

Some Remarks on the Coastal Plain of Palestine under Achaemenid Rule—an Archaeological Synopsis

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In recent decades a number of attempts have been made at summarizing aspects of the material culture of Palestine under Achaemenid rule;¹ however, the need for revising, updating and adding new perspectives and observations together with relevant published and unpublished data still remains. In what follows, I will put forward an archaeological outline of some of the wider material aspects connected with the Coastal Plain of Palestine which have been neglected up to now in the scientific literature dealing with the period, and I will also look at some well-studied domains from new perspectives.²

The Route Network

Palestine, as a geographical region located to the south-west of the Fertile Crescent, *i.e.* the area which at present includes the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, is made up of five essential constituents which must be taken in consideration when we discuss its routes in a given period.³

1. The geographical constituent: the location of Palestine in the heart of the Near East, between Egypt and the major centers of the Fertile Crescent on one hand, and between the hubs of the Arabian Peninsula and the Mediterranean shores on the other. When this relatively small country came under the sway of Eastern Powers, its particular location made it into a minor province and, in the same time, a major land-bridge.

2. The topographical and environmental constituent: the type of rocks, the location of streams and water sources, the climate and the type of vegetation. These factors prescribed the formation of a route pattern, which included several longitudinal arteries that extended along the country's main north-south land strips, in the Coastal Plain, and inland further east in the foothills of Samaria and Judah, and along the Rift Valley. These arteries were intersected by a series of transverse routes, which extended along low topographical features that provided the best available routes from west to east:

1 The pioneer work of Watzinger was archaeologically-oriented (1935: 4-10). It was followed by more elaborate attempts some three decades later by Stern (1973, Hebrew edition; 1982, updated English edition; 1984 English summary). Weippert (1988: 682-718) gives in the main a summary of Stern's monograph, while Stern's more recent collective publication on Persian period Palestine (2001: 351-582) is a partially updated precis of his 1982 monograph. Recently Carter (2003) attempted to summarize the picture of Syria-Palestine in the Persian period from an archaeological point of view, together with an abstract on the Province of Judah based on his monograph on the subject (1999). Other publications do not provide more conclusive studies than those cited above.

2 Although my presentation at the conference covered more ground than specified below, I am limiting myself in this paper to a selection of normally overlooked aspects.

3 The following is based upon a joint oral presentation by Israel Roll and the author at the fourth International Congress on the Archaeology of the Near East (ICAANE), held at Berlin in March-April 2004.

across valleys in Lower Galilee, along river beds in Samaria, on top of transverse ridges in Judah, and across the extensive plains of the northern Negev.

3. Settlement patterns and models: the nature of this constituent of the coast of Persian period Palestine is discussed below. Here I must emphasize that the location, size and nature of the urban and administrative centers more often than not determine the arrangement of the network. It is quite obvious that main routes usually connected between main centers, hence the fundamental role played by the coastal cities in the development of traffic along the routes in Palestine. As for official state traffic, here the centers of government and the military installations were of even greater importance, being located not only in the central towns but also in strongholds distributed at politically vital points along the main lines of communication.

4. The economical factor: the character of the financing body, military or civil, which holds effect on the nature of the route system, side by side with its technological abilities.

5. The ruling authority: the nature of the government of the country was of major importance, because this dictated the character of the route network, its priorities and purpose. In the times of the First Temple (*i.e.* the Iron Age, during the days of the Unified and Divided Monarchy) and in the latter part of the Second Temple period (*i.e.* in Hasmonean times), when the country was a small but an independent political entity, a local but centralized route system was established, which focused upon the capital, Jerusalem, and at times also upon Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. In between these two periods, as well as in earlier times, *i.e.* in the Late Bronze Age, Palestine became a main land-bridge for a series of Eastern Powers that ruled over large parts or even the whole of the Near East. Then the main traffic centered on the north-south coastal route, which may well be defined as a Trunk Route, while the other thoroughfares became regional or even local routes.

The route network of Palestine under Achaemenid rule clearly belongs to this latter category. While applying historical perspectives together with the evidence from the increasing number of excavations and surveys at Persian period sites in Palestine, we can now propose a detailed description of the royal (international) and local (regional) imperial route network. By mapping district capitals and Achaemenid administrative strongholds (both residences and fortresses), we can draw lines along extant ancient routes,⁴ or relate to the area topography (*fig. 1*). Both royal and regional routes were most probably unpaved and maintained by the local administration, as we have no material evidence for any systematic road paving prior to Roman times in Palestine. The chief royal artery that came to serve first and foremost the royal military and administrative traffic was the Trunk Route which extended along the Palestinian coast and beyond, to Syria in the north and Egypt in the south, and was literally an eastern Mediterranean coastal highway.⁵ In Palestine it was controlled on the sea-side with fortresses, like those uncovered at Ashdod, Tel Michal and Shiqmona, which are located some 60 km apart (see below). From the district capital of Dor this trunk route divided in two, with an eastern branch that crossed the hills of

4 On the basis of the logical perception that subsequent imperial powers frequently used existing route systems and improved them where needed, rather than formatting new systems.

5 Graf (1993, 1994) is one of the few notable recent attempts to sketch a general framework for the Achaemenid royal road system in Palestine and the Fifth Satrapy. Using diverse historical perspectives on the communications of the imperial civil bureaucracy, and the means for transporting troops and expeditions to troubled areas and frontiers, he has outlined an imperial network that was most probably introduced to Palestine with the Neo-Assyrian conquest by the late eighth century B.C. (see on this Dorsey 1991: 3-6). Though much generalized, his proposal consists of a coastal route extending from Acco to Pelusium that passed through Dor and Gaza, and a hill country route extending from Hazor to Arad that passed through Samaria and Jerusalem (Graf 1993: *fig. 1*, where we also find three transverse routes from the coast to the hill country that have no reference in the text and seem rather too speculative given the limited scale).

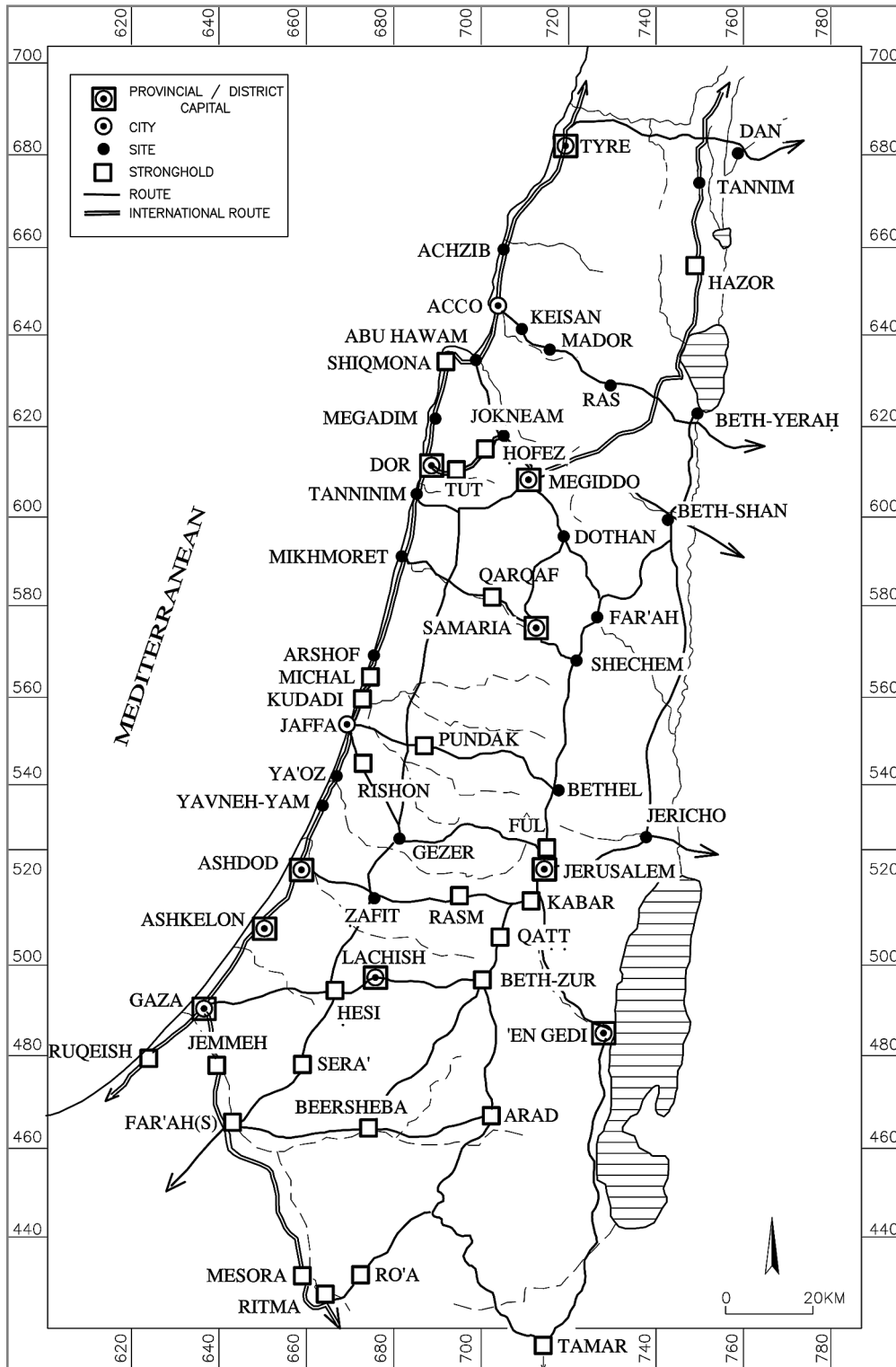


Fig. 1—Selected sites and suggested routes in Persian period Palestine.

Manasseh along Naḥal Tut towards the district capital of Megiddo.⁶ From Megiddo the artery continued in a general north-easterly direction towards Damascus via the Jezreel and the Ḥulah Valleys, and the urban centers of the Beq'a Valley. From the district capital of Gaza it again divided in two, with an eastern branch which formed the most northerly segment of the Arabian trade routes, which were used to transport luxury goods from Southern Arabia, Eastern Africa and even India. Thus Gaza and its ports served as the main outlet for the major consumption centers of the eastern Mediterranean. Here too, strongholds such as those discovered at Tell Jemmeh and plausibly Tell el Far'ah (south), and fortresses at Ḥorvat Ritma and Ḥorvat Mesora controlled this route.

Local regional routes are more numerous by far, with three longitudinal inland routes, two across the western and eastern foothills of Samaria and Judah respectively, and a third across the Rift Valley; and eight transverse routes at a similar distances apart, linking urban centers and administrative strongholds. In the north, two arteries stretched from Acco across the northern valleys, one of them to Beth-Yerah and beyond, and the other one to Megiddo and Beth-Shan. In Samaria, the main transverse artery extended along the river valley of Naḥal Shechem. The major settlements distributed along the watershed of the Judean mountains, *i.e.* Jerusalem, Bethel and Beth-Zur could be approached from the coastal plain along several arteries (cf. *e.g.* Fischer, Isaac, Roll 1996: 326, fig. 36 in p. 312), the alignment of which followed the best available east-west ridge, while the main transverse route of the northern Negev extended across the vast Beersheba Valley. As stated above, all these routes came to serve traffic of a regional or merely local nature. This was also the case with the three longitudinal routes that stretched along the watershed of the central mountain range and in the foothills on both its sides. Both main and lateral arteries were utilized for maintaining communication between the centers of power of the Achaemenid rule. There can be little doubt that the route network described here must have contributed considerably to the demographic expansion and economic growth of Persian period Palestine.

Settlement Patterns and Models

The Palestinian coast is the most excavated and surveyed topographical region in Palestine and its political organization can therefore be well demonstrated.⁷ It may be divided into three sub-units, the coast of Galilee and the Plain of Acco in the north, the Carmel coast and the Sharon Plain in the center and Philistia in the south. We can trace the hierarchy of sites and describe the models of the settlements as major administrative centers (Acco, Dor, Jaffa [Joppa], Ashdod, Ashkelon and Gaza); secondary administrative centers (*e.g.* Achzib, Nahariya, Tell Abu Hawam, Tel Megadim, 'Atlit, Tel Tanninim, Caesarea.[Stratonos Pyrgos], Mikhmoret, Apollonia-Arsuf [Arshof], Tel Ya'oz, Yavneh-Yam and Tel Mor);⁸ villages and agricultural estates; strongholds and fortresses; as well as mixed settlements with more than one defined characteristic, mostly civil as well as military. There are a few

6 It is worth noting that during the Persian period the main passage from the Sharon Plain to the Jezreel Valley was not along the traditional pass of Naḥal 'Iron but along Naḥal Tut, as attested by the two Persian period strongholds of Naḥal Tut and 'En Ḥofez located along this route (see Alexandre 1996, 1997).

7 For the surveys, see the coastal maps published in the Israel Antiquities Authority series: *The Archaeological Survey of Israel*. For the most recent coastal survey map, see Olami, Ronen, Romano (2003), with references to the earlier survey maps on p. 2). See also Porath, Dar, Applebaum (1985); Frankel, Getzov, Aviam, Degani (2001) for other surveys with a different scientific frame.

8 For all listed sites see henceforth *NEAEHL* and *OEANE* under the relevant entries and with further bibliography. The Persian period occupation of a few of these sites was recently published extensively; for Dor see Stern (1995); for Apollonia-Arsuf see Tal (1999); for Tel Yazoz see Kletter, Segal, Ziffer (2000); and also Tal, Fischer, Roll (2005); for Yavneh-Yam see Fischer (2002: 5-6).

secondary administrative centers located a few km of the sea coast (such as Tell Keisan and Tell Abu Zeitun), as were most of the villages and agricultural estates. The spatial organization of the sites which I have designated as major and secondary administrative centers shows an average distance of 12 km between centers, whereas the spatial organization of the sites which I have designated as villages and agricultural estates (the largest number in the reconstructed pattern), shows an average distance of 2.5-5 km between settlements. As stated above, the fortresses discovered at Shiqmona, Tel Michal and Ashdod are located at more or less regular intervals of 60 km apart on the average (see below), and thus we can assume that the spatial organization of the military settlements was far sparser than any other type.⁹ This coastal site hierarchy may well be explained according to the “Central Place Theory”, with a central “metropolis” flanked by a few “poleis” and several villages, interacting politically, economically and socially.¹⁰

Urban, Rural and Military Architecture

The urban architecture of the period under discussion continues urban traditions which pre-date the Persian period. In a number of cases new fortification systems were built during the Persian period, sometimes over remains of structures dated to the Iron Age, e.g. Acco (Stratum 6?), Tell Abu Hawam (Stratum IIA), Tel Megadim (Stratum II), Dor (Stratum VI), Tel Mevorakh (Stratum V), Mikhmoret (Stratum 1), Tell Abu Zeitun (Stratum 1b) and Jaffa (Level IIB). In other cases fortifications ante-dating the Persian period continued to exist after refurbishing (e.g. Dor [Stratum VB]).¹¹ The construction techniques are not new to the period discussed, reflecting in the main earlier local building traditions (*fig. 2*), though some scholars tend to see their origin in Phoenicia, and to a lesser extent in Greece (cf. Shiloh 1979: 50-87; Kempinski, Reich 1992; Elayi 1996; all with further bibliography). The preference for ashlar constructions in some of the urban settlements can be seen as socio-economic rather than cultural. The single extant city gate, belongs to an earlier (Biblical) tradition, the two-chambered gate discovered at Dor (*fig. 3*). The dates of the fortification systems given by the excavators fall between the fifth and the fourth centuries B.C., and thus cannot be interpreted as a sudden royal (Achaemenid) initiative. In contrast, the re-foundation of most of the urban settlements in the late sixth to early fifth century BCE must surely be related to some official initiative (see below). The few public and administrative buildings discovered also show local building traditions, as can be demonstrated in the Achaemenid stronghold at Tell Qasile. In some urban settlements public and administrative buildings have plans similar to those of domestic buildings (as in Dor), *i.e.* a central courtyard surrounded by rows of rooms (*fig. 4*). There are fewer extant examples of large residential buildings. Here we can distinguish between two types: the first is

9 This settlement pattern is confined to the coast and the adjacent lowlands. The hill country of Samaria and Judah shows a different pattern with few governmental/administrative centers, a number of villages and agricultural estates, and military strongholds on the main routes, see Lipschits 2001: esp. 58-64.

10 A spatial geographical analysis in south Germany of the 1930s led Christaller (1933), to develop his “Central Place Theory”, which was subsequently applied to different geographical settings, reconstructing political, economic and sociological aspects of each settlement within a pattern of a “site hierarchy”, cf. Lösch (1954) and Haggett (1965: esp. 121-125). On such applied models see e.g. Hodder, Orton (1976: 53-97); or, in brief, Renfrew, Bahn (1991: 158-162). However, the mathematic nature of these hierarchal models means that they have only very limited reliability, and this only within a defined period and region, with a unified political system (see in general Jansen 2001: 42-44). For implication of the “Central Place Theory” on Persian period Palestine, see e.g. Tal (1999: 207-210) for the southern Sharon Plain; and Carter (1999: 93-97, *fig. 7*) for the Province of Judah.

11 For the publications of these sites see below: tables 2a-2b.

the commonest type of the period, *i.e.* the central courtyard house; the second, which is much rarer, is the frontal courtyard house. Both originate in local Eastern architecture: Mesopotamian or more likely Palestinian. The origins of the city in Persian period Palestine are strikingly local. Each urban component found in the urban settlements of Persian period Palestine turns out to be integrally connected to the environment, culture, and social and political background not only of the period discussed but also of the periods preceding it. A similar conclusion also arises from methodological analysis of the cult buildings in the period discussed. Although the few extant sites are mostly of a non-urban nature and located in inland regions, the ones found on the coast at Makmish (Avigad 1960) and possibly Tel Michal (Herzog 1989: 110-112), demonstrate the dominance of local building traditions, whether they are longitudinal or latitudinal in plan (*fig. 5*).

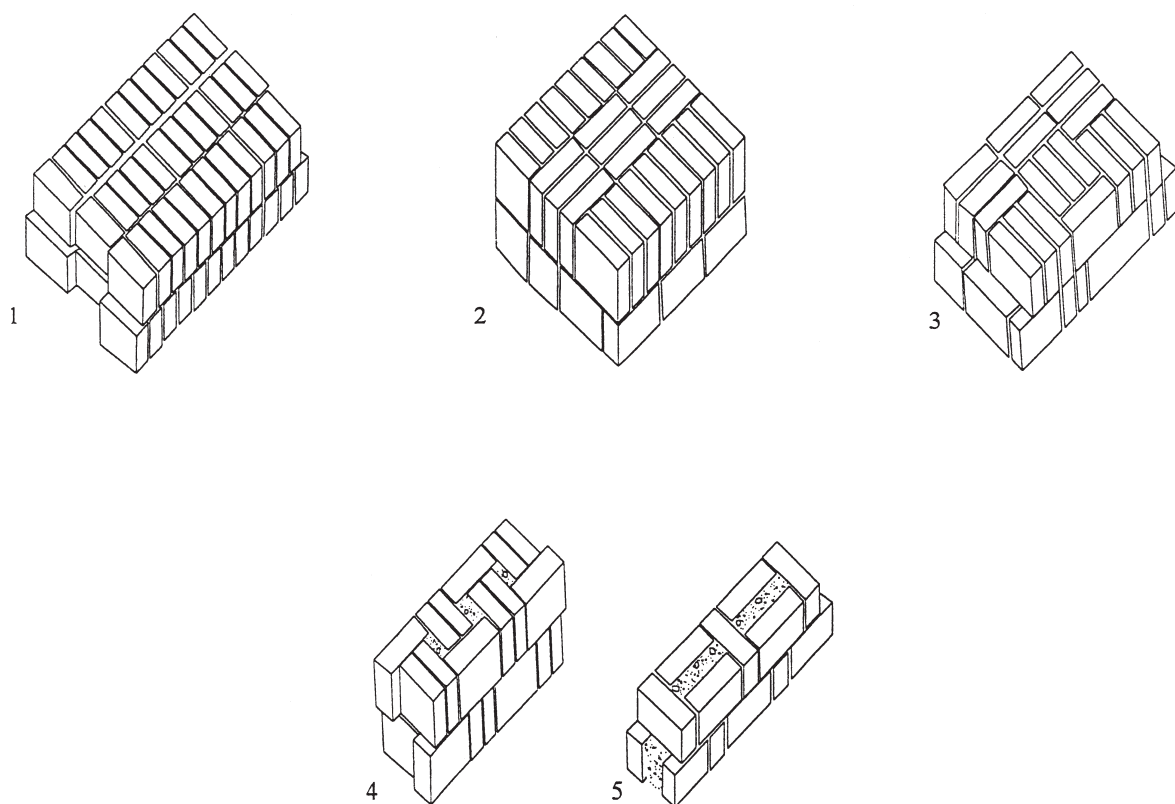


Fig. 2—Illustrative selection of Persian period ashlar wall-building techniques.

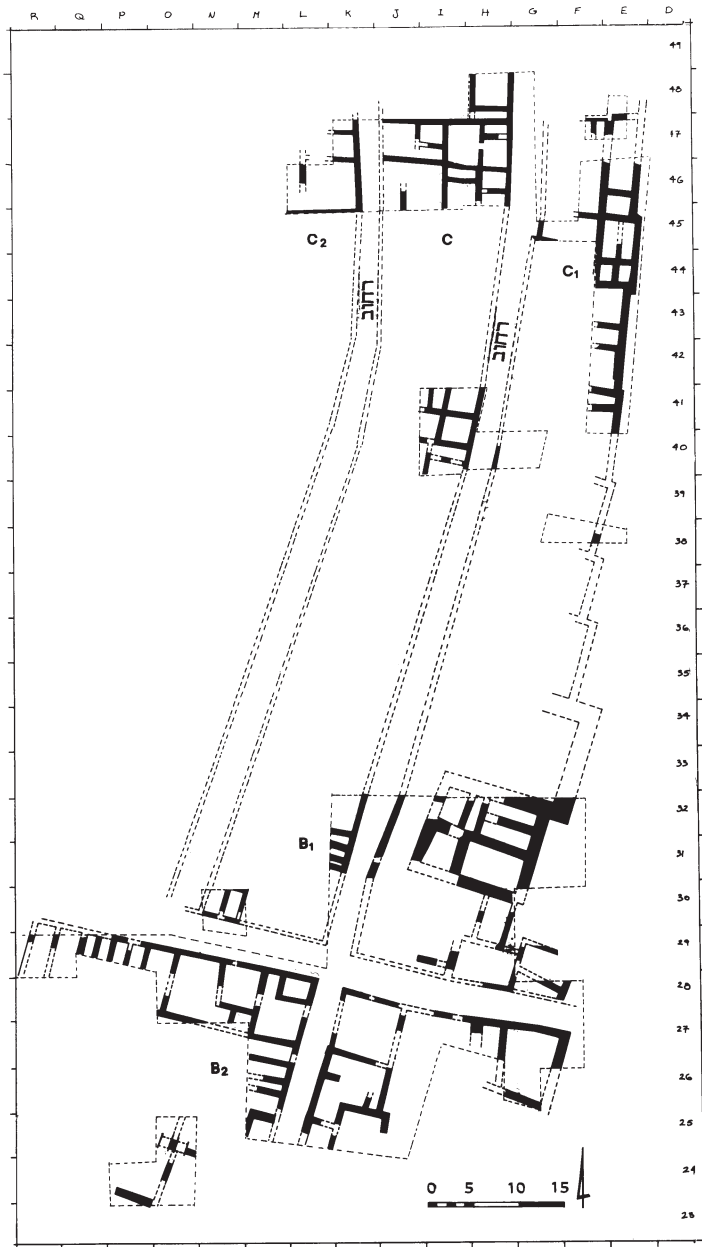


Fig. 3—City plan and gate of Persian period Dor.

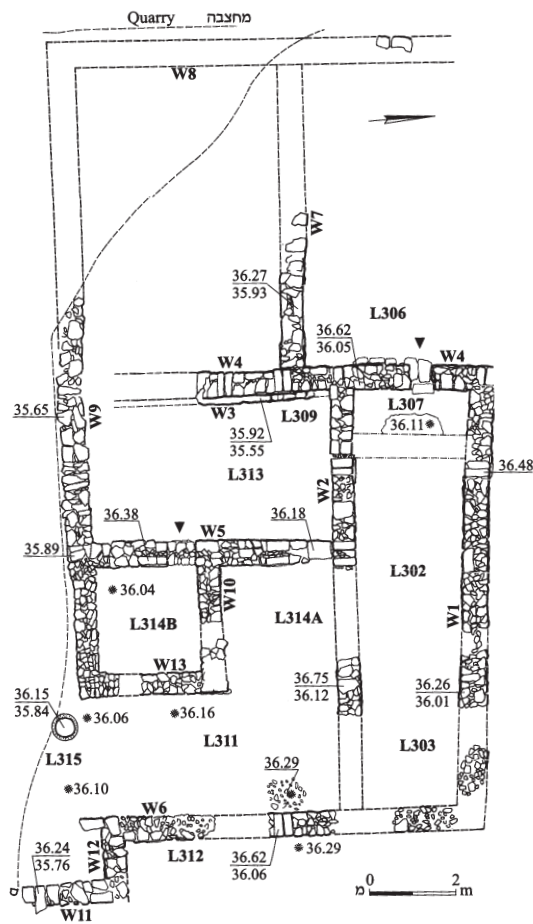
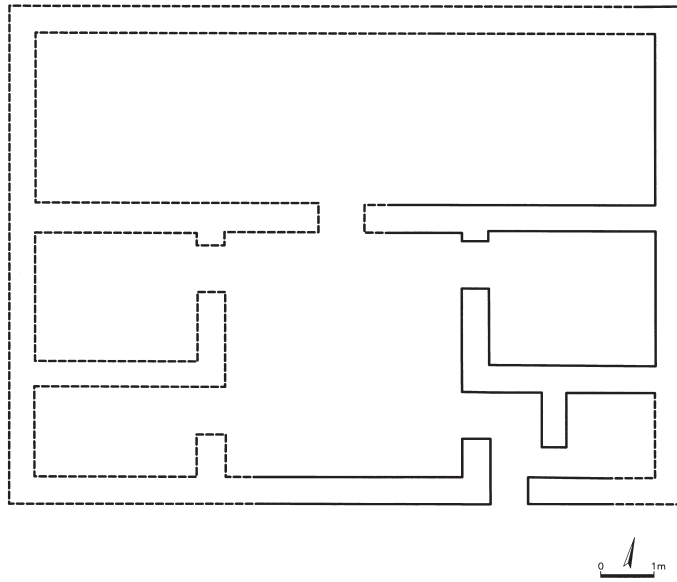
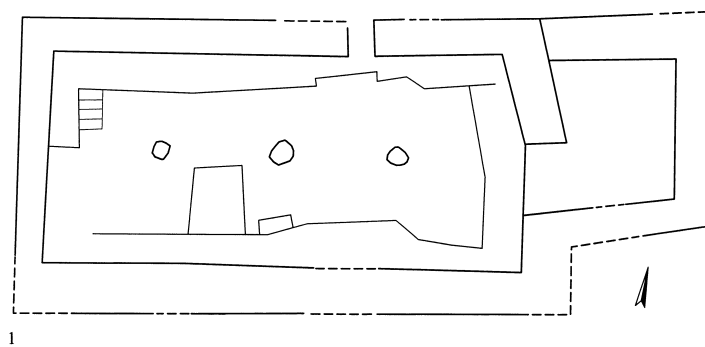
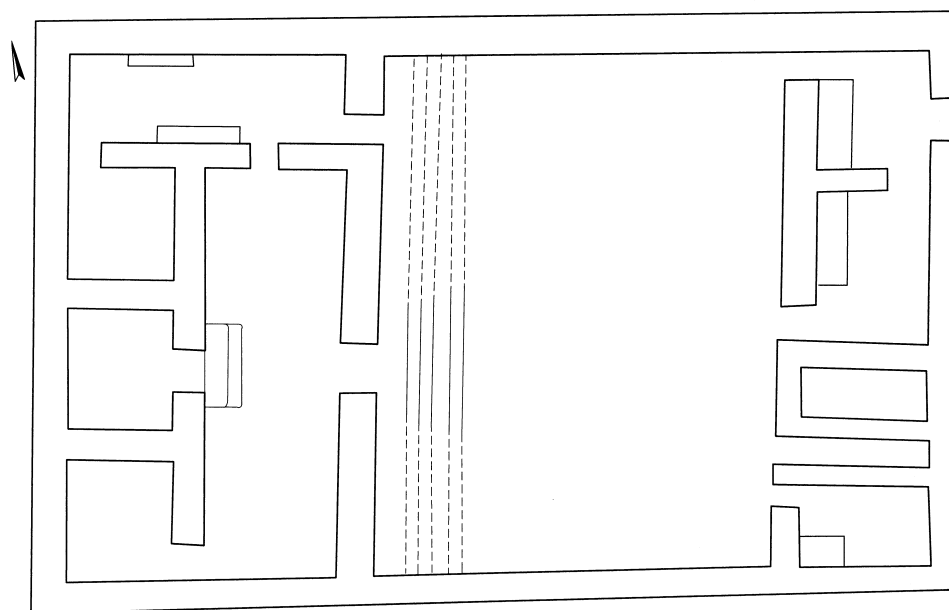


Fig. 4—Persian period houses (Tel Ya'oz).



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Fig. 5—Persian/Hellenistic period temples (1. Har Mizpe Yamim; 2. Lachish).

The rural architecture of the period discussed can be seen best from a thorough examination of agricultural estates, those isolated and introverted buildings or groups of buildings which can be defined as self-sufficient manufacturing units, overlooking or even dominating a large agricultural terrain (fig. 6). These buildings are usually characterized by a square ground plan, a central courtyard surrounded by rows of rooms (some of which contain various industrial facilities), and can be paralleled (with some generalizations) in the urban domestic buildings.¹² It is clear from this that a large number of the agricultural estates excavated and surveyed were founded in periods preceding the Persian period—*i.e.* the Iron Age—while the others are similar in ground plan and construction techniques to those of earlier times (Maier, Dar, Safrai 2003). Thus we have no option but to attribute their origin to local building traditions. The size of both urban and rural domestic buildings may attest to their having been occupied by extended, rather than nuclear families, as in the periods preceding the Persian period.

12 Most agricultural estates of Persian date in the Palestinian coast have been surveyed rather than excavated. Unfortunately, the few excavated in the Coastal Plain do not enable us to make full reconstructions of their ground plans, cf. *e.g.* Tel Mevorakh (Stern 1978: fig. 25). The same holds true to the few others recently excavated at Rishon LeZion (see Tal 2005).

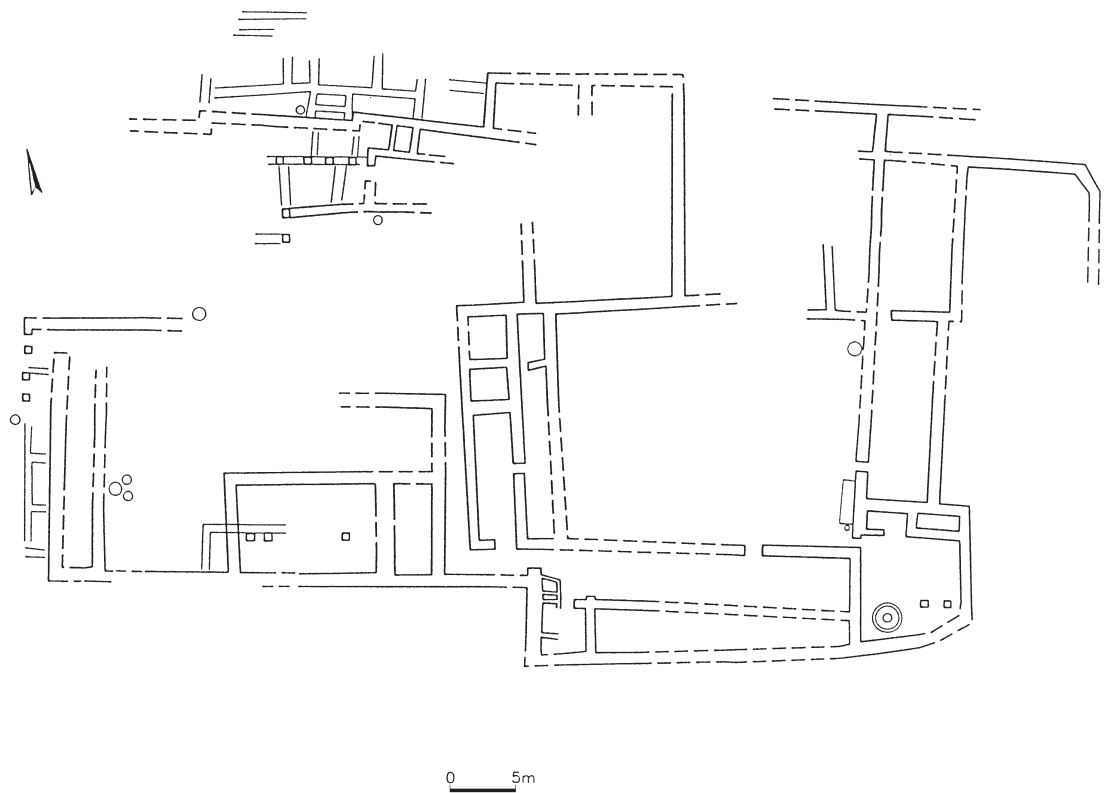


Fig. 6—Iron Age/Persian/Hellenistic period farmstead (Tirat Yehuda).

The military architecture of the Palestinian coast in the Persian period is characterized by one type of building, the open courtyard fortress (*fig. 7*).¹³ These buildings functioned as the domicile of the regional headquarters (*i.e.* centralized military compounds); and were used for domination, for the collection (and inspection) of taxes, as well as for current field security and attrition. A study of the ground plan shows that it is difficult to attribute their foundation to a royal initiative, as they lack any unity in regard to size, wall thickness, internal divisions, etc., and it is clearly hard to find a unified building standard.

13 Excavated Achaemenid fortresses on the coast are few; for Shiqmona see Elgavish (1968); for Tel Michal see Herzog (1989); for Ashdod see Porath (1974). The nature of the two probable Neo-Assyrian fortresses of Tell Kudadi (cf. *NEAEHL* 3, s.v. Kudadi, Tell) and Rishon LeZion (Levy, Peilstöcker, Ginzburg 2004) that were occupied in Persian times is unclear. Preliminary investigations of the Persian finds from both excavations seem to indicate a non-military nature at this period.

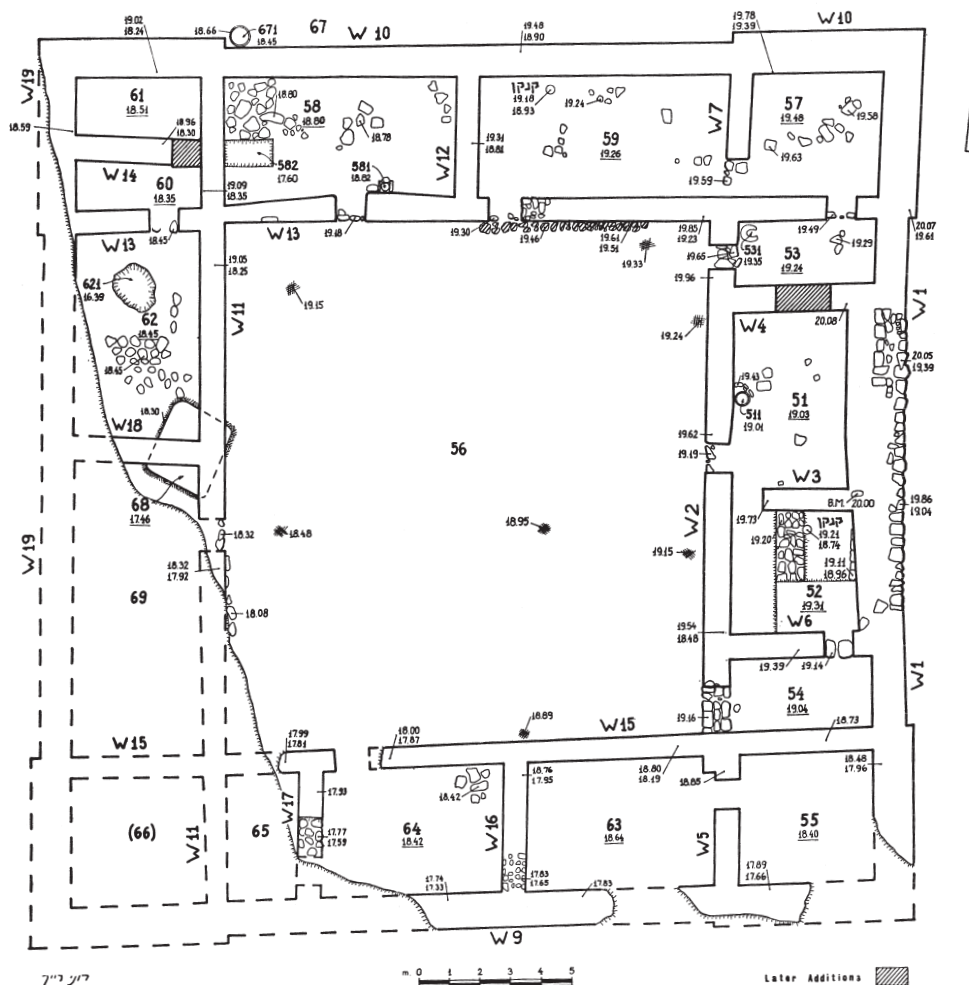


Fig. 7—Persian period fortress (Ashdod).

The central courtyard house is the commonest type of building in Persian times. Many scholars claim that it resembles a traditional Mesopotamian plan which had penetrated into Palestine during the Neo-Assyrian period (following Amiran, Dunayevsky 1958; but see also Aharoni 1975: 33-40; Reich 1992). However, the building plan has components (square ground plan, latitudinal rooms, multiple corridors) that can be traced back to prehistoric times in this region. As an architectural type, it can be shown to have been used for administration (public and administrative buildings), cult (temples), and domestic (large residential buildings, smaller urban and rural houses) and military (fortresses) uses. This multi-functional type of building may be explained as an ideological and even cognitive construct, since its plan responds to functional, environmental and socio-economic needs. Its integration in the region and use among different populations may be understood as reflecting a common ideological and behavioral concept.

Historical Events, Foundation and Destruction Layers

EVENTS	SOURCES AND REFERENCES
<p>Cambyzes invades Egypt circa 525 B.C.</p>	<p>Herodotus III, 1 ff.; Kelly 1987: 46-49; Briant 1996: 61-72, 914-916.</p>
<p>Darius' campaign to Egypt circa 519-518 B.C. The Sharon Plain and its coastal harbors are given to Sidon in the last third of the sixth century. Ashkelon is given to Tyre most probably at the same period, as is evident from the fourth-century B.C. Periplus of pseudo-Scylax.</p>	<p>Herodotus IV, 166-167, 200-203; Briant 1996: 488-500, 972-975. Donner, Röllig 1966-69: §14.1.19; Pritchard 1969: 662; Kelly 1987: 39, 52; Briant 1996: 505-506, 977; Elayi 2004: 26-27. On the Periplus see Galling 1964: 185-210; Stern M. 1984: 8-12.</p>
<p>Egypt revolts circa 486-484 B.C.; further disturbances in the Levant.</p>	<p>Herodotus VII, 1, 4, 7; Cook 1983: 99-100; Briant 1996: 562-564, 989-990.</p>
<p>Re-conquest of Egypt circa 484 B.C.; the Persians prepare for war against the Greeks, led by Xerxes, ending circa 478/477 B.C.; the Phoenician fleet is backbone of Persian naval power.</p>	<p>Herodotus VII, 89 ff.; Kelly 1987: 42-46, 52; Elayi 1990: 236-237.</p>
<p>Egypt revolts some time 464-454 B.C.; Athenian fleet sent to Egypt.</p>	<p>Herodotus III, 12, 15; VII, 7; Thucydides I, 104, 110; Diodorus Siculus XI, 71, 74-75; Elayi 1990: 169; Briant 1996: 591-592, 998.</p>
<p>This Athenian fleet may have attacked sites on the Phoenician coast.</p>	<p>Olmstead 1948: 304; Meiggs, Lewis 1989: no.33.</p>
<p>Megabyzus, royal brother-in-law of Artaxerxes I, sent to quell revolt in Egypt, supported by Phoenician fleet circa 456-454 B.C.; concurrently Megabyzus becomes the governor of the province Beyond the River; measures are taken to assure loyalty of Levantine centers during war against Egypt and the Greek fleet.</p>	<p>Herodotus III, 160; Thucydides I, 109; Diodorus Siculus XI, 74, 77; Briant 1996: 592-594, 998-999.</p>
<p>Further naval action off Cyprus; hence the Peace of Callias circa 448 B.C.</p>	<p>Badian 1987; Yamauchi 1990: 251-253; Briant 1996: 596-599, 999-1000.</p>
<p>Herodotus visits Palestine, circa 448 B.C.</p>	<p>Herodotus I, 105; II, 157; III, 5; Mittmann 1983.</p>
<p>After the re-conquest of Egypt, Megabyzus is angered when his policy of moderation toward the Egyptians is violated; Megabyzus himself revolts, and a loyal army led by an Egyptian is sent to the Levantine coast against him circa 448/447 B.C. Southern Palestine firmly in Phoenician control; the Phoenician fleet continues to serve Persia after this revolt and through the reign of Darius II.</p>	<p>Ctesias, <i>Persica</i> 37; see, however, Hoglund 1992: 97-205; Briant 1996: 594-596, 999. Diodorus Siculus XII, 27, 4; XIII, 36, 5; 38, 4.</p>
<p>Egypt revolts circa 404 B.C.</p>	<p>Demotic Chronicle III, 18-19; Diodorus Siculus XIV, 35, 3-5.</p>
<p>Cyrus the Younger revolts in same year, but Levant remains loyal to Artaxerxes II. Abrokomas, then probably the governor of the province Beyond the River, amasses troops to invade Egypt, but is diverted to oppose Cyrus the Younger.</p>	<p>Xenophon, <i>Anabasis</i> I, 4, 5; Briant 1996: 634-653, 1011-1015.</p>
<p>Phoenician fleet supports Persia in war against Sparta circa 396 B.C.</p>	<p>Diodorus Siculus XIV, 79, 8.</p>

<p>Achoris of Egypt forms an alliance with Evagoras of Salamis circa 387-386 B.C.</p> <p>While the Persians invade Egypt, Evagoras invades Phoenicia and captures Tyre and other Phoenician settlements.</p> <p>Persian forces driven out of Egypt; but Evagoras is ousted from the Levant; he accepts peace terms with Persia circa 383-381 B.C.</p> <p>Reign of 'Abd-'shtart I/Straton circa 371-367/357-354 B.C.; naval forces gather at Acco to invade Egypt circa 374-373 B.C.</p> <p>The invasion is repelled by the Egyptians.</p> <p>Satraps' Revolt circa 366-359/358 B.C.; Syrians and Phoenicians also take part in the rebellion.</p> <p>Egyptians, led by Tachos (pharaoh of Egypt), invade Levantine coast circa 359 B.C.; Tachos is subsequently compelled to find refuge in Sidon with 'Abd-'ashtart I.</p> <p>Artaxerxes III Ochus regains control over the empire by about 355 B.C., and by about 351-350 B.C. makes an unsuccessful attempt to re-conquer Egypt.</p> <p>Invasion fails and leads Phoenicia to revolt, led by Tennes, now king of Sidon. Finally Sidon is taken by Artaxerxes III Ochus circa 351-345 B.C. During this time coastal Phoenician centers are apparently destroyed under Persian rule.</p> <p>Artaxerxes III successfully invades Egypt, most likely with the support of the Sidonian fleet under 'Abd-'ashtart II/ Straton around 343-342 B.C.</p> <p>Alexander welcomed by 'Abdalonim/'Abdalonimos after his victory at Issus and the occupation of Syria and the Palestine circa 332 B.C.</p> <p>After Issus, Ptolemy I occupies the Syrian coast, including the Phoenician coast up to the Eleutheros (Nahr el-Kebir) circa 301 B.C.</p>	<p>Diodorus Siculus XV, 2, 3; Elayi 1990: 175-178.</p> <p>Isocrates, <i>Evagoras</i> 62-63; <i>Panegyricus</i> 161; Diodorus Siculus XV, 2, 4.</p> <p>Isocrates, <i>Panegyricus</i> 140; Diodorus Siculus XV, 8-9; Briant 1996: 667-674, 1017-1018.</p> <p>Elayi and Elayi 1993a: 125-161, esp. 148; Isaeus, <i>On the Estate of Nicostratus</i> 7; Diodorus Siculus XV, 41, 3; Polyaeus III, 9, 56.</p> <p>Diodorus Siculus XV, 42-44.</p> <p>Diodorus Siculus XV, 90, 3; Elayi 1990: 179-180; Briant 1996: 675-678, 1018-1019.</p> <p>Xenophon, <i>Agesilaus</i> II, 30; Diodorus Siculus XV, 92; Briant 1996: 682-683, 1019.</p> <p>Isocrates, <i>To Philip</i> 101; Demosthenes XV, 11-12; Diodorus Siculus XVI, 44, 1; 48, 1; contra XVI, 40, 3; Elayi 1990: 180-181; Briant 1996: 700-704, 1029-1031.</p> <p>Isocrates, <i>To Philip</i> 101-102; Diodorus Siculus XVI, 40-46; Barag 1966; Betlyon 1982: 16-18; Elayi 1990: 182-184; see, however, Briant 1996: 703-704, 1030-1031.</p> <p>Diodorus Siculus XVI, 46, 4-52, 3; Elayi 1990: 183; Briant 1996: 704-706, 1031.</p> <p>Diodorus Siculus XVII, 48, 7-49, 1; Quintus Curtius Rufus IV, 1, 15 ff.; Plutarch, <i>Alexander</i> XXV, 1 ff; Arrian, <i>Anabasis Alexandri</i> II, 15, 6; 20, 1; 25, 4; VII, 9, 8; Marcus Junianus Justinus, <i>Historiae Philippicae</i> XI, 6; Abel 1935; Briant 1996: 876-877, 1075.</p> <p>Diodorus Siculus XX, 113.</p>
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Table 1—Historical sources relating to possible destructions of sites of the Palestinian coast during the Persian period.*

* Classical sources mentioned in the table are mainly cited from editions published in the Loeb Classical Library.

	Acco	Tell Keisan	Tell Abu Hawam	Shiqmona	Tel Megadim	Dor	Tel Mevorakh	Mikhmoret
538		Stratum 3b	Stratum IIA			Stratum VI	Stratum VI	Stratum 1
500	Stratum 6 ca. 525-480 B.C.	ca. 580-480/460 B.C.	ca. 538-400 B.C.	Stratum 6 ca. 525-475 B.C.	Stratum III ca. 500-450 B.C.	ca. 538-400/380 B.C.	ca. 500/ 450-380 B.C.	ca. 538-400 B.C.
475	Stratum 5 ca. 480-400 B.C.	Destruction?		Destruction				
450		Stratum 3a ca. 450-380 B.C.			Stratum II ca. 450-400 B.C.			
425								
400	Stratum 4 ca. 400-300 B.C.		Destruction Stratum IIB ca. 400-332 B.C.		Destruction	Destruction Stratum VB ca. 400/ 380-350 B.C.	Destruction Stratum V ca. 380-345 B.C.	Destruction
375					Stratum I ca. 375-350 B.C.			Stratum 2 Persian/ Hellenistic
350				Stratum 5	Destruction	Destruction Stratum VA	Destruction Stratum IV	
				Destruction		ca. 350-275 B.C.	ca. 345-332 B.C.	
325	Stratum 3		Stratum I					

Table 2a—Foundation and destruction layers of sites of the Plain of Acco, the Carmel coast and the northern Sharon Plain.*

* For the dating of Acco see Dothan (1976: 26-27); for the dating of Tell Keisan see Nodet (1980); for the dating of Tell Abu Hawam see Stern (1982: 11-13); Finkielsztejn (1989); Balensi, Dunaux, Finkielsztejn (1990); for the dating of Shiqmona see Elgavish (1968: 42-48, 1994: 79-94); for the dating of Tel Megadim see *NEAEHL* 3, s.v. Megadim, Tel; for the dating of Dor see Stern (1995: 29-38, 272-275); for the dating of Tel Mevorakh see Stern (1978: 26-30, 79-85); for the dating of Mikhmoret see Isserlin (1961: 3-5).

	Tel Poleg	Apollonia-Arsuf	Tel Michal	Tell Qasile	Tell Abu Zeitun	Jaffa
538					Stratum Ib	
500	Single stratum,	Persian 2 ca. 525-445 B.C.	Stratum XI ca. 525-480 B.C.		ca. 538-500 B.C.	
475	ca. 490-430 B.C., in relation to Strata X-IX at nearby Tel Michal		Destruction Stratum X ca. 480-460 B.C. Destruction Stratum IX ca. 460-430 B.C.	Stratum VI ca. 480-400 B.C.		
450		Destruction Persian 1 ca. 445-345 B.C.	Destruction Stratum VIII ca. 430-390 B.C.		Stratum Ia ca. 450-400 B.C.	
425						
400				Destruction?		Level IIB
375			Destruction Stratum VII ca. 380-340 B.C.			Destruction Level IIA Building M
350		Destruction	Destruction Stratum VI ca. 340-300 B.C.			Destruction
325		Hellenistic	Destruction			

Table 2b—Foundation and destruction layers of sites of the southern Sharon Plain.*

* For the dating of Tel Poleg see Singer-Avitz (1989: 380); for the dating of Tel Michal see Rainey (1989: 12-15); Herzog (1989: 88-114); for the dating of Tell Qasile see Maisler (1950-1951: 67-71, 211-214); for the dating of Tell Abu Zeitun see Kaplan (1958, 1959: 76-77); for the dating of Jaffa see NEAEHL 2, s.v. Jaffa; Ritter-Kaplan (1982: 64-68).

A comparison of the stratigraphy and chronology of the main excavated Persian period sites on the Palestinian coast produces the following picture. The beginnings of regional settlement on the Palestinian coast under Achaemenid rule appear to have taken place during a period of less than 50 years and were thus presumably officially initiated, if only in part. It may be concluded that most of the settlements existed temporarily, particularly in the fifth century B.C. and to a lesser extent, in the fourth century B.C. at each of the above-mentioned sites. The destruction layers of several Persian period coastal sites in Palestine apparently attributed to Evagoras (ca. 390-380 B.C.; cf. Isocrates, *Evagoras* 62-63; Panegyricus 161; Diodorus Siculus XV, 2, 4),¹⁴ do not appear at all the coastal sites (e.g. Acco, Shiqmona, Apollonia-Arsuf and Tell Qasile). However, the destruction layers of many of the Persian period settlements in Palestine attributed to Tennes in the mid-fourth century B.C. are well attested in the region discussed.¹⁵ Surprisingly, we have no information on destruction layers at the major coastal sites of Philistia, namely Ashdod, Ashkelon and Gaza. Large scale and fully-published excavations at Tel Ashdod led the excavators to consider the Persian period remains (Stratum V) to be, in part, modifications of earlier remains from the Iron Age, mainly from the tenth to early sixth centuries B.C. Architectural remains were unearthed in both the upper and lower settlements that form the mound, but any destruction layers (if indeed they existed) were removed in most cases by Hellenistic occupation activities (*NEAEHL* 1: s.v. Ashdod, with further bibliography). Persian period remains from the large scale excavations at Ashkelon have been published in a very preliminary form (cf. *NEAEHL* 1: s.v. Ashkelon, with further bibliography). The excavators claim that the Persian strata are between 2 and 3 m thick, making this period one of the richest found at the site, with few phases and destruction layers, but they do not refer to their date within the period. Excavations at the mound of Gaza (Tell Ḥarube) by W.J. Phythian-Adams in the early 1920s unearthed a series of five mud-brick city-walls, the uppermost of which, about 3 m thick, was tentatively identified as having been built against Alexander the Great, thus implying that the Persian period city was fortified (*NEAEHL* 2: s.v. Gaza, with further bibliography). On the coastal strip, at Blakhiyah (Shatteh), some 3 km south of Tell Ḥarube, few phases of domestic architecture were related to the Persian occupation of the site, identified by the excavators with Anthedon; no exact dates within the period were given but for a late fifth century B.C. date of foundation (Humbert, Sadeq 2000: 105-106, 112-117). Publications on Ruqesh as another important administrative center further to the south of Gaza reveal the same vagueness (cf. *NEAEHL* 4: s.v. Ruqesh, with further bibliography). Since most sites referred to above are mostly major or secondary administrative centers one would expect a more unified picture; however archaeology is not an exact science and archaeologists can never be truly objective. Some of the destruction layers above were assigned to a particular political event before a full analysis of the finds retrieved; others did not yield enough imported material or coins and thus their dating is tentative. Furthermore, it should be remembered that the remains excavated at most of these sites do not normally exceed 10% of the total area, so that the excavated spots do not necessarily provide a complete and accurate reflection of the total history of a particular site. Many other major or secondary administrative centers were also only excavated on a limited scale, among them Achzib, Nahariya, 'Atlit, Tel Tanninim, Caesarea (Stratonos Pyrgos), Tel Ya'oz, Yavneh-Yam,

14 In the Palestinian coast destruction layers of early fourth century B.C. date that could be attributed to Evagoras were recorded at the following sites: Tel Megadim, see *NEAEHL* 3, s.v. Megadim, Tel; Dor, see Stern (1995: 29-38, 272-276); Tel Mevorakh, see Stern (1978: 26-30, 79-85); Mikhmoret, see Isserlin (1961: 3-5); Porath, Dar, Applebaum (1985: 126-132); Tel Michal, see Rainey (1989: 13-15); Jaffa, see Ritter-Kaplan (1982: 66).

15 The effects of the rebellion of Tennes on sites in Palestine is a question for debate. According to Barag (1966), a large number of destruction layers on the coast, in Galilee, and in Judaea are the result of this event. However, Stern (1982: 243, 1995: 274), thinks this event only partially affected some of the sites along the coast of Palestine. Stern's view is supported by a recent analysis of the fourth century B.C. in southern Palestine, as administrative sites in this region seem to have been abandoned rather than destroyed (see on this Fantalkin, Tal, in press). It should also be noted that the date of the rebellion of Tennes is disputed, cf. Elayi (1990: 182, especially note 134) and Briant (1996: 703-704, 1030-1031).

Yavneh, and Tel Mor. Although Persian remains were documented to some extent, destruction layers were not recorded (or reported) in the excavated areas.

Burial Customs

The types of burials found on the Palestinian coast from Persian times include jar burials, pit and cist burials, shaft tombs, and natural and artificial burial caves (*fig. 8*). We also have evidence of the use of anthropoid stone sarcophagi and clay coffins further inland, which may imply the use of coffins made from other materials such as wood (as may also be deduced by the discovery of metal fitting implements in some tombs). Some of these types of burial predominate in specific geographical regions, but most types are found all over Palestine.¹⁶ The burials can be divided between individual tombs and family tombs, with an emphatic preference for primary, individual burials. Burial

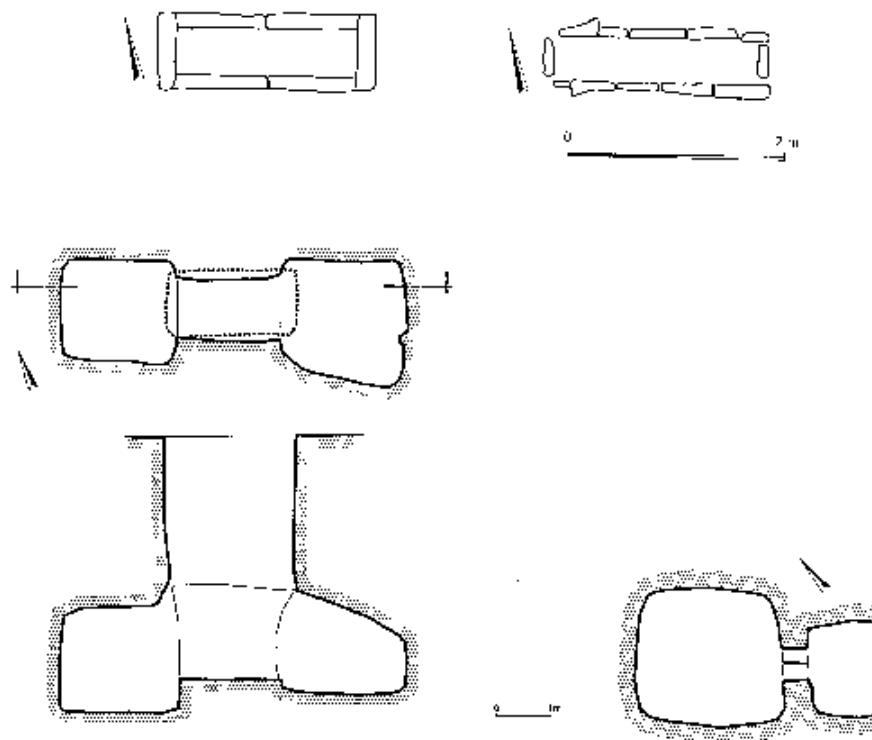


Fig. 8—Persian period tombs; cist tomb (top, Acco), shaft tomb (bottom left, 'Atlit), artificial burial cave (bottom right, Ramat Avishur).

¹⁶ On typology according to site distribution see Stern (1982: 63-92, 2001: 470-477, which is an updated overview of his previous publication). However, Stern's definitions of the tomb types should be questioned, since pit graves are often confused with cist graves, and shaft graves are often synonymous with burial caves with a stepped entrance. Moreover, Stern's classification of "eastern" and "western" shaft tomb types on the basis of content and form is also problematic. The "abundance of Greek and Phoenician pottery and Greek and Phoenician coins, jewelry, and cosmetic utensils [found in the shaft tombs], ..." (2001: 477), should be connected to the tombs' location rather than their form, since shaft graves are documented in the region in much earlier periods. The same conclusions can be applied to the single tomb-type that is not documented at coastal sites, *i.e.* the tumuli or cairn burials, two specimens of which, found in the Jordan Valley, are the only documented "Palestinian" examples (*cf.* Magen 1985). Recently, Wolff (2002) published a summary of this subject from a pan-Levantine view, which looked at Stern's material from a different, sociological aspect.

practice included both inhumation and emplacement burial, but there is almost no evidence for cremation. Burial in the period under discussion usually took place near a settlement, either immediately outside the walls or in the near vicinity, within clearly defined settlement territory. This suggests that the dead were considered defiling. The common burial position found in coastal sites, is that of the deceased lying on his or her back in a supine position, with head pointing east and feet to the west. This may attest to a perception of death as an eternal sleep. We have evidence from certain coastal sites, such as Tell er-Ras, Acco, 'Atlit, Tel Michal, and possibly Jaffa, for concentrations of contemporary tombs of one or more types. Thus we can assume the existence of organized (urban?) cemeteries, where tombs were marked by tombstones or other markers that have not survived. Tombstones, in the form of worked stone blocks, are nearly absent from burials of the period. They may have been removed for re-use elsewhere. Coastal Persian period tombs are relatively poor in finds, with the exception of 'Atlit. Pottery is the most common find, in particular a juglet of a coastal type and sometimes a flat-shouldered Phoenician store-jar with twisted handles. Bronze bowls and ladles and other objects such as jewelry, weapons and household implements, and to a lesser extent, glass containers and coins, also appear.¹⁷

Ethnicity

With the Neo-Assyrian occupation of Palestine by the eighth century B.C., the coastal settlements became subject of Assyrian rule. Local town rulers served as vassals of the Assyrian kings. Unsuccessful attempts at revolt initiated or joined by local town rulers resulted in forced deportation for the local rulers, their extended families, entourages and thousands of inhabitants, and consequently transplantation of other ethnic groups into the coast. By the last third of the seventh century B.C., Egypt had taken control of the southern coast of Palestine, first and foremost because of its strategic importance as the main land-gateway from the north. Like the Neo-Assyrians, the Neo-Babylonian rulers had adopted the practice of the deportation and transplantation of peoples and ethnic groups. Although there are no clear indications for a significant change in the geo-political situation of Palestine during the Neo-Assyrian, Egyptian and Neo-Babylonian occupations, we can safely assume that by the time the Achaemenids gained full control over the Palestinian coast its population must have been very varied (Lemaire 1990: 45-63). The Persians, like their predecessors, allowed the coastal cities a considerable degree of independence in terms of local administration, economy and trade, because of their purely political and economic interest in regional stability in the face of the Egyptians and the Greeks (Elayi 1990: 81-134; Briant 1996: 55-59, 505-506). There was, of course, the core element of the descendents of the Philistines and Canaanites, which had already become mixed to some extent with neighboring Semitic People, Judeans, Samaritans, Edomites and Arabs—as well as Egyptians. Phoenicians (from Phoenicia proper) must have formed a significant component of the population of the coast, especially after the formal annexation of the Sharon Plain to the Kingdom of Sidon in the days of 'Eshmon'azor II, in the last third of the sixth century B.C.¹⁸ The Achaemenids probably annexed Tyre and Sidon together with a defined region with close social, political and economic affinities, *i.e.* the Palestinian coast, as this would contribute to regional

17 For excavated Persian period tombs on the coast published recently (since the 1990s), see *e.g.* Tell er-Ras (Peleg 1991; Messika 1996; Onn 1999; Shourkin 1999); Tel Michal (Herzog, Levy 1999); Ashkelon (Golani 1996).

18 Most probably as tribute given for the participation of the Sidonian fleet during Cambyses' and/or Darius' successful campaigns to Egypt. For the tomb inscription see Donner, Röllig (1966-1969: § 14.1.19); Pritchard (1969: 662). For revised dating see Kelly (1987: 39, 52); Briant (1996: 505-506, 977), and most recently Elayi (2004: esp. 26-27).

stability. In the Periplus of pseudo-Scylax, which is usually dated to the fourth century B.C., Ashkelon is referred to as being under Tyrian rule, while Dor and Jaffa are under the Sidonians. We also learn from this source that Ekdippa (Achzib), Acco, Crocodilon [polis] (?) and most probably all other settlements in the region were under Tyrian rule. This would include the entire region of the Plain of Acco, and the narrow coastal strip that adjoins the Mount Carmel block ridges. In contrast, Sidon was granted the Sharon Plain, the next adjacent region to the south. We may thus infer a similar status for all other settlements within this region. A second century B.C. inscription found at Yavneh/(Jabne)—Yam some 15 km south of Jaffa attests to Sidonian hegemony (Isaac 1991). The term “Sidonians” as used in the Yavneh-Yam inscription may, however, be better explained as referring to people who lived under Sidonian hegemony, and not to people who came directly from Sidon.¹⁹ Philistia, as the next adjacent region to the south was probably affiliated to Tyre, as Ashkelon is mentioned as being specifically under Tyrian rule. Thus Ashdod and Gaza as integral parts of Philistia, were most probably under Tyrian hegemony too.²⁰ We can thus conclude that the denomination of the people who inhabited the Palestinian coast under Achaemenid rule as “Phoenicians” was extremely ambiguous. The inhabitants’ reference point for their group of identity must have been primary jurisdictional (*i.e.* Accoians, Dorians, Joppaians, Ashdodians, Ashkelonians, Gazaians, etc.), and characterized by shared social and cultural resources, institutional bodies, language, religion, cult, belief, and even currency.

Demography

The growing evidence from the excavations and surveys carried out along the Palestinian coast indicates that various settlements which existed at more or less the same time can be documented as having expanded both in size and number during the Persian period. The question of both the demography and demographic changes of the Palestinian coast still remains open, as no serious attempts have been made to assess them. Demographic models of ancient societies are all based on a theoretical background, and when combined with inaccurate data-bases can never be taken uncritically. Since the publications of excavations and the surveys normally serve as the one and only available data-base for all demographic calculations, accuracy or even sound speculations can never be obtained. Excavations are by no means aimed at unearthing the total populated area of a given site in a given period; and the size of a settlement is normally based on the distance between architectural remains of a given period, and the distribution of the pottery of that period within the estimated boundaries of the site at the time. Even a very good reconstruction cannot give us a real indication of a site’s population because of the inherent uncertainty of the data-base, since a built-up hectare at a given site and period of time can hold a variable number of people. Surveys are far too problematic: the size of a surveyed site is normally based on the distribution and relative quantity of the pottery of a given period. Both distribution and relative quantity cannot be fixed, as they depend on several variables (see on this Lipschits 2003:

19 It should be emphasized that in some Biblical accounts Phoenicians are sometimes synonymous with the Canaanite ethnic groups who lived in Palestine, cf. *ABD* 5, s.v. Phoenicia, History of; and see also Kasher (1992: 13-15) and especially Hjelm (2000: 218-222).

20 However, Gaza is still considered as a sovereign settlement under Achaemenid rule by few scholars because of the frequent references to it in the classical historical sources. *E.g.* Meyer is of the opinion that Gaza remained a self-sufficient (independent) community “ein selbständiges Gemeinwesen” (1954: 130); Kahrstedt (1926: 40), sees Gaza as being under direct Persian rule “unmittelbares Reichsgebiet”; Abel (1935: 48), sees Gaza as a military stronghold; Avi-Yonah (1966: 31), sees Gaza serving as royal stronghold and military base outside Phoenician control; and Lemaire (1990: 52-53), sees Gaza as the seat of the Persian governor. See also Katzenstein (1989), for a historical reconstruction of the city in Persian times.

324-325, and especially note 4). Moreover, pottery alone can in no way reflect the size of a settlement, or the changes in demographic processes between different periods of time. Pottery vessels are used differently by different people and one's *raison d'être* can be another's most neglected aspect of living. Demography and demographic changes on the Palestinian coast under Achaemenid rule can thus never be determined without a high level of speculation. Using our archaeological and historical database we can deduce that the destruction of coastal settlements by the Neo-Babylonians in Iron Age II left a habitation vacuum, which came to an end with Achaemenid rule. Demographic processes are continuous in nature; most of the Persian settlements of the Palestinian coast continued to exist under Ptolemaic and Seleucid rule, so that we can assume that there was a general increase in population from the Late Iron Age to the Early Hellenistic period, but since the coast underwent several changes under Achaemenid rule there must have been some ups and downs, or in other words sinuosity.

Indigenous Coinage and Monetary Economy

The use of weighed quantities of metal in pre-Persian period Palestine is best witnessed by the Hacksilber hoards which are dated as early as the Middle Bronze Age II, according to the finds from Shechem, Nahariya and Megiddo (Kletter 2003: 148), though the evidence is meager. The use of Hacksilber as a unified form of payment in the southern Levant is especially attested in the Iron Age II period (Golani, Sass 1998; Gitin, Golani 2001; Kletter 2003: esp. table 1; Thompson 2003: esp. table 2; Schaps 2004: 53-56). Few of these hoards were found wrapped in a cloth, namely a bag (possibly the Biblical *šor kesef* [e.g. Genesis 42: 35]), and sealed with a bulla to guarantee weight and probably purity. It is clear that the many documented seventh century B.C. hoards found in Palestine indicate an economic development in which silver was used as a currency,²¹ as is also evident from some references in the Bible where units of silver are mentioned. These include first and foremost the sheqel which was the standard unit (e.g. Genesis 23: 15-16; Leviticus 27: 3, 16; Samuel I 9: 8) apparently weighting ca. 11.33 gr. Other units are documented as well, these include the kikar (e.g. Exodus 37: 24; 38: 24; Kings II 5: 22-23), *i.e.* three thousands sheqel, the maneh (e.g. Ezekiel 45: 12; Ezra 2: 69), *i.e.* fifty or sixty sheqel, the beqa (Genesis 24: 22; Exodus 38: 26), *i.e.* half of a sheqel and the gerah (Exodus 30: 13; Numbers 3: 47, 18: 16; Leviticus 27: 25; Ezekiel 45: 12), *i.e.* twentieth of a sheqel. The pim (Samuel I 13: 21) formed part (about two-thirds) of a sheqel according to the archaeological findings, whereas the qeshita (Genesis 33: 19; Joshua 24: 32; Job 42: 11) is probably an archaic (pre Iron Age) weight standard. The agora (Samuel I 2: 36) is a reference for a minute piece of silver, and the term *beša kesef* (Judges 5: 19) may have been the Biblical word for money itself (see in general *Encyclopedia Biblica* 4, s.v. Midot U-Mishqolot). Thompson (2003), after analyzing Hacksilber hoards from Iron Age II Palestine, demonstrates that in many cases these metal pieces were given weights set to standards, and their composition was controlled. Subsequently she came to the conclusion that a kind of a coined metal economy existed in the region prior to the traditional date of "invention" of coinage by the Lydians and Greeks circa 600 B.C. According to Thompson, Hacksilber hoards were one of the factors which influenced the "invention" of Graeco-Lydian coinage, which was an adaptation of pre-existing Levantine concepts. Thompson also argued that there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the monetary use of silver proliferated in Cisjordan during

21 It is worthy of note that dozens of Hacksilber pieces are also found as strays in Palestine and appear frequently in the local antiquity market. All the discussion below but for a few observations is taken from a forthcoming joint monograph by Haim Gitler and the author, titled, *The Coinage of Philistia of the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.: A Study of the Earliest Coins of Palestine*, Numismata, Milan.

the Iron Age and that this proliferation is linked to the overwhelming preference for silver coinage among the Greeks. This hypothesis sees the Near East as the region where a monetary economy was first initiated and only later modified in Greece and Lydia (see, however, Kletter 2003, 2004). However, the weight standard and weight denomination of the first coins ever minted in Palestine were in the environs of the Attic weight and not the Phoenician. In this context it is important to emphasize that during the Babylonian period and early stages of Achaemenid rule, Hacksilber hoards are no longer found. We may thus infer that the Greek Archaic coins took over the economic role of Hacksilber, though in much smaller quantities. The local traditional practice of weighing pieces of metal was still in use in this transitional period, as many Greek Archaic coins and even early Athenian tetradrachms are found cut into pieces in order to form fractions to be weighed for transactions. In this manner the local societies benefited not only from smaller denominations of fixed standards, but also from an assurance of the purity of the silver piece. Some of these cut pieces were re-shaped into oval forms, as if to serve as smaller regularized fractions. The phenomenon of cut up coins is also visible in some imported fourth century B.C. coins. We can thus suggest that the traditional practice of silver coins used as bullion to be weighed upon transaction remained in use during Late Persian times and onwards side by side with coins, but most probably only as a marginal phenomenon.

The cities of Philistia—Ashdod, Ashkelon and Gaza—struck the first indigenous coins of Palestine, apparently simultaneously and within the same time span during the Persian period.²² The cities' semi-autonomous status under Achaemenid rule may be best explained in terms of gaining their loyalty because of their proximity to neighboring Egypt. The striking of city coins was considered a synonym for autonomy and sovereignty; the level of such autonomy was obviously partial, but the concept of monetarized economic organization was very much appreciated, and allowed partial economic control and some degree of media communication via the images shown on the coins. These cities were to be launching bases for the forces of the Achaemenid army and their coins were intended both for local trade and for facilitating transactions between the local and temporary inhabitants of the region. The fact that there was no coin-minting tradition prior to the mid-fifth century B.C. may explain why the minting authorities of the coastal cities of Philistia decided to imitate Athenian prototypes during their initial operative stage, as the latter formed the accepted international currency of the period. As a result, the Attic weight system was taken on, and used throughout the time that they issued coins. Some scholars believe that the minting of silver bullion in the earliest stages of the monetary economy in the southern Levant may be connected with payments for the army (cf. e.g. Babelon 1910: 671; Elayi 1995: 73-78); *i.e.* funding for the Phoenician fleet in its military activities on behalf of the Achaemenid authorities, or financing the major urban centers which were responsible for ongoing army supplies. Other scholars have suggested that the minting of Athenian-styled Philisto-Arabian (but preferably Philistian) issues was intended to rectify the lack of Athenian coinage in the markets of the Near East after the Peloponnesian War (cf. e.g. Six 1877: 177-239; Milne 1937: 57-58). It is much more reasonable to see the minting of coins in the cities of Philistia as symbolizing some aspects of "autonomy", rather than reflecting a need for a particular imperial economic necessity, because economic needs could have been met using other means of payment (*i.e.* metal bullion, agricultural surpluses etc.). The coins of Ashdod, Ashkelon and Gaza are in many cases iconographically similar. They follow the Attic denomination system of tetradrachms, didrachms, drachms, hemidrachms and especially obols and hemiobols that supplied the daily cash for the southern coast of Palestine. Some imported Greek silver coins, mostly Athenian, were still in circula-

22 It is worth mentioning that Qedar (2000-2002) has recently suggested Dor as another minting authority operating between the years 413-401 B.C., on behalf of the Persian satrap Tissaphernes. This idea has as yet received no scholarly consensus.

tion at that time, however the bulk of the money supply came from local mints (cf. for example Lemaire 1994; Mildenberg 1994). This evidence suggests that it is more than likely that their ruling body (whether it was Tyrian or direct Achaemenid rule) was the same. If it was Tyrian, we may assume that Ashdod, Ashkelon and Gaza struck coins simultaneously with Tyre and Sidon, as early as the mid-fifth century B.C. This is supported by the existence of several criteria, among them the monetarized economy as a regional Phoenician phenomenon, the discovery of Philistian coins in hoards of the mid-fifth and second half of the fifth century, and the archaizing motifs depicted on the coins. We can further assume that the division of the Palestinian coast alternating between the Tyrian and Sidonian hegemonies was officially intended. The fragmented territorial domination of these two kingdoms would increase tendencies to rivalry between these two vassals, thus serving the political and economic interests of the Achaemenid authority.

In sum, the above perspectives, together with the many others that are frequently discussed in the scientific literature, show that Palestine, and especially the Palestinian coast, under Achaemenid rule demonstrates evolution rather than revolution in its culture, environment and social reality. In most domains we are witnesses to the continuation of traditional patterns from the Bronze and Iron Ages rather than innovations under direct Achaemenid influence or any other foreign impact.

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