pages and indexes from all pages ensuring that the user not "get lost" while navigating the presentation.

## CREDIT AND ATTRIBUTION

Standard rules for bibliographic credtation for the material content, presentation authoring and exhibition context will be given according to the Berne Copyright Convention. The presentation will be developed by the Digital Documentation Center at AUB in cooperation with the AUB Department of History and Archaeology.

Professor Børre Ludvigsen
The Digital Documentation Center, AUB
November 7, 1997

*Illustrations top to bottom:*
*VRML site model (oversimplified for illustratory purposes), glass objects (not from Beirut), sample VRML models of pottery found in the Beirut excavations based on section drawings. Site map in background.*