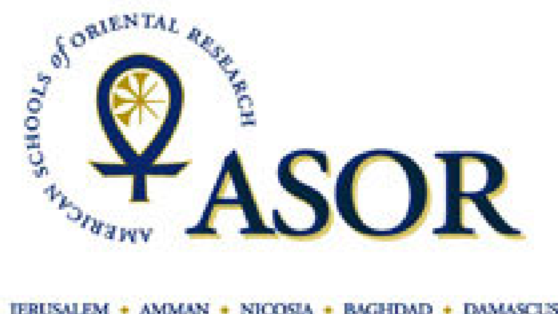

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A People Transformed

Palestine in the Persian Period

John W. Betlyon

The Persian Empire was perhaps the mightiest kingdom of the ancient world and certainly the widest reaching—it spanned two centuries and stretched from the Indus Valley in the east to Egypt and parts of Greece in the west. So why, until as recently as the 1970s, did historians consider this a "dark age" in Syro-Palestinian history?

For one thing, the Greek and East Greek authors who were the earliest literary sources of Persian history in the Near East highlighted all things Greek in their classical Greek texts and portrayed Persia as a decadent "oriental" empire built on Median precedent. For another, early archaeological explorers had the biblical text foremost in mind, so they tended to focus on the time of the kings of Israel and Judah or even earlier—or on the development of Rabbinic Judaism and New Testament Christianity in the later Hellenistic and Roman periods. Assuming that Persian strata would shed no light on the pages of the Bible, these early excavators overlooked details that might have provided an accurate portrait of the Persian period in Palestine. As W. F. Albright noted in 1931, "though the latest period of Old Testament history, it (the Persian period) is in some respects almost as obscure as the Age of the Patriarchs" (Albright 1974: 169).

Until recently, the prevailing view of archaeologists was Kathleen Kenyon's, that is, "the slight glimpses we get of the culture of Palestine (in the Persian period) come largely from unimportant sites." For Kenyon and a generation of archaeologists, the "great cities of the Israelite period played little part in the life of the country under the Babylonians and the succeeding Persian Empire" (1979: 310–11). Some scholars went so far as to argue that most of Judah remained uninhabited in the Persian period because of the extensive damage done during the Babylonian wars of the early sixth century.

Fortunately for historians and biblical scholars, new interest has changed all this. Today, work is being done on the Persian period—its texts, its material culture, and its archaeology. Recent finds—and not-so-recent ones reevaluated—point to better answers to the question, What was distinctive about Palestinian material culture at the time that Persia dominated the Near East? Hans Barstad has made the case that indeed the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods in Palestine are more important than some had thought, that many people remained in Judah and surrounding regions during the Exile, and that Late Iron Age culture was continuous, not ending with the Exile but, in many parts of Palestine, extending well into the Restoration, after Cyrus' proclamation in 539/8 BCE (Barstad 1996, 2003).

Ephraim Stern's prize-winning *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period 538–332 B.C.* (1982) marks the change. In gathering information from disparate sources as part of his dissertation for the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Stern painted the first composite picture of the material culture of Palestine during the Persian period. His work, originally published in Hebrew in 1973, was published in English in 1982 (Stern 1982: vii). At the same time, new scholarly work shed light on the development of the final versions of both the Torah and the Deuteronomistic histories, showing clear connections to the early Persian period. Scholars asked probing questions about the early development of Judaism in the time of Achaemenid control and its effects on the archaeology of Palestine.

Now, as beneficiaries of these recent decades of Persian-period re-appraisals, we seek to deepen our understanding of the Persian period as we discuss it from recently gained perspectives. Contemporary literature replaces—or complements—older works, including Olmstead's *History of the Persian Empire* (1948), Ackroyd's *Israel Under Babylon and Persia* (1970), and Cook's *The Persian Empire* (1983). Innovative interpretations of the period's history have come from J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes (1986), W. D. Davies and L. Finkelstein (1984), and Pierre Briant (2002), among many others. Scholars worldwide convened in Germany in 2003 to focus on Persian Judah; their papers, a conjunction of history, theology, and archaeology, have recently been published in the anthology, *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* edited by Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming (2006). Thus from our own early-twenty-

The edict recorded on this clay cylinder and echoed in the biblical books Ezra and Nehemiah signals the end of the Exile and the beginning of the Persian period. In his first regnal year Cyrus II, better known as Cyrus the Great or just "Cyrus," relayed the command given to him by Marduk, his god. Marduk declared that all other gods should be resettled in their own sacred cities and their dwelling places fortified and repaired. People from Jerusalem, therefore, should return there to rebuild the Temple. And thus began not only the Restoration of Judah and Jerusalem but also Cyrus' self-established reputation as a human rights advocate. Most of the cylinder, written in cuneiform, consists of an immodest explanation of the rise of righteous Cyrus, chosen by Marduk, who had to scour the world to find such a worthy ruler. "All the inhabitants of Babylon as well as of the entire country of Sumer and Akkad, princes and governors, bowed to him, jubilant that he (had received) the kingship, and with shining faces. Happily they greeted him as a master through whose help they had come (again) to life from death (and had all been spared damage and disaster, and they worshiped his (very) name... ." Furthermore, "all the kings of the entire world from the Upper to the Lower Sea, those who are seated in throne rooms, (those who) live in other [types of buildings as well as] all the kings of the West land living in tents' brought their heavy tributes and kissed my feet." *(Photo by Erich Lessing, courtesy of Art Resource, NY.)*

first-century perspective, we can appreciate Palestine during the Persian period as a time of great transformation: The people were rebounding from the devastation of war and grappling with their faith; international trade, fueled by an emerging monetary economy, was on the upswing; and closer contacts with the Greek world were sowing the seeds of Hellenistic expansion.

A Brief History of Palestine in the Persian Period

The Rise and Fall of the Neo-Babylonian Kingdom

Assyria's stranglehold on the lands of Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent came to an abrupt end in 612 BCE when a coalition of Medes and Babylonians captured Nineveh. The ensuing period of Neo-Babylonian hegemony in Palestine is well documented biblically and archaeologically. Late seventh and early-sixth-century Egyptian and Babylonian diplomats jockeyed for influence over buffer states, including Judah. They exerted tremendous influence on Jehoiakim. Once that Judean king finally stopped paying tribute to Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon, war was inevitable. In 597 BCE, Judah and Jerusalem were attacked. The protestations of the prophet Jeremiah went largely unheeded, and Jehoiakim's successor, Jehoiachin, was taken into exile along with many of his people. Although Jerusalem was spared, Judah was made a vassal state of the Neo-Babylonian monarch.

Nebuchadnezzar handpicked the new Judean king, Zedekiah. But Zedekiah was morally weak and unable to sustain a viable program for Judean survival. In 587/586, after refusing to meet tributary obligations, Judah (especially Jerusalem) faced the full onslaught of Neo-Babylonian arms. Signs of the destruction have been preserved

in the archaeological record. The signs indicate that the degree of disaster differed across the region, from one town to another. New work by Israeli and American scholars shows evidence of major devastation in parts of Judah, but not the Benjaminite territory, which remained largely unscathed. Recent studies of settlement patterns have looked not only at the number of settlements but also at their relative size as compared to each other and to earlier as well as later periods. One study summarized the total number of settled *dunams* (a measure of land) and concluded "that between the end of the Iron Age and the Persian period there was a decline of approximately seventy percent in the size of the settled area" (Lipschits 2003: 355–57). Sites were abandoned because of war, disease, drought, and starvation.

The decades of Neo-Babylonian hegemony were a time of transformation throughout Palestine, particularly in the south. The Neo-Babylonian wars had a less destructive effect on northern and coastal areas because they passed under Babylonian rule slightly earlier, when Assyria fell. Mizpah (Tell en-Naṣbeh) became the Neo-Babylonian provincial capital (Wampler 1947; Zorn 1993b: 222; 2003). Remains of the administrative apparatus of government at Mizpah were unearthed in excavations (McCown, Wampler, and Bade 1947). There, in ca. 582 BCE, a group of noblemen assassinated Gedaliah, the Judean governor personally appointed by Nebuchaznezzar; and consequently Nebuchadnezzar ordered deportations, in keeping with his imperial policies for dealing with rebellion. Neo-Babylonian rule of the region continued unabated until the fall of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar's goals were security, stability, and a resumption of commerce following his military operations. Thus the commercial leadership of the Phoenician cities along the coast proved invaluable to him.

The last of the Neo-Babylonian kings, Nabonidus, lacked the administrative creativity and dedication of the highly-skilled Nebuchadnezzar (Beaulieu 1989: 228–29). Nabonidus abandoned his own capital for expeditions to distant Syria and for extended stays at oases deep in the Arabian desert, leaving his son at home to rule in his stead (Lambert 1972; Rollig 1964). Much of the Bible's invective against Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar probably tainted our view of Nabonidus as well. Efforts by Cyrus the Mede to discredit Nabonidus for altering traditional religious views in Babylon by replacing Marduk with Sin—the new supreme deity—probably paid off (Sack 2004: 120–23). Perhaps Nabonidus did subdue Arabia and Edom and gain control of their lucrative trade routes, but Cyrus's power proved too much for him (Lemaire 2003: 289–90). In 540 BCE, a coalition of Medes and Persians attacked Babylonia and were welcomed with open arms by the elders of Babylon. The Persians, a royal dynasty derived from Achemenes (thus Achaemenian and Achaemenid) and at this point led by Cyrus II, better known as Cyrus the Great, or just "Cyrus," found themselves *de facto* rulers of Mesopotamia and all the eastern Mediterranean—including Palestine.

The Edict of Cyrus and the End of the Judean Exile

According to Ezra/Nehemiah, Cyrus the Great issued an edict allowing Hebrew exiles to return to their homeland in ca. 539 BCE. Indeed, by copying (some version of) the edict in both Hebrew (Ezra 1:2–4) and Aramaic (Ezra 6:3–5), the writer wanted to be certain that everyone understood the magnanimity of the Achaemenid monarch. This edict "officially" ended the period of Exile and enabled the descendants of the deportees (deportations in 596, 586, and 582 BCE) to return to Judah and Jerusalem. One of the prophetic voices of the early exile, Deutero-Isaiah, thus proclaimed Cyrus to be the anointed one of God—the "Messiah" (Isa 45:1).

The biblical tradition speaks of groups of exiles returning to the ruins of Jerusalem to begin reconstruction of the Temple. After establishing an outdoor sanctuary for the renewal of Levitical sacrifices, Joshua, the High Priest, and Sheshbazzar, the governor, put the people to work. Temple reconstruction, however, had to compete with the reconstruction of private lives and commercial concerns, as well as regional infrastructure. By 521/520 BCE, early in the reign of Darius I, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah had to call God's faithful back to the important work of rebuilding the Temple despite distracting personal interests. Temple reconstruction was renewed in 515 BCE, and the Second Temple was eventually dedicated on the site of the first, the Temple of Solomon.

No wonder progress was slow. Needs were massive and work difficult for the returnees, particularly in and around Jerusalem. There, especially, they had to deal with large areas of destruction debris. In outlying areas, agriculture probably continued as it had for centuries, largely unimpaired. Judah, now called Yehud, indicating the influence of Persia's lingua franca, Aramaic, was a region particularly well suited to viticulture and cultivation of the olive. These crops had long been grown successfully for trade as well as local use. They would eventually enable Yehud to grow in economic importance and strength in its role as a province (or subprovince, depending on whose nomenclature one uses) within the huge Persian satrapy, Abar-nahara, also an Aramaic name. Abar-nahara, from *eber-nari*, means "across (or beyond) the river," the river referred to being the Euphrates and the perspective being Persia's, therefore from the east, from Susa or another of the Persian royal cities. (The distinction must be made because in some pre-Exilic biblical contexts people west of the Euphrates used "beyond the river" in reference to points east of that river.) Yehud was but one of about ten small administrative units that comprised Abar-nahara, a satrapy so large that it included at times the island of Cyprus as well as all those lands from just south of Cilicia in the north to the Negev in the south. Even so, it was only one of the twenty satrapies that made up the vast Persian Empire, according to Herodotus, the mid-fifth-century BCE historian to whom most modern writers turn (though not entirely trustingly).

Palestine enjoyed a relatively peaceful time during the reign of Darius I. The Persians' campaigns were focused primarily against mainland Greece far to the northwest and would not end until the reign of Xerxes (485–465 BCE). Meanwhile, life was returning to "normal" and settling down for those who returned from Exile.

The Egyptian Revolt of the 460s and the Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah

Xerxes failed in his bid to extend Persian rule into Greece. His armies defeated at Marathon and Thermopolae and his naval forces sunk in the Gulf of Salamis, the "Great King" (each and

every one of the Persian kings, in his turn, was "great king") withdrew his forces into Asia Minor and the Near East. When Xerxes died in the early 460s BCE, it took his successor, Artaxerxes I, some time to consolidate his own hold on power. This was quite normal. But in this period of relative weakness, some in the western regions of the empire sensed a power vacuum in Persepolis. In the void, Inaros, a Libyan nobleman, led Lower Egypt in revolt (Guentch-Ogloueff 1941: 117; Hoglund 1992: 104–5; Briant 2002: 573).

The rebelling Egyptians called on Athens for help. Athens sent twenty thousand soldiers and several hundred ships to reinforce the Egyptian revolt (Meiggs 1972: 102–3). Meanwhile, Artaxerxes I responded with a major mobilization. There was a massive deployment into Abar-nahara. Troops were mustered on the plain of Acco, where the soldiers trained and prepared for battle. Several sites, particularly near Gaza and Ashkelon, became logistical bases for the Persian armed forces. The Persian military, well trained and well equipped, soundly defeated the Egyptians after vicious fighting, then reestablished Persian rule throughout Lower Egypt (Betlyon 2004: 460–62; Hoglund 1992: 150).

In the aftermath of this massive Egyptian revolt, Persia altered its policies towards its western satrapies. Ezra, priest and scribe of the God of Heaven, was sent to Jerusalem on an official mission to reform local religious and legal praxis. Ezra was followed in the mid-440s by Nehemiah, another official of the Persian crown. Nehemiah was given the dual charge of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and increasing the city's population. Throughout the region, Persia took steps to change the terms of its relationship with local populations. By building "strong points" (or fortresses, called in Hebrew *biraniyot*) at major crossroads, at industrial installations, and in the midst of villages, towns, and cities, Persian forces undertook a massive "military operation other than war" (Betlyon 2004: 464–65). This operation consolidated Persia's hold on the region and helped to keep Yehud, Samaria, and other provinces of Abar-nahara "in line."

In the course of two centuries, Persia would fight the Egyptians eight times. Egypt used the excuse of various Persian "interregnums" to break away from the rule of Persepolis. The results of the wars and rebellions were not always the same. But one thing was for sure: Palestine was a staging area from which Persian power was repeatedly projected into the Nile River valley.

The "Peace" of the late Fifth and Fourth Centuries BCE

History tells us little of Palestine in the late fifth and fourth centuries BCE. We do know that Persia continued to have problems with the Egyptians as well as with some other peoples, including the Sidonians, with whom many sites along Palestine's coast had close ties. We also know that, although the

Restoration

With the rebuilding of the Temple, the religious lives of the Jews once again focused on Jerusalem and cultic sacrifices. Early-fifth-century Jerusalem, however, was but a shadow of its late-seventh-century self. Charles Carter, in his sociological study The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period (1999), *has estimated that the population of Jerusalem at the time of the return could have been no more than 2,500–3,000 persons. With the city's restoration, however, Jerusalem slowly began to take on the trappings of provincial government once again, no matter its size.*

Not all Jews in the region were in favor of rebuilding the Temple. Jews of the golah—the returnees from Exile—were distrustful of the Jews in Samaria and the other people who remained behind in Judah/Yehud during the years of Exile. Significant changes in religious practice occurred in those decades, including a new emphasis upon the reading and study of the Torah and the Prophets. "Judaism"—the name itself new—had begun its evolution. We can only speculate about the tension between advocates of the new ways and defenders of the old. This tension would be an important part of Jewish life throughout the Persian period, and beyond.

In these years of relative quiet, it may have seemed to the people of Palestine as if the Persians were ignoring them. Darius I was consumed with his campaigns to make Egypt a part of his empire. All Persian-controlled provinces were expected to provide soldiers or sailors for the Imperial Armed Forces and Palestine was no exception. Jewish soldiers were sent to the Nile River island of Elephantine to serve their Persian masters, once Darius succeeded in extending Persian rule to Egypt. We do not know who was serving in Palestine, but conscripts must have been present on the highways and in the towns of Yehud and Samaria, as well as the coastal areas, in those days.

Extremely little is yet known of the history of the region in the late-sixth and early-fifth centuries. Traditionally, we have had to rely on the biblical text for our "leads" at understanding the history. But as more and more excavations at sites in Israel and Jordan and in the wider region have been considered from new perspectives, scholars have begun to see that populations were slowly growing, more settlements were being established, and there was renewed prosperity, particularly along the coast of Phoenicia and Phoenician-controlled (that is, Persian-controlled) Palestine.

Greeks were not militarily strong, their economies dominated the eastern Mediterranean, resulting in trade wars with Persian tributaries and allies such as Sidon, Tyre, and Byblos. And we know that in Palestine, Jews in Jerusalem maintained temple worship and attempted to bring Samarians back into the worship of the Hebrew God in the restored Temple.

A bronze Greek helmet of the Persian period was found in the ocean near Ashkelon. These are sherds from a similar helmet. According to Herodotus, men from Palestine were part of the Persian army that invaded Greece and wore helmets similar to the Greeks own: "The Phoenicians, with the Syrians of Palestine, furnished 300 vessels, the crews of which were thus accoutred: upon their heads they wore helmets made nearly in the Grecian manner; about their bodies they had breastplates of linen; they carried shields without rims; and were armed with javelins. This nation, according to their own account, dwelt anciently upon the Red Sea, but crossing thence, they fixed themselves on the sea-coast of Syria, where they still inhabit. This part of Syria, and all the region extending from hence to Egypt, is known by the name of Palestine." *(Herodotus,* Histories *VII.89. Trans. G. Rawlinson, New York: Random House, 1942.) Photo courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority.*

The emergence of monetary economies throughout the Near East was of supreme importance. Although the Persian imperial mint kept control of the largest gold and silver denominations struck in the East, by 420 BCE the Great King permitted local mints at major cities in Asia Minor and Phoenicia to strike major silver and bronze coins—though not so major as his own. Smaller local mints were eventually established to produce "small change," including mints in Samaria, Gaza, Ashkelon, and Jerusalem. Some scholars have argued that the creation of these mints suggests increased local autonomy in the late fifth and the fourth centuries, but in my opinion, the mints are merely signs of Persia's policy of centralized economic planning and control.

History tells of some small revolts in Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Egypt but, generally, most of the fourth century appears to have been a time of prosperity in the Levant. In the years leading to Alexander's conquest of Persian armies in 332/331 BCE, a few Levantine cities and towns suffered (some horribly) because of their resistance, while other towns acquiesced to the Macedonians and survived. But that was not the first half of the century, when Palestine generally experienced a season of steady, slow growth. We should not assume, however, that all parts of Palestine experienced uniform growth; in particular, we cannot make that assumption for areas inland from the coast, especially those not near important routes or

Gaza was probably the first city in Palestine to mint coins. The earliest coins imitated Athens'—the Greeks having made coinage popular and Athena and the owl ubiquitous—but soon Gaza and other Palestinian mints were churning out a wide variety of whimsical designs that represented the syncretistic society along the coast, coins with Egyptian, Greek, Phoenician, and Mesopotamian themes. Kings, satyrs, horses, lions, camels, sphinxes, fortresses, the god Bes: these are just some of the motifs. Numismatists labeled the first coins found Philisto-Arabian; then, as more and more appeared, representing a wider area than first assumed, they became known as Greco-Persian and Greco-Phoenician, and now they are all called "Palestinian." *(Drawings by Julia Iatesta.)*

centers. And we must be careful about how we characterize the culture: although Palestine was far removed from major Persian policy decisions, military operations against Egypt directly affected areas along the coastal roads and borders. It must be noted that Persian interests did not lie in homogeneity, in imposition of language or culture or religion, but in maintaining a vast and diverse empire and thus a large military and concomitant heavy taxation. In such an environment nascent Judaism could emerge, as did the basic shape of the Hebrew Bible, and, especially on the coast, an international mixture of cultures could flourish.

Surveys and Excavations

Borders and Boundaries

Scholars have long proposed "borders" for "provinces" within Achaemenid Palestine (Aharoni et al. 1962; Stern 1982; Carter 1999, to mention a few), without benefit of what I consider substantial evidence of how Persia administered the region. That traditional view, with its dependence on linear borders, does not fit my own understanding—a more fluid, flexible approach to "boundaries." For example, recent discussions of Persian administration in the Galilee, stemming from "historical" assessments of archaeological finds including "palatial structures" and a lone late-sixth-century seal (Herbert and Berlin 2003: 46–48), assume old imperial models persisted, namely that "borders" established by the Assyrians and followed by the Babylonians were also followed by Persian administrators.

Rather, the way I see it, Persian power was projected from wherever the Achaemenid king stationed troops and officials to gather taxes, administer infrastructure, and manage regional agricultural production. But whatever and wherever the "borders" in fact were, and their degree of significance, there is no question on this point: Persian roads and bridges linked every part of this vast empire and enabled communication and

The lengthy epitaph on the sarcophagus of Eshmunezer II, found near Sidon in 1855, speaks of that Sidonian king being granted the cities of Dor and Jaffa and the glorious corn-lands in the field of Sharon, now known as the Sharon Plain. The region described corresponds to the Assyrian province of Dor, suggesting the Persian authorities may have delineated this part of Palestine in a way similar to the Assyrian provincial divisions. "We are the ones who built houses for the gods of Sidon in Sidon-by-the-Sea, a house for the Lord of Sidon and a house for 'Ashtart-Shem-Ba'l. Furthermore, the Lord of Kings (probably the Achaemenid king) gave us Dor and Joppa, the mighty lands of Dagon, which are in the Plain of Sharon, in accordance with the important deeds which I did. And we added them to the borders of the country, so that they would belong to Sidon forever." *(Photo by Erich Lessing, courtesy of Art Resource, NY.)*

EDITORS NOTE: A matter of maps? Ancient sources may be few and controversial and perplexing, but they are not nonexistent when it comes to discussing probable provincial borders and boundaries within Achaemenid Palestine. For example, Charles Carter's recent *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study* presents, in four consecutive pages, four quite different variations of Yehud maps by four eminent scholars (Avi-Yonah p. 84; Stern p. 85; Rainey p. 86; Grabbe p. 87). And Yehud is only a tiny part of the satrapy, as Betlyon points out repeatedly. Betlyon argues that the Persians, favoring a more flexible approach, discarded "old imperial models"—borders and administrative centers established by the Assyrians and maintained by the Babylonians and thus already in place. But Betlyon's position is contra the traditional one—that the Persians generally retained those borders, at least for awhile, the better to collect tribute and taxes, essential for their military machine. To see how one scholar (whose work Carter considered) maps out the satrapy from a traditional perspective, including inscriptions and other ancient sources, examine some of the following. They offer varying degrees of detail:

A. F. Rainey. Herodotus' Description of the East Mediterranean Coast. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 321 (2001): 57–63.

A. F. Rainey, Z. Safrai (eds.) *The Macmillan Bible Atlas* (Third revised edition). (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 130–31.

A. F. Rainey, "The Satrapy 'Beyond the River,'" *Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology* 1(2) (1969): 51–78.

Palestine in the Persian Period

Sidon
Sarepta
Tyre
Tel Dan
Ayellet Ha-Shahar
Hazor
Achziv
Kabri
Shavei-Zion
Kh. Usa
Akko
Mizpe Yammim
Bireh
Keisan
Gil'am
Shiqmona
Abu Hawam
Megadim
'Atlit
En Hofez
Yokneam
Beth-Yerah
Tel Qiri
Dor
Nahal Tut
Mishmar ha-'Emeq
Megiddo
Mevorakh
Taanach
Mikhmoret
Samaria
Shechem
Tell es-Sa'idiyeh
Qedumim
Tell el-Mazar
Tell Safut
Makmish (Tel Michal)
Deir 'Alla
SAMARIA
Kh. Meras ed-Din
Khilda
Jaffa
Qa'adeh
Wadi ed-Daliyah
Rishon Le-Zion
Umm Uthainah
Rabbath-Ammon
Nimrin
Tell en-Nasbeh
Bethel
Jericho
Tell el-'Umeiri
Kh. Nijam
Nebi Yunis
Yavneh
Gibeon
Kh. Almit (Almon)
Gezer
Tell el-Ful
Ras el-Kharrubeh
Ashdod
Jerusalem
Heshbon
Bethany
Rammat Rahel
Ashkelon
Khirbet Abu Tuwein
Maresha
Kh. El-Qatt
Lachish
Beth Zur
Tell el-Hesi
JUDEA
Gaza
Kh. Nimra
En Gedi
Ruqeish
Tel Sera
Tel Halif
Kh. Luzifar
Jemmeh
Haror
Tel el-Far'ah (S)
Arad
Beersheva
Kerak
Beerotaim
Buṣeirah
Nahal Ro'ah
Kadesh-Barnea
IDUMEA
Kh. er-Jariyeh (Feinan)
Tawilan
Tell el-Kheleifeh
N
W
E
S
0 kilometers 50
0 miles 50

commerce to move at will, albeit under military protection, all part of the Persian administrative system (Briant 2002: 357–87).

Excavated sites in Persian Palestine fall within several small administrative regions—whatever their "boundaries"—each region a province within the larger administrative unit—the satrapy of Abar-nahara. Damascus was the seat of the satrap, or governor, who answered directly to the king of all Persia. The satrap utilized local leadership to administer smaller areas on behalf of the imperial Achaemenid government. Local governments were responsible for the collection of taxes and the raising of troops when orders were received from higher authorities (Briant 2002: ch. 10).

The northwestern coastal areas of Syria-Palestine fell under the administration of local Phoenician "city-states," including Tyre, Sidon, Akko, and Dor, and possibly other provincial centers not yet identified. Dor, although an administrative center, was, in its turn, under the administration of Sidon for much of the Persian period. Phoenician cultural remains from the Persian period have been found as far south as Tel Michal, located just north of modern Tel Aviv. The inscribed sarcophagus of Eshmunezer, king of Sidon, from the end of the sixth century BCE, mentions that king's rule over the coastal region's Sharon Plain from Dor to Jaffa.

Other sites are found within regions probably administered, to a greater or lesser degree, by Megiddo, Kedesh, Samaria, Yehud (Jerusalem), Ammon, Moab, Edom (Idumaea), and the region of traditional Philistia, including Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ashdod. These, too, however similar or diverse their populations and cultures, were all part of huge Abar-nahara.

The Southwest: Philistia, including Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ashdod

The southwestern coast of Palestine was originally the land of the Philistines during the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah. After the disasters of the Neo-Babylonian conquest, which included the destruction of Ekron in 604 BCE, Phoenician settlers and merchants began to move southward and to occupy some of the coastal towns. During the Persian period, Phoenician presence increased.

Gaza was the most important city of the region (Downey 1963; cf. Katzenstein 1997: 334–36). Although the ancient site has not yet been excavated, several nearby sites illustrate the region's occupational trends in the Persian period. Tell Jemmeh is one example. The site was first excavated by Sir W. M. F. Petrie and later by Gus Van Beek (Van Beek 1993: 672–73). Excavators found storehouses and round granaries, some of which still contained charred grain. But the site was dominated by a large square building with extremely thick (slightly more than two meters) mudbrick walls and an open, central courtyard surrounded on three sides by rooms. These installations have been dated to three phases of occupation in the Persian period. The granaries and associated levels are dated by a mid-fifth-century Attic *lekythos*. The building and granaries were part of a Persian logistical depot intended to supply advancing military forces as they moved towards Egyptian territory. By the end of the Persian period, Tell Jemmeh stored grain and wines collected from surrounding farms (Reich 1966: 264–67).

Petrie's drawing of the mudbrick, central-court fortress on Tell Jemmeh shows the granaries considered essential to the site's role as "pantry" for the Persian army—or any other army or group needing to stockpile grain. Petrie resorted to conjecture for a large percentage of the building's construction, as can be seen from his drawing. The building, noted for its corner rooms and thick walls (some more than 2 m), measured about 38 by 29 m. Several pieces of pottery date it to the Persian period, including mortaria, basket-handle storage jars, juglets, and limestone incense burners. The red-figured Attic-ware *lekythos* on page 25 dates to the late-fifth to late-fourth century. Petrie's small Greek letters refer to types and sizes of mudbricks. *(Petrie 1928: pl. XI.)*

A South Arabian inscription suggests that cargoes of incense arrived here from the Arabian peninsula for shipment to markets elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean world.

Other sites in the area, including Tel Haror, Tel Seraᶜ, and Tell el-Farᶜah (south), evidence the same occupational pattern. At Haror, the Late Iron II fortified town the Babylonians destroyed was later leveled and above it a new town was built, with grain storage pits and a large structure with a courtyard (Oren 1993a: 584). Pottery at Haror included Greek and Cypriot imports. Haror may have been occupied by imperial soldiers who stayed in one of the Persian fortifications that served a dual purpose as administration center. Tel Seraᶜ had silos and grain pits beneath a thick covering of organic material that contained cereals and dung. Agriculture was an important element in the site's life but evidently not the only one: a courtyard structure and "citadel" were also found at this site, along with associated Greek figurines and Attic pottery (Oren 1982, 1993a: 1334). Given the possible presence of Greeks or East Greeks here, some of this village's inhabitants may have been part of a Persian military operation to secure the southwestern borders of Abar-nahara. Tell el-Farᶜah (south), also excavated initially by Petrie and later by J. L. Starkey, G. Lancaster-Harding, and O. Tufnell (Macdonald, Starkey, and Harding 1932), shows similar use, although Petrie did not recognize the Persian date for this particular stratum (Petrie 1930). The fragmentary remains of a large, courtyard building, with thick mudbrick walls, is analogous to the similar building found at Tell Jemmeh (Yisraeli 1993: 241–44).

Many Persian-period sites have been found to the south, in the northern Sinai between the Gaza Strip and the Suez Canal. Most of these sites are near the coastal road that was constructed during the Persian period. From these sites Cambyses launched his 525 BCE attack into the Nile Delta, initiating the area's use as a Persian "power projection platform" for almost two centuries thereafter. The region had long been important as the terminus of the Arabian trade routes bound for Gaza, from which goods were shipped to the lucrative ports of Greece and other places. However, Persian period military operations gave the

These chest-shaped incense altars, small enough to be portable, appeared in Palestine during the Persian period but probably date to the Assyrian period or earlier, especially outside Palestine. Excavators have examined designs on assemblages found in South Arabia, Mesopotamia, and Cyprus to suggest a chronology and typology, which, however, are still not firmly established. The earlier, Israelite altars, to which these have been compared, were larger and had four horns. Most Persian-period altars were made of limestone, some of terracotta or basalt. Most were incised or given a painted decoration on all sides, even the top and bottom. Some bear inscriptions. A few have sculpted figures. Gezer was the first place they were discovered in Palestine, but most from Gezer were surface finds and therefore hard to date securely. One from Gezer was found in Tomb 153, early-fifth century BCE, although excavator R. A. S. Macalister, who uncovered them, labeled the tomb and contents "Fourth Semitic, " or Israelite, and referred to the altar as "votive." Macalister notes the size of c as about 2 7/8 inches in height, 3 inches in diameter at the top and 3 1/8 inches diameter at the bottom. Stern calls these cultic and suggests they come from Phoenician workshops (1982: 19). But Stern's view does not represent a consensus; it has been pointed out that fragrance from the incense may have been appreciated on its own merits, especially in close atmosphere such as found in desert tents. Several altars were found by Petrie at "Gerar," his misidentification of Tell Jemmeh. *(Drawings by Julia Iatesta.)*

(a) This altar, with its very detailed geometric ornamentation, is from Tell es-Sa'idiyeh in Transjordan (the Jordan Valley). It was found on the floor of what the excavator called a "palace." Note the inscription *lyknw*, in lapidary Aramaic script on the upper register. The same inscription is on the opposite side. Also note the reclining figure near the top on the front. A horse is in the same spot on the back. *(Pritchard 1985: 18:6 and 174.)*

(b) An animal attacking or being attacked, such as on this altar, is a main motif. Figures of humans, plants, and animals within a well-executed geometric frame characterize early altars. *(After Macalister 1912: 442.)*

(c) This rider on a horse, carelessly done, probably was a later altar, representing the end of the tradition. *(After Macalister 1912: 12.)*

(d) Lacking even a border, this altar represents the final lowering of the artistic standard and the latest date. *(After Stern 1982: 189.)*

region additional importance. Eliezer Oren's survey identified more than two hundred sites, including towns, villages, fortressses, and cemeteries, as well as seasonal encampments (some military, others commercial; Oren 1993c: 1393–94).

The site of Ruqeish, located near Deir el-Balah, was apparently a large Persian period administrative center (Oren 1993b). Rich archaeological finds indicate that this was probably one of the sites mentioned by Herodotus as a coastal emporium of the time. On a ridge nearby, a site called Tel Qatif, a small fortress and observation tower were excavated. These facilities guarded the coastal highway and included a "massive mudbrick structure" enclosed by a five-meter-wide defensive wall (Stern 2001: 416), probably one of the Persians' *biraniyot* (Betlyon 2004: 464–69). Similar remains were found at Sheikh ez-Zuweid, Rumani, and Tell el-Heir (Migdol; Oren 1993c: 1393–94).

Further south, Tell Raphia revealed a poorly-preserved cult site. Several *favissae* (repositories for discarded cult objects) were filled with ash, mixed pottery, bones, and fragmentary figurines of differing styles from all over the eastern Mediterranean. The pottery indicates that the site was in use throughout the entire Persian and early Hellenistic periods (Reich 1993). Nearby Kasion, located on the sandbar of the Baradawil lagoon, also had Persian remains. The site was known for shipbuilding and was dedicated to Zeus Kasios, patron deity of ships and seafarers. It was an important caravanserai (rest stop) on the coastal road near the border with Egypt. In other words, Kasion was near the Persian customs station at the border—a place taxes were collected (Stern 2001: 416). Military units must have been stationed nearby. Archaeological surveys in the area continue to reveal more and more Persian-period sites—all of which pose the possibility for more detailed investigation in the future.

To the north lay the important cities of Ashkelon and Ashdod. Located just north of Ashdod was a 29 by 29 meter fortress, complete with a large open courtyard. The fortress was Persian in construction and purpose, guarding the coastal road as well as the important commercial functions of the local population (Hoglund 1992: 177–78; Dothan 1971: 1713; Porath 1974). Nearby at Nebi Yunis, some Persian-period storage "yards" were discovered. The excavator, B. Isserlin, suggested the site was overrun and destroyed in ca. 345 bce in the "aftermath of the revolt against Persian rule by the Sidonian king Tennes" (Cross 1964: 185). Other periods of hostility, however, may account for the destruction (Betlyon 2004: 468–73).

Ashkelon has been excavated several times. New excavations under L. E. Stager have yielded important information about the Persian-period city, which was rebuilt on a monumental scale in the early Persian period after having been destroyed by the Babylonians in the early sixth century (Stager 1996). At least five phases of monumental architecture of ashlar construction have been excavated, indicating the site's stature. Brick storage facilities with well-built ashlar foundations, probably associated with workshops and warehouses, have been unearthed. Coins from the fifth and fourth centuries date the ruins, burned several times (Stager 1993). The fires could have erupted for any number of reasons, but since we know difficulties between Persia and the Egyptians often erupted into bloodshed, is it not possible Ashkelon became involved in these affairs on more than one occasion?

Ashkelon's trade with the West flourished throughout the period, as the evidence of various imported wares indicates: Sixth-century finds included pottery from Corinth and Chalcedon; fifth-century wares were predominantly Attic imports; and Italic red-figured imports arrived in the fourth century. Other imported wares came from Cyprus, Egypt, and Persia.

This ibex head, a gold earring found at Ashdod, is in pure Achaemenian style. Its design and exquisite craftsmanship justify the Mesopotamian reputation for artistry at metalcraft. Animal heads were a motif frequently used in Achemenian jewelry, especially in earrings and bracelets. *(Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority.)*

Located slightly north of Ashkelon was Yavneh Yam, an anchorage site usually associated with the more inland town of Yavneh (Jamnia). The buildings and material culture found in the harbor facilities show that Greek or East Greek merchants and sailors were frequent guests or occupants. Structures were built using typical Phoenician style wall construction—sections of ashlar stretchers-and-headers alternating with sections of smaller, uncut fieldstones (Wolff 1998: 787). Attic red-figure vases of the fifth century as well as Phoenician coins of the fourth century clearly indicate the site's composite Greco-Phoenician nature.

Inland from Ashkelon sits Tell el-Hesi—like many other sites, excavated several times. Although we do not know the ancient name for the site, we do know Hesi became a military center in the first half of the fifth century BCE. A large platform was built and on it a small fortress was constructed. Associated with this building was a series of silos and grain storage pits with identifiable Attic wares of the early-fifth century. Throughout its four phases of occupation, activity areas on the site's acropolis changed little. Ancillary finds included loom weights, iron arrowheads, a ram-shaped rhyton, a Bes vase, and a number of votive figurines (Bennett and Blakely 1990: 273). Coupling those finds with architectural remains like Tell Jemmeh's, Hesi appears to have been another one of the Persian army's logistical bases (Betlyon 1991: 39–41; 2003: 272–75). From these sites, soldiers were equipped and staged for battle in the Nile River valley.

Near Tel Michal (Makmish), Nahman Avigad discovered the remains of a sanctuary (Avigad 1960: 90–93). Ze'ev Herzog renewed these excavations more recently and found remains of a trading station, apparently used from the sixth into the fourth centuries BCE. The mound was covered with silos and ash pits; cooking ovens were next to the silos. A fortress was found on the northern edge of the site and showed five phases of use. This was another military and administrative site located near the coastal road and therefore allowing easy access to Egyptian borderlands. While we do not know who used the fortress in four of its phases, the third phase contained Attic black-glazed wares, typical of the late fifth and early fourth centuries BCE. The final phase, which included a new thick-walled building in the center of the mound, included coins of ʿAbdʿashtart I (also known as Straton I) of Sidon, a king who probably revolted against the Persians in the 370s BCE. Late-fourth-century remains include several large wine presses, indicating the strength of local viticulture in the area's economy (Herzog 1993a; Herzog et al. 1989: 112–113).

One important anchorage in the fifth and fourth centuries, when Sidon controlled the area, was Joppa. Evidence from that site includes a large storehouse, probably associated with the importation of Greek wares. Pottery found at Joppa has been identified as Athenian using neutron activation analysis (Ritter-Kaplan 1982; Kaplan and Ritter-Kaplan 1993: 659).

Regional surveys show that the entire area was densely populated in the Persian period, explaining the picture of this southwestern coastal region. Yes, there were important trading sites—Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Jaffa, to name primary ones. However, interspersed with these commercial centers were

Ashkelon's Dog Cemetery

Persian-period Ashkelon is notable for the presence of the largest dog cemetery ever found at an ancient site. More than eight hundred dog burials have been excavated, and several times that number found (Wapnish and Hesse 1993). Individual or multiple dog burials have been found at Tel Dor and at Ashdod, as well as at Berytus in Phoenicia. But these small cemeteries pale in comparison to the hundreds—if not thousands—of burials found at Ashkelon.

Excavator L. E. Stager assumes that the dogs were part of a healing cult (Stager 1993). Mid-fifth-century texts from a Phoenician temple at Kition on Cyprus indicate that sacred dogs, and puppies were included in temple service there, perhaps part of a healing cult connected with a Phoenician deity, although the texts left the dogs' role unstated. Because Ashkelon's fifth-century population had strong cultural affinities with Phoenicia, as well as with Greece, Egypt, and Persia, the Ashkelon cemetery suggests a similar function, thus raising the possibility that a new cultic practice arose in the Persian period along coastal Palestine.

The healing aspects of this cult may also represent Sidonian Eshmun—understood locally as a manifestation of Baal in his healing epiphany. Another possible connection is the Mesopotamian goddess of healing, Gula-Ninisina, whose sacred animal was the dog and who would have been known to the Persian segment of Ashkelon's diverse population.

The burials indicate the dogs were treated kindly, their deaths attributable to natural causes. All, apparently, were buried similarly—individually in shallow pits and on their sides with tail tucked carefully around their hind-legs. They were laid to rest without burial offerings. Puppies make up what at first seems a high proportion–about sixty percent of the burials. But this is not much different than modern mortality rates of puppies in urban areas (Stager 1993:108). Nor is there evidence of selective breeding. The dogs averaged 53 cm in height and 14 kg in weight, both male and female.

A few dozen burials were located about a hundred meters distant from the large concentration, indicating the cemetery may have been even larger

This view of Ashkelon's impressive dog cemetery provides a good indication of the size of this feature. Individual and multiple dog graves have been found elsewhere but this is the largest such burial ground ever uncovered. *(Photo courtesy of Richard Nowitz.)*

Individual dog burials like this one demonstrate the care taken with the interment of these animals. The bodies were especially articulated and buried with grave goods. *(Photo courtesy of Richard Nowitz.)*

than what modern excavators see today. The resting place remained well preserved because, after what was probably less than a century of "interments," the seaside cemetery was covered with fill and the prime real estate put to another purpose.

numerous Persian military installations, including logistical bases at Tell Jemmeh and Tell el-Hesi, and many fortresses. The forts that guarded the coastal highway at Rishon le-Zion and north of Ashdod were just two of the larger examples of the *biraniyot* that were an integral part of Persian military preparedness and satrapal life in the fifth and early fourth centuries BCE (Levi 1996: 744). The role played by military forces cannot be underestimated. As noted above, we know of Egyptian, Cypriot, and Phoenician revolts. The presence of soldiers was the restraint that kept these cities and towns within the Persian system. Trade with the Greek mainland is attested at numerous places, including small military sites such as Tell el-Hesi. Trade with Athens was a shrewd economic move, particularly for the Phoenicians, considering their vast economic interests and desires (Betlyon 2004: 465–68). Although historical sources are scant at best—and usually written from a markedly Greek bias—a regional picture of the period emerges from archaeological data such as we have just glimpsed as well as from informed readings of the historical sources.

Regionally, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Yavneh-Yam were all important cities with port facilities. Ashkelon, however, was preeminent among them. Classical sources refer to Ashkelon as a "city of the Tyrians and a royal palace." It replaced Ashdod as the residence of the royal governor, according to the historian Scylax. The region had a large Phoenician population, as shown by material culture from many sites. In particular, religious artifacts attest to the Phoenician presence. Among such artifacts are an ostracon from Nebi' Yunis dedicated to the "lord of Tyre" and the sign of the Phoenician goddess Tanit found at Ashdod-Yam and Ashkelon (Cross 1964). L. Stager has noted that the significant Phoenician cultural horizons at Ashkelon far overshadow any others there, including Achaemenian, Cypriot, Egyptian, Greek, or Arabian (Stager 1993).

Coin of ʿAbdʿashtart of Sidon. Maritime motifs were popular on coins struck in coastal Phoenicia. Chariots were also popular, reminders of the power and strength behind the coin and reflecting Achaemenid influence. Sidon was one of four Phoenician cities the Persians granted the right to strike coins. The others were Arvad, Byblos, and Tyre. *(Drawing by Julia Iatesta.)*

The Province of Idumaea

Southern areas that might be described as extremely inland, including the northern Negev and what had once been southern Judah, were part of a Persian province named Idumaea. The lists in Neh 11 mention twelve Jewish towns—ten near Beersheva, Lachish on the northernmost border of the region, and Kiriath-arba (Hebron) in the southern hills. This is a controversial list. Some scholars argue that it represents new settlements following the Exile—that is, following a "gap" in occupation. Other scholars argue that these sites were continuously occupied, although not necessarily by Judeans. This latter option seems to make the most sense if looking at the archaeological evidence from this desert borderland. O. Lipschits reviewed these arguments fully in a recent paper in which he followed an argument developed nearly a century ago by Gerhard von Rad (1930: 21–25) that this list from Neh 11 is actually an "ideal reflection" of Yehud's borders to which the people would aspire after the walls of Jerusalem were built (Lipschits 2002: 430–31). Thus the location of a northern or southern border for "Yehud" is immaterial—goes the argument—from a Persian perspective. But again, as stated earlier, Persian "borders" and administrative issues are significant, but not to the extent some would make them. In this case, here in the south, they are probably not so significant as when Edom and Judah were independent kingdoms. Persian dominance here, as in the rest of the region, in all likelihood relegated the actual "borders" between provinces inconsequential, at best. (These were also non-issues in the Hellenistic period, when Idumaeans had taken over a large area of the south.)

Biblical sources mention Geshem, the Arabian, as ruler over the South (Neh 2:19; 6:1, 2). But there is no differentiation between southern areas that once were Judean and other areas inhabited by Edomites who moved westward ahead of Arabian Bedouin advancing from the Transjordanian plateau (Betlyon 2003: 275–77). Again, this is a "border" issue discussed by scholars.

Our primary epigraphic sources for this area are documents found at Tel ʿArad, Khirbet el-Qom, Maresha, Lachish, Tel Beer-sheba, Tel ʿIra, and Tell el-Kheleifeh (Beit-Arieh and Cresson 1991: 126–35; Beit-Arieh 1993: 645). Generally, these texts talk about agricultural issues. However, they also include a large onomasticon from which we learn a great deal about the background of the people living in the area. Theophoric names include composite names with the Edomite god Qos, Phoenician Baal, El, and Hebrew Yahu (Stern 2001: 445–47). The Qos-names predominate, indicating that, by the fourth century BCE, Edomite culture dominated the local population in the desert south. This demonstrates that there was a process of migration and assimilation that probably began as early as the seventh century under Assyrian hegemony. Ostraca—more than a thousand in number—found between Hebron and Lachish attest to many personal names, including a majority of Aramaic, Edomite, and Arabic exemplars, with a minority of Jewish names (Lemaire 2003: 290–91).

In the northern part of Idumaea, Lachish is the best-known archaeological site. Olga Tufnell's Stratum I included all remains on the mound dated later than the Judean monarchy, a definitive *terminus* (Tufnell 1953). The Persian material remains are dated by Attic pottery to ca. 450–350 BCE. They include

the fortifications, a gatehouse, the remains of a "tower," and the "Residency"—a large, public building with courtyards and surrounding rooms. There have been no recent excavations of these Persian remains. It is virtually impossible stratigraphically to distinguish between Persian and Hellenistic remains at the site, according to some of its excavators (Ussishkin 1978; 1982; 1983: 152–53; 1993; Aharoni 1975: 3–11; Zimhoni 1985).

More recently excavated was nearby Tel Maresha. A. Kloner, the excavator, found Persian remains underneath a Hellenistic tower. Several phases of Persian occupation included fortifications (Kloner 1991: 76–80). Tel Halif had a number of Persian-period pits and storage bins around a large building that may have been a storehouse or military structure (Seger 1993: 558–59).

Between Hebron and Beer Sheva, several sites with military implications have been excavated. Khirbet Nimra, located north of Hebron, included a structure 25 by 12 meters in which was found an animal-shaped rhyton, an Achaemenian-style jewelry piece, and other objects. Khirbet Luzifar, further south on the north–south artery, was a fortress with Attic pottery and at least one locally-made small coin (Stern 2001: 450–51).

In the Beer-sheba valley, Tel Beer-sheba had some storehouses and a military fortress from the fifth/fourth centuries BCE (Herzog 1993b). Ostraca from the site suggest that Tel Beer-sheba was a local collection point for the payment of agricultural taxes—specifically barley and wheat—during the early years of the fourth century. A third of the names on the ostraca were Edomite theophoric names incorporating the divine name Qos. Another third were clearly in Arabic and the rest in common Semitic (Lemaire 1996). At the other end of the valley, Tel ʿArad, with its own fortress, stood guard (Herzog 1977; Herzog et al. 1984, 1987). The Arad ostraca of this period indicate that the site included soldiers of Edomite origin who belonged to the *degel* (military unit) of ʿEbed-Nanai—a soldier with a Babylonian name. Josef Naveh has argued that this fortress guarded the north–south road that led down the Wadi Aravah towards Tell el-Kheleifeh (Naveh 1981: 153–74). Given the site's location, this is a logical conclusion. The fortress probably provided a full range of communications, mail services, and transportation assets to move food supplies and other logistical needs to local military forces.

Tell el-Kheleifeh is near the shores of the Gulf of Aqaba and was excavated many decades ago by Nelson Glueck. Glueck's Stratum V was Persian period. This stratum included an industrial settlement constructed on a new plan, one that differed significantly from what was known from the Iron II and Neo-Babylonian strata (Pratico 1993: 4–7, 32–34). This makes sense, as we would expect to have some sort of military installation at the site to watch over the natural harbor at the head of the Gulf (see below).

In the Negev lies the oasis of Kadesh-barnea. Some evidence of Persian reoccupation of the Judean fortress there has been noted. This occupation was from the late fifth and fourth centuries BCE and linked by archaeologists to military campaigns by Persian forces against Egypt (Dothan 1965: 136–43; Cohen 1983; Betlyon 2004). E. Stern has suggested an alternative explanation: the site was a way station used by Jews making their way between Judah and their settlements in Egypt, "thus continuing a long tradition" harking back to a possible route for the Exodus from Egypt (Stern 2001: 453).

Several regional surveys have identified sites where Persian pottery was found. These sites are in the Hebron Hills and appear to be groups of villages interspersed with small Persian fortresses. One Israeli excavator, Y. Baruch, came to the conclusion that along the Hebron Ridge system there were nearly as many occupied sites in the Persian period as there had been in Late Iron II. This area seems to have been spared the Neo-Babylonian destructions. Further to the southwest, some Persian fortresses have been identified along the road that led from Arad to Kadesh-barnea and on to Egypt. Ḥorvat Masorah, Nahal Roʾah, Yaʿtir, and Beʾerotaim have similar stout-walled rectangular buildings: Each measures 21 by 21 meters and has nine rooms around a central courtyard. R. Cohen, the excavator, and Z. Meshel both believe that these forts were built upon the sites of late Judean outposts, which guarded this same road towards Egypt (Stern 2001: 454; Meshel 1977: 43). This was an important highway that ultimately connected Mediterranean coastal cities such as Gaza and Ashkelon with Elath and Etzion-geber. These small fortress-sites functioned as way stations, providing supplies and refreshments and military protection to commerce-oriented travelers, making this long, hot journey safer and more bearable.

The Eastern Region, including the Transjordan

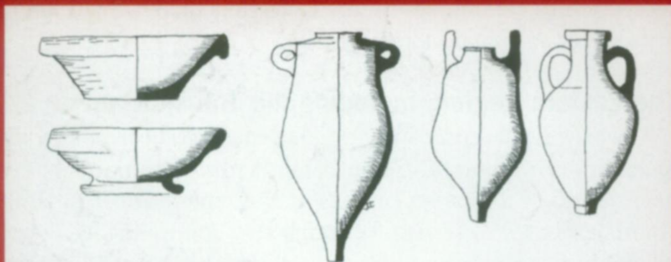
The provincial center appears to have been Rabbath-ammon, near modern Amman. Some Persian-period remains have been found at a number of sites in the region of the capital (Burdajewicz 1993: 12–16). Persian levels, continuing Iron Age occupation, have been identified at Heshbon (Geraty 1993: 626–30), Tell el-ʿUmeiri, and Tell Safut. At Tell el-ʿUmeiri, two stamped jar-handles were unearthed with the inscription *shuba ʿAmmon*, the name of the province of Ammon in the Achaemenid period (Geraty and Herr 2002: 18–19).

There have been some excavations within the towers of the Ammonite capital city. The tower at Khirbet el-Hajar was initially destroyed by the Babylonians in ca. 580 BCE, according to the excavators. They further suggest that it was then reused in the Persian period because a Sidonian coin of ca. 400 BCE was found in its new-use phases (Stern 2001: 456). Evidence for extensive Persian occupation is scant, and some even suggest it is nonexistent (Kletter 1991: 33–50). A similar story can be told for another excavated tower, Tell el-Dreijat. The towers at Umm Uthainah and Abu Nuseir yielded similar finds, including Ammonite and Attic sherds. Ammonite ceramic types normally dated to the Late Iron Age have been found at a number of sites in strata with sixth/fifth century Attic pottery. L. Herr's excavations at Tell el-ʿUmeiri have confirmed these findings, showing that local ceramic traditions changed very slowly and do not provide a precise means for dating Late Iron II or early Persian levels (Geraty and Herr 1989, 1991).

Coarseware from Tell el-Hesi

The excavators at Tell el-Hesi during the 1970s and 1980s put special effort into examining Persian-period pottery and trying to develop a typology. They established five categories of vessels, not including Attic or other imports. This "coarseware" they divided into five categories of vessels: mortaria, cook pots, transport jars, amphorae, and juglets. These sketches (not to scale) are all drawn after models in Hesi excavation reports.

Mortaria. *Sometimes called the "Persian bowl" because it is so ubiquitous, this moldmade ceramic form was probably used for grinding, as well as other purposes. Its rim is usually ca. 30 cm in diameter, its height 8 cm, and its thickness 1.5–2 cm. The outer surface is rippled, usually about midway down and sometimes near the rim. Its ware has sharp, coarse inclusions and is usually (at Hesi, anyway) yellowish-white. Hesi typologists divided their mortaria into two forms, ring-base and flat-base, but other excavators have used different criteria for division, including rim characteristics.*

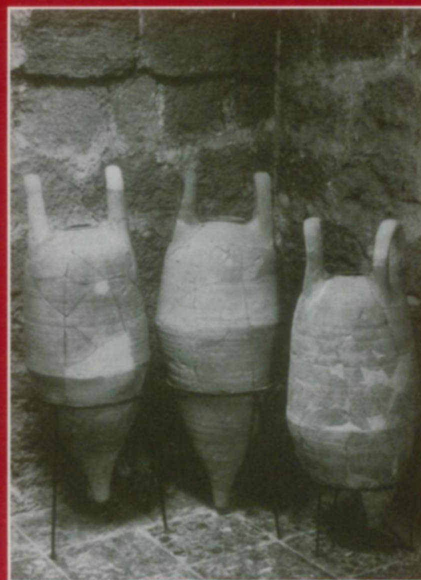


From left to right, mortaria (one flat and one with a ring base), a "Lebanese transport jar," a basket-handled amphora and a Greek-style amphora. (*Drawing by Julia Iatesta.*)

Cook pots. *The Persian period was a transitional one for cook pots. Their typical Iron Age characteristics changed to include a slightly globular body sometimes described as "bag-shaped," and a neck that would now accommodate a lid, since lids became standard during the Persian period. In Persian-period cook pots, the rim is flanged at the top and two small handles connect the rim and shoulder. The shoulders are round or sloping. At Tel Michal, where excavators studied six Persian occupation phases to develop a ceramic typology, it was noted that the clay becomes well-levigated, the walls thinner, firing better, and rims straighter.*

A cook pot. (*Drawing by Julia Iatesta.*)

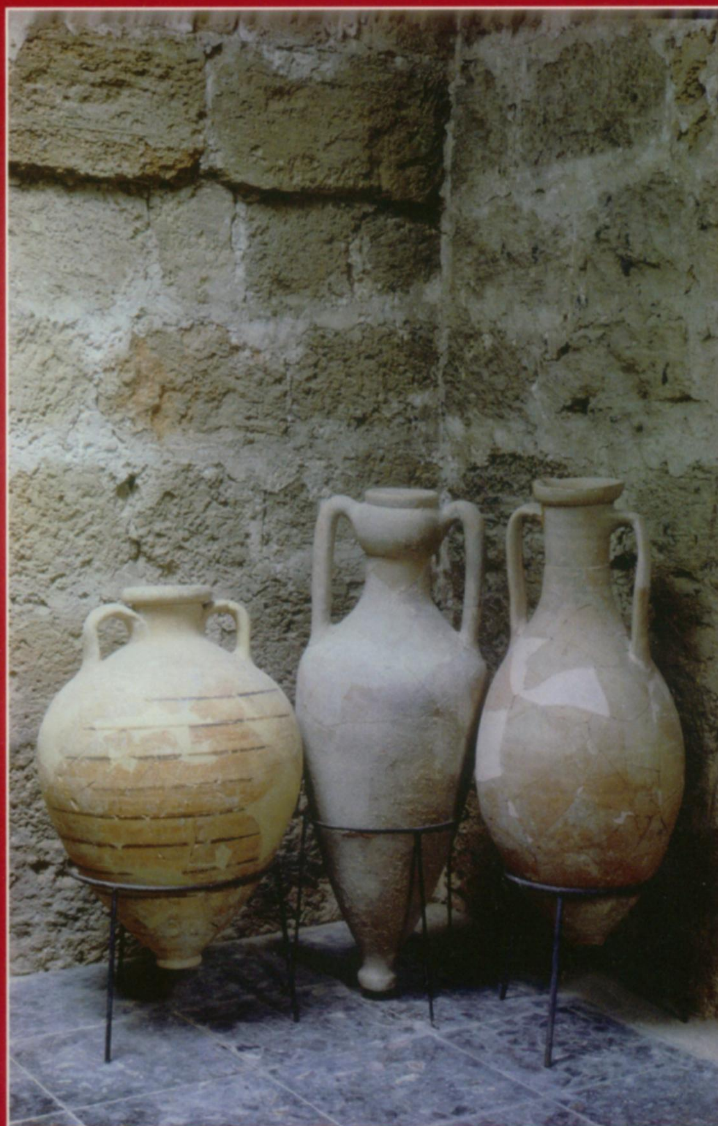
Transport jars. *Hesi excavators dubbed this vessel the "Lebanese transport jar" because testing showed that the clay used for them came from the Sarepta area (modern Lebanon). Similar vessels have been found in Cyprus, Rhodes, Egypt, Carthage, coastal Palestine, and the Shephelah, indicating they were designed for maritime travel. At Hesi they are typically about 50 cm high and cyma-shaped. They always have a pointed base, to enable them to be embedded securely in sand in a ship's hold. Hesi excavators believe that the twisted handles are a technological development rather than sloppiness. In a typology developed for Persian pottery at Gezer, excavator S. Gitin labeled jars like this Type 122, the "classic Persian period form," with antecedents in the eighth-century "sausage jar." Where one finds these transport jars one is also likely to find mortaria and basket-handled amphorae.*

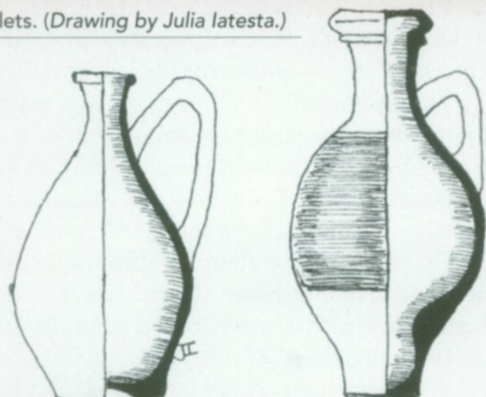


Restored basket-handle amphorae from Dor. Besides their different shapes, note the variety in their necks, handles and the color of the clay. (*Courtesy E. Stern and Tel Dor Project. Photograph by Ze'ev Radovan.*)

Amphorae. *"Greek" amphorae are characterized by oval bodies, sloping shoulders, a pair of rounded handles somewhere from mid-neck to shoulder, and necks that vary from low to high. Basket-handle amphorae refers to the handles that rise vertically above the vessel, as illustrated. These handles were often extremely thick, enabling the amphorae to be carried by a rod inserted through the handles and the weight shared by two persons. Basket handle jars were often used for infant burial. They have been found on Rhodes and Cyprus, in underwater shipwrecks, and as far*

Three restored amphorae from Dor. Besides shape, note differences in necks, handles and clay (color). *(Courtesy E. Stern and Tel Dor Project. Photograph by Ze'ev Radovan.)*





Juglets. (*Drawing by Julia Iatesta.*)

east as Lachish, as well as in Kadesh-barnea, an important way station. During the Persian period they evolved from bi-conic (sloping shoulders and narrow body widening to a full center then tapering to base) to conic (similar but with wide shoulders and cylindrical body narrowing toward the bottom where it terminated in a pointed base). Excavators at Hesi, a central storage facility, insist that whatever the amphorae's original contents, oil or wine, it was re-filled with barley or wheat.

Juglets. *Special features characteristic of Persian period jusglets include a sack shape, replacing the ovoid shape of the Iron Age, triangular or raised handles, and a flat base instead of the earlier round one (Stern 1982: 119).*

Persian Recyclers?

"I shall now mention a thing of which few of those who sail to Egypt are aware. Twice a year wine is brought into Egypt from every part of Greece, as well as from Phoenicia, in earthen jars; and yet in the whole country you will nowhere see, as I may say, a single jar. What then, every one will ask, becomes of the jars? This, too, I will clear up. The major of each town has to collect the wine-jars within his district, and to carry them to Memphis, where they are all filled with water by the Memphians, who then convey them to this desert tract of Syria. And so it comes to pass that all the jars which enter Egypt year by year, and are there put up to sale, find their way into Syria, whither all the old jars have gone before them.

"This way of keeping the passage into Egypt fit for use by storing water there, was begun by the Persians so soon as they became masters of that country. As, however, at the time of which we speak the tract had not yet been so supplied, Cambyses took the advice of his Halicarnassian guest, and sent messengers to the Arabian to beg a safe-conduct through the region. The Arabian granted his prayer, and each pledged faith to the other."

Herodotus, Histories III.6–7

In the Jordan River valley, three sites are most important. Tell es-Saʿidiyeh yielded remains of a "palace," as J. B. Pritchard called it. The "palace" was on the highest point of the mound beneath a Hellenistic building of the second century BCE. The "palace" was 24 by 24 meters, with an open central courtyard surrounded on all sides by rooms (Pritchard 1985; Tubb 1993). It is an obvious example of the *biraniyot*—fortresses situated along the major highways as part of the Persian military "buildup" of the fifth century BCE.

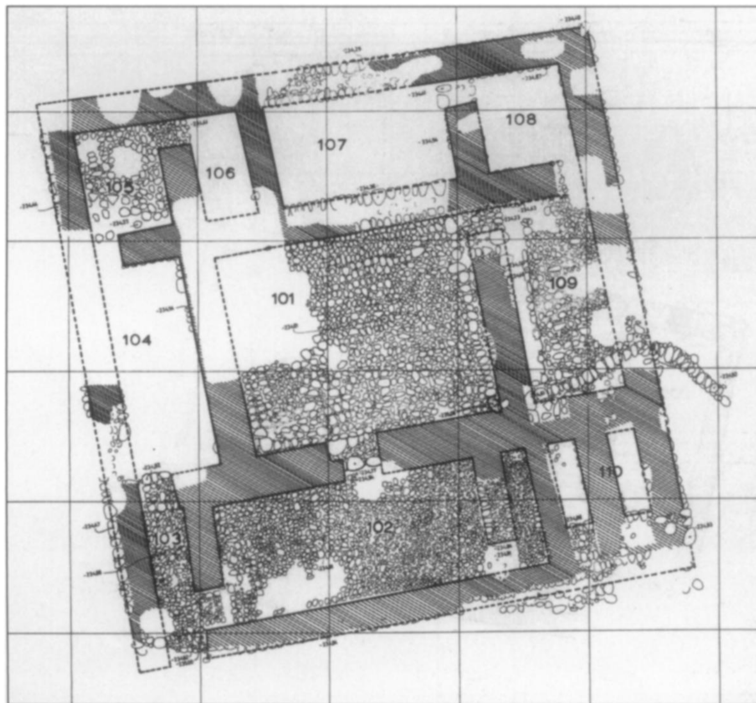
Two Persian-period strata were unearthed at the Jordan Valley's Tell el-Mazar—one stratum from the fourth century BCE and one stratum from the fifth century BCE. Persian storage pits, some of them two meters in diameter and more than four meters deep, characterize Stratum I, the fourth-century stratum (Yassine 1984; DeGroot 1993: 989–91). Similar pits—or silos—were found at Tell es-Saʿidiyeh and Deir ʿAlla. These pits are like those found at Tell el-Hesi and Tell Jemmeh, not far from the Egyptian border. They indicate imperial military installations were probably exceptionally uniform (although not identical) in size, appearance, and use. These installations were part of Persia's military preparedness to safeguard the grain-producing regions of Ammon, Moab, and Edom from attack by desert Bedouin. Many years later, Diocletian would build his *Limes arabicus* (Arabian frontier forts) in an attempt to achieve the same objective.

The site of Tell Nimrin also had some Persian remains, dating from the late-sixth into the fourth centuries BCE (Flanagan and McCreery 1990: 145–48; Dornemann 1990: 155–60).

Further south in the Transjordan, excavators have identified few Persian-period remains. In Moab, only an inscription from Kerak can be definitively tied to the fourth century BCE. J. T. Milik, who initially published the Aramaic text, described a dedicatory inscription to Chemosh and Sara, the Moabite divine pair. There is some controversy as to whether Hillel bar ʿAma, who made the dedication, was a Moabite or a Qedarite Arab. In this early context, however, he must have been a Moabite.

Edomite Tawilan was a thriving outpost on one of the major trade routes. An early Persian-period cuneiform text found there mentions King Darius I. Pottery and jewelry from the site are best dated to the sixth/fifth centuries BCE. Another site already discussed, Buseirah, had a large, fifth-century administrative building, as reported by C. M. Bennett and P. Bienkowski. Contemporary with these sites were the reopened copper mines of Feinan (Bennett 1973, 1974, 1983). A full assemblage of the pottery of this period was attested at Khirbet el-Jariyeh, in the same area. Another site, Tell el-Kheleifeh, on the Gulf of Aqaba, was probably a trading post in this period. Ostraca and pottery there attest to a population of Greeks and Phoenicians—a combination of people almost certainly involved in commerce, as we know from the Mediterranean coast. Many Attic vases and Greek amphorae were found, in addition to Greek coins and their local imitations. One inscription mentions ʿAbd-ʿEshmun (Eshmunezer), a king of Sidon, the Phoenician city that commercially controlled much of the southern Levantine coast.

Most of the biblical emphasis on Persian-period Transjordan concerns ancient Ammon, ruled by the Tobiad family. Although Moab may have also been a province under Persian rule, neither of these "provinces" (Ammon or Moab) should be considered "national" entities. Both were dependencies of the Persian crown. Their responsibilities included commerce and trade, payment of taxes, and the production of industrial and agricultural goods for both internal use and trade. Undoubtedly there were also levies of conscripts made against these municipalities during the several wars that engulfed the region and its southwestern neighbors in the distant Nile River valley.



Stratum III of a central-courtyard building on the summit of Tell es-Saʿidiyeh dates to the Persian period. Several finds at the site also tie it to Persian-period Palestine. Here were found some incense burners as illustrated elsewhere in this article. *(Pritchard 1985: fig. 185; courtesy University of Pennsylvania.)*

Yehud and Jerusalem

Much has been written about Persian-period Yehud. Thanks to many archaeological excavations and the biblical record, knowledge of Yehud's history is a bit fuller than other areas'. While some claim that Yehud was the political/economic successor to the semi-autonomous state of Judah from the seventh and sixth centuries, BCE, in reality Yehud was a small dependency in a huge world empire. Biblical references in Ezra/Nehemiah appear to list the towns included in Persian-period Yehud, but the boundary lists in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 are not alike. As discussed above, these lists must be considered "idealized" rather than actual. For instance, some of the settlements Nehemiah

lists are not part of Yehud but in the Negev or Shephelah or the "Plain of Ono" (near Joppa). Most scholars place the eastern border of the province at the Dead Sea and the River Jordan. But where were the other borders, if they existed? Yehud lived next to Samaria, to Arabia-Idumaea, and to the Phoenician dependencies along the coast. That much we know. But, again, we do not know how formal or informal the boundaries between these areas may have been. Those boundaries almost certainly were not important to Persian overlords, for whom the entire region was part of Abar-nahara. Nonetheless, scholars continue to propose reconstructions.

Most recent among the many proposed reconstructions of Yehud's borders is C. Carter's, based on a geographical analysis (Carter 1999: 77–113). Carter argues that the population of the province was greatly reduced from what it had been in the late seventh century—but not unoccupied, as some scholars have imagined. The material culture of the early Persian period is very similar to that of the Neo-Babylonian period, meaning there is an historical break in 539 BCE when Babylonian rule ended—but no archaeological break. The archaeological record shows, instead, a basic continuity in material culture. A parallel situation holds true at the end of the Persian period; that is, in the decades immediately prior to Alexander's conquest the material culture is virtually the same as the decades immediately afterwards, indicating an historical break but not an archaeological one.

Carter follows Kenneth Hoglund (1992). He suggested that the many fortresses built in the mid-fifth century indicate that a new form of imperial policy was implemented at that time. What followed—in the late Persian period—was a period when coinage became more prominent and ties with Athens grew closer despite imperial opposition. Therefore, it is possible to consign Persian-period strata to two categories: Early (ca. 539–450 BCE), and Late (ca. 450–332 BCE). Many Yehud sites appear to demonstrate this theory. They evidence changes in building types and construction techniques, including the appearance of the *biraniyot*. The beginning of coinage struck by the Phoenician city-states also marks this change. These developments do not mean that an entire, new material culture appears in the mid-fifth century. Rather, political, military, and historical considerations indicate that Persian authorities adopted different policies in Abar-nahara following the Egyptian revolt.

Once the ruins of Jerusalem were reoccupied, the city slowly began to grow again. It is not clear when Jerusalem recovered her role as provincial capital, in place of Mizpah. Jerusalem's destruction at the hands of the Babylonians in 587/6 BCE had been devastating, although incomplete, and apparently Mizpah, a few miles distant, had temporarily taken Jerusalem's role as government seat. Babylonian governors ruled from Mizpah, while Jerusalem faded temporarily from the pages of history. This is not to say Jerusalem was completely abandoned. She arose anew, however, with the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah—prophecies concerning a new temple in the midst of the city and her designation as "signet" for the people. Returnees from exile (the *golah*) asserted their leadership over the "people of the land" who had remained behind in Yehud (or Judah, as it was still known at the time they remained behind). Zerubbabel and the prophet Haggai flirted with nationalistic zeal, a move that must have angered Persian authorities, as Zerubbabel and Haggai both disappeared. The prophecies of Trito-Isaiah make clear that Jerusalem was already coming to life once again in the late-sixth century, albeit on a smaller scale than before the Babylonian wars. As already noted, some scholars argue that Jerusalem was the capital of an autonomous or semi-autonomous province in the Persian period, but such arguments, even if they refer to the latter part of the period, fail to deal with the tremendous power of Persia. Any attempt to define what an autonomous province may have been must reckon with overwhelming military force and centralized controls administered through various satrapal bureaucracies (Briant 2002: 1–10; Albertz and Becking 2003: ch. 15).

In Crowfoot's 1927 excavations in Jerusalem's Tyropaean Valley, a group of seal impressions was found in a "disturbed" context (Carter 1999: 137). These sealings provide clear epigraphic evidence dateable to the mid-fifth through the early third centuries BCE and hint at the nature of the society and the roles of some persons in it. In the early 1960s, Kathleen Kenyon discovered the wall line of Jerusalem in the post-exilic period. It lay within the wall line of the earlier (Iron II) city wall. This discovery made clear that late-sixth and fifth-century Jerusalem was much smaller than the seventh-century capital had been (Franken and Steiner 1990; Eshel and Prag 1995). More recent excavations—in the courtyard of the Armenian Church on "Mount Zion" (western hill), which would have been an area outside Kenyon's wall but probably within the Iron II wall—have yielded Persian-period pottery in a fourth-century context, as well as a silver Yehud coin (probably dating from the mid-fourth century BCE). Nevertheless, Persian-period Jerusalem was, almost undoubtedly, small (Broshi 1976: 82–83; Carter 1999: 148).

Yigal Shiloh's first five seasons (1978–1982) on the southeastern hill (City of David excavations) found Persian-period pottery "scattered throughout most of the excavational areas" where he dug, although architectural remains were found in only four (Shiloh 1984: 29). Stratum 9 is the Persian material. It included a "round, columbarium-like structure" almost five meters in diameter, plus some important domestic remains that clearly must have been located outside the city walls. Shiloh noted that the excavations in Area G are east of (outside) Nehemiah's wall and referred readers to Stern's descriptions of seals and seal impressions when he dated his City of David finds (Shiloh 1984: 20, 34 with notes 86, 87). The Area G ceramic assemblage is the most complete Persian pottery assemblage thus far excavated in Jerusalem (Ariel and DeGroot 1996). The variety of ceramic vessels and locally produced chalk objects demonstrate that there was a community of artisans who, along with associated industries, did very well in this period. From these excavation areas, many bullae of the late Iron Age/early Persian period have been found (Shiloh 1984: 19–29).

Some excavations outside the city walls of post-exilic Jerusalem have unearthed important information concerning the Persian-period city. Gabriel Barkay's Ketef Hinnom excavations were in rock-hewn hillside burial caves below the Scottish Presbyterian St. Andrew's Church, west across the Hinnom Valley from ancient Jerusalem. Several tombs yielded pottery and other Persian period evidence. Most of the tombs were plundered "in antiquity" and the finds from various periods jumbled together, but at least one tomb provided a sealed context. Barkay found several objects with parallels at coastal sites and like those described in Stern's *Material Culture* (Barkay 1994: 96–100; Stern 1982: 151–55). Among these objects is a glass pendant in the form of a grotesque head (a bearded male with bulging eyes) as well as several pieces of jewelry including a pair of gold-filigree lions'-head earrings in the Achaemenid style. Barkay dates the earrings "probably" to the fifth century BCE. (Barkay 1994: 100–101). Egyptian influence is also represented—a faience amulet in the form of the Eye of Horus.

Some other tombs were found near the Jaffa Gate, on Haʿemeq Street. There are clear parallels between these tombs and those in Ketef Hinnom. R. Reich and E. Shukrun concluded that the finds indicate continuous use throughout the sixth and fifth centuries. Jewelry and a black Attic *amphoriskos* from the mid-fifth century were among the principal finds (Reich 1990: 16–17, 1994: 111–18).

Jerusalem was indeed inhabited although, as with the size of her walls, we can only speculate as to the size of her population in this period. This remnant of population probably maintained some sort of ritual activity on or near the site of the first Temple even after the building itself had been destroyed, in accord with Jeremiah's eyewitness account (Jer 39 and 41). As the city slowly grew again, especially in the later Persian period, its built-up area would once again begin to approach the size of its pre-exilic predecessor, but reach it only in the Herodian, or possibly late Hellenistic, period.

Other Persian-period sites in the environs of Jerusalem include Khirbet er-Ras (west) and the excavations in the Wadi Salim, near ʿIsawiye, on the road from Jerusalem to Maʾale Adumim (Nadelman 1993: 54–56; Carter 1999). Excavators at Khirbet er-Ras discovered rectangular stone towers two stories high, with buildings and courtyards measuring between twenty and thirty meters square. The buildings were apparently constructed in the eighth/seventh centuries BCE but were used in the Persian period as well, as the presence of Persian pottery has shown. Excavations in the Wadi Salim unearthed two agricultural sites with stone buildings and nearby terraces. The agricultural use of the sites was determined by ceramic finds from the Iron II, Persian, and Hellenistic periods.

Elsewhere in Yehud

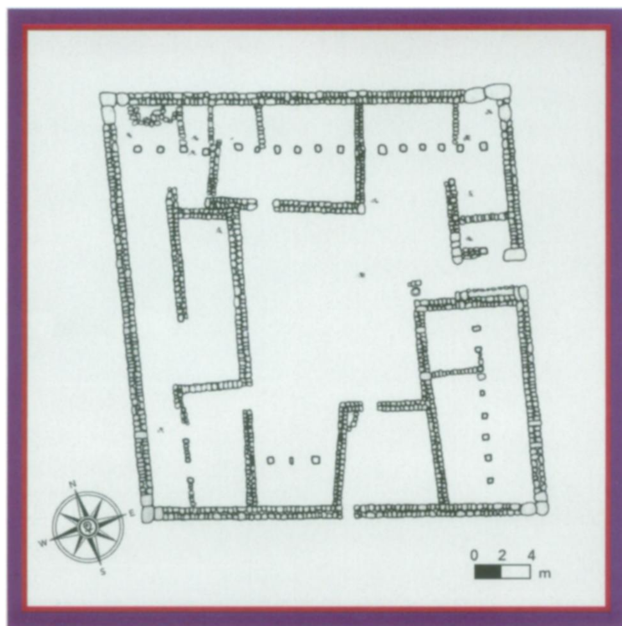
Much has been written about the excavations at Ramat Rahel led by Y. Aharoni in the 1950s and early 1960s. Aharoni identified Stratum IV, which included Persian as well as Hellenistic and Herodian remains, as "The Period of the Second Temple." (By the fourth season he subdivided the stratum, and IVB represented the fifth to third centuries BCE.) No floors in the structure, which Aharoni called a Persian citadel, could be dated definitively. Indeed, the date of this building was "extremely problematical." Finding a datable floor that sealed beyond question the objects beneath it, providing a *terminus*, might have settled the discussion then and there. But the site did contain unique pottery finds and one of the richest concentrations of seal impressions of any site in the region. While some come from Late Iron II, others are clearly Persian in context and date. Several are inscribed with names of high officials, including a seal attributed to Nehemiah ben Azbuk, ruler of the half-district of Beth-Zur, according to Nehemiah 3:16 (Aharoni et al. 1962, 1964). Many came from a rubbish dump (no. 484) in the middle of what the excavator considered to be a large courtyard. There appears to be insufficient evidence to suggest that in the Persian period Ramat Rahel was an administrative site, as it had been in Late Iron II, although imperial authorities may have transferred a "seat of authority" from Tell en-Naṣbeh to Ramat Rahel, as some have suggested. The architectural finds from the Persian period, however, are insignificant (Lipschits 2003: 330–31; Naʾaman 2001: 274).

There has been much discussion concerning the Beth-Zur remains that date to 450 BCE and later. The citadel seems to date to the Ptolemaic and Hellenistic periods rather than the Persian, according to Charles Carter. Carter argues against the views of W. F. Albright (Albright and Sellers 1931: 9–13), E. Stern (2001: 437), and O. R. Sellers (1933; Sellers et al. 1968). He cites a "gap" in the ceramic evidence from an area south and west of the "Wine Shop" near the eastern gate of the city (Carter 1999: 154). But does Carter assume too much clarity in our knowledge of Persian-period ceramic forms and their development? Many common ceramic forms changed little between the Neo-Babylonian and Hellenistic periods. Another suggestion comes from R. Reich, who has proposed that the citadel was the residency of a Persian governor. He cites parallels with the residency of Lachish Stratum I (Reich 1992a: 214–22; 1992b: 113–23). Although there is some general similarity, there are many problems trying to establish an exact parallel between the buildings. Each does, however, have a central courtyard. Ceramic dating is not precise and is, in fact, less than satisfactory. Numismatic evidence is also rather imprecise, although mid-fourth-century dates seem probable. Could this "residency" be another of the *biraniyot* of the Persian army and its allies? These buildings were used more intensively during periods of crisis, with intervening gaps in occupation. The evidence, as presented, is in perfect agreement with military activities.

Elsewhere in Yehud there is definitive occupation at a number of sites. Tel Goren (ʿEn Gedi) is located along the Dead Sea, nearly twenty-five miles from Jerusalem. The site was excavated and surveyed several times between 1905 and the mid-1960s. Mazar, Dothan, and Dunayevsky (1966) all have argued that the site was densely populated and its major architectural remains dateable by ceramic and epigraphic finds. There may have been a perfume industry here, a spot where caravans crossed the Dead Sea from Transjordan (at the Lisan Peninsula) and then made their way towards Tekoa and Jerusalem beyond. Building 234 had an area of more than 550 square meters. (B. Mazar 1993: 402–3; Mazar and Dunayevsky 1967: 133–43). The site's growing prosperity coincided with the governorship of Nehemiah in the mid-to-late fifth century BCE.

Jericho has yielded very limited Persian remains, but those include local pottery and imported Attic vessels. And epigraphic finds from the excavations of Sellin and Watzinger (1913) have been dated to the fourth century. Although the nature of the Persian-period at Jericho remains unclear, that city did exist in some form in the fourth century (Kenyon and Holland 1981: 171–73; 1982: 537–45). Ezra and Nehemiah both mention the 345 people who resettled Jericho in the Persian period (Ezra 2:34; Neh 7:36).

Late Persian occupation is known from a number of sites, all of which were occupied only after the great Egyptian Revolt of ca. 465 BCE. Bethel was reoccupied at this time, although it did not become a large community until the Hellenistic period (cf. The Hills of Benjamin). Ras el-Kharrubeh (identified by many as biblical Anathoth) is located 4.5 kilometers north of Jerusalem and has limited ceramic and architectural remains of the period (Bergman 1936: 22–23). The excavations of Eshel and Misgav (1988: 158–76) at Ketef Jericho unearthed some Persian remains, including an inscription detailing a list of cultic donations. Its text is similar to an inscription from the Jewish temple at Elephantine. Excavators believe the text was deposited in the cave during the Persian campaign launched to quell the rebellion in Syria during the reign of Artaxerxes III (ca. 358–338 BCE). The excavators believe Jericho was destroyed at this time and that some Jews fled to the cave outside the town to escape deportation or death.



One of many central-courtyard buildings in the region, the site of Khirbet Abu Tuwein in the Hebron Hills may have served as a fortress or administrative center during part of the Persian period. The date of construction and use is debated. *(From NEAEHL 1, 15; courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society.)*

The list of sites with Persian remains goes on and on: A small, late Persian settlement was discovered at el-ʿEzariyeh (Bethany). Excavators worked in caves, tombs, pits, and a cistern dating from the sixth and fifth centuries BCE. Several seal impressions date the beginning of this occupation to the late fifth and fourth centuries. A larger settlement, probably to be associated with another Persian *biraniyah*, was found at Khirbet Abu Tuwein. The building was almost square; it measured 29.5 by 31 meters and had a large central courtyard. Although Mazar considered the site industrial, he "could not rule out" use of the building "to house troops." He suggested that the site was built in the late seventh century, abandoned, and then reoccupied in the sixth and fifth centuries (A. Mazar 1982: 95–96; Hoglund 1992: 197). The building plan's resemblance to so many other buildings of the period, however, means it was built in the mid-fifth century, not earlier. Some small buildings at the foot of the site may have been related to the fortress, including annex housing for soldiers. This small settlement and the fortress are contemporaneous—their ceramic assemblages virtually identical. Arrangements similar to Khirbet Abu Tuwein's are known from the fortresses and small settlements found at Khirbet el-Qatt, Khirbet Umm el-Qalʾa (and its neighbor, Khirbet Jrish), and Khirbet ez-Zawiyye.

Khirbet Nijam was excavated in 1991 and is yet another example of a Persian fortress. The building measures 21.8 by 25.8 meters, with a central courtyard measuring 10 by 11.9 meters (Dadon 1994: 87–88). Additionally, a fifth-century tomb was found at ʿAin Arrub, some eleven kilometers north of Hebron. Several interesting cups were found in the tomb, including a cup imitating Achaemenian style, plus a number of other vessels all from the late-sixth or early-fifth centuries BCE; all these vessels have parallels at sites further south in Yehud and in neighboring coastal provinces. An additional Persian-period tomb was found at Khirbet ʿAlmit, where several caves contained evidence of human habitation in the fifth century BCE.

Oded Lipschits recently presented chart-comparisons of settled areas in Judah in the Iron Age and Persion period, by region. He argued that in the Persian period there was a drastic decline in the importance of larger sites in Benjamin and Yehud, while medium-sized and smaller sites increased in importance and number (2003: 353). This reflects a time of relative peace and stability that allowed smaller villages and towns to grow and develop. Lipschits, using settled *dunams* as his measure and admitting his data are "significantly different from the data that have been presented previously in the research," has estimated that "between the end of the Iron Age and the Persian period there was a decline of approximately seventy percent in the size of the settled area" (2003: 355). This means, following Lipschitz' figures, that the population of Yehud fell from approximately 108,000 in 587 BCE to no more than 32,000 in 332 BCE. Jerusalem itself probably received the largest portion of the *golah*—the returnees from Exile. However, the priests and social elite who resettled the city were not great in number. The region of Benjamin and the Judean hills were the more populous parts of the region; Lipschitz accords them seventy-five percent of the population (Lipschitz 2003: 366). Jerusalem, just as it is depicted in the book of Nehemiah, was largely devoid of significant population, with no more than ten percent of the district's people residing in the former capital (Lipschits 2003: 364–65).

Attic Pottery in Palestine

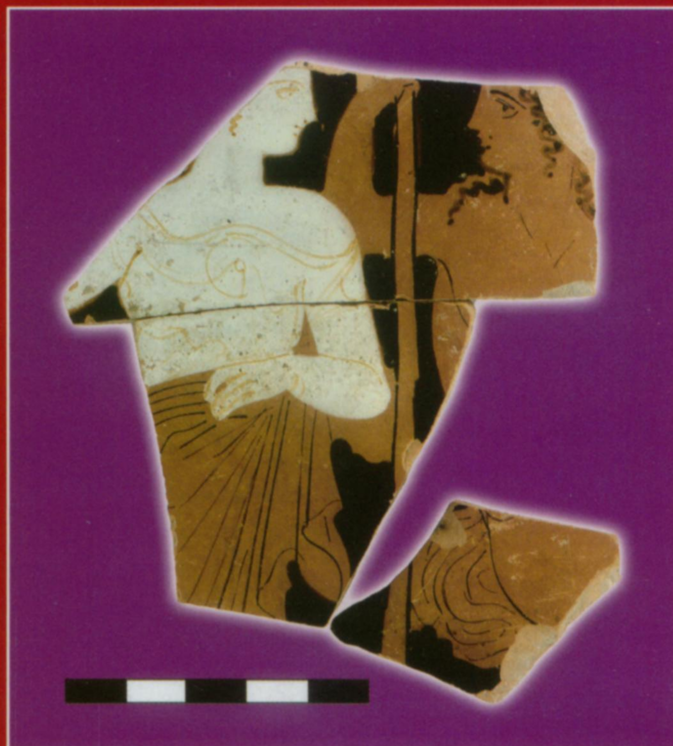
A sharp increase in imports of Attic pottery in the late sixth century marks the beginning of extensive trade between mainland Greece and Palestine that lasts throughout the Persian period. The significance of these imports is wide-ranging, signaling emulation and exchange, conspicuous consumption and the practice of ritual dining. Virtually every site in Israel with Persian occupation levels has one or two sherds of Attic pottery, but the quantity at coastal sites is truly impressive: hundreds of vessels have been recovered along the coast from Gaza and Ashkelon in the south, to Dor and Akko in the north.

Three main techniques are seen in the Attic pottery of the fifth and fourth centuries: black glaze that is sometimes decorated with geometric shapes and patterns; black figure, in which forms are rendered in black with incised details and background areas are left in reserve (red); and the subsequent painting technique of red figure in which figures appear in reserve against a black backdrop. In red figure the development of painting is most advanced, allowing for richly detailed scenes.

Drinking vessels are important from the inception of trade and are common in all three decorative styles. A preference is seen for stackable and sturdy forms suited to the long journey from Greece. In red figure and black glaze the large cup is ubiquitous throughout the period. In black figure a somewhat smaller cup predominates, often showing scenes of everyday life with figures rendered in a simple silhouette style. Both forms can hold substantial quantities of wine. Greeks used large footed bowls called kraters to mix wine and water at a ratio of around 1 to 3. Although it is unclear whether the inhabitants of Palestine also followed this aspect of Greek custom, the wine krater is the most popular large serving vessel. The bell krater is the most commonly found form, and, as its name implies, its gently curving surface provides ample space for decoration often with mythological stories or genre themes rendered in red figure.

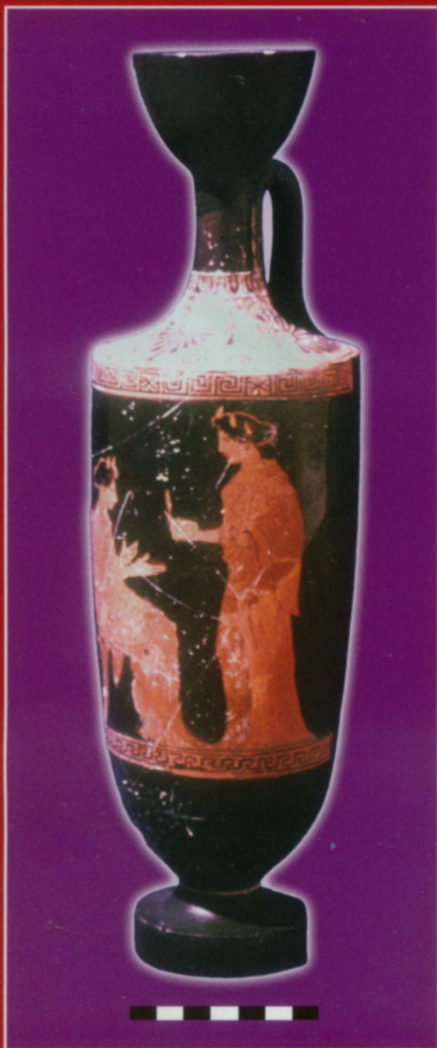
Individual dining wares accompany the wine serving and mixing vessels, and by early in the fourth century they are so popular that they replace most local products. Imports include a wide variety of bowls and plates almost all of which are made in plain black glaze. They are often decorated with fine geometric and floral designs incised, pressed or stamped into the clay before firing. These vessels are the first to be imitated widely by Levantine craftsmen, beginning sometime in the mid-fourth century.

A small selection of other shapes was also imported from Attika including salt cellars, casseroles and oil-pourers. The lidded casserole could be used for storing jewelry or cosmetics, and its association with newly-married women is reflected in several red-figure examples showing erotes, young women and their maids. In the Levant, the most common personal item used by both men and women is the perfume lekythos, a cylindrical vessel with a narrow neck that could be plugged to prevent spills. These are particularly popular in plain black and black-figure, the latter typically decorated with simple narrative scenes or geometric patterns over white-slipped backgrounds. Other forms essential to the Greeks are, however, uncommon in Palestine, notably those used exclusively in



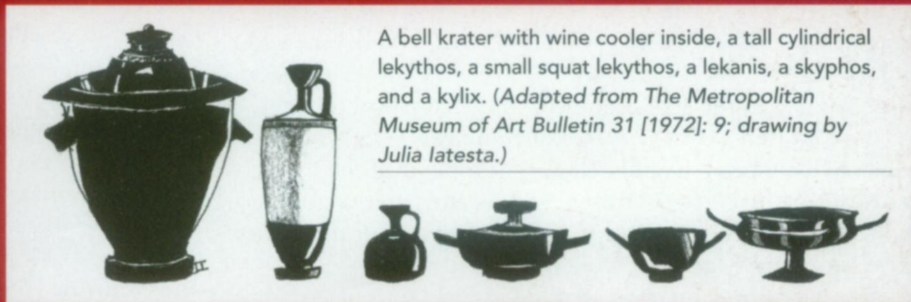
Three fragments of a fourth-century bell krater in the red figure technique showing the wedding of Ariadne (left) and Dionysos (right). From Tel Dor. *Photo courtesy of Gabi Laron courtesy of Ephraim Stern, Hebrew University, Jerusalem.*

Two joining fragments of another red-figure bell krater showing a *symposion* scene of a seated flute player (left) and a standing woman, perhaps a prostitute (right). From Tel Dor. *(Photo by Gabi Laron courtesy of Ephraim Stern, Hebrew University, Jerusalem.)*



One of the finest and largest examples of red-figured Attic ware to emerge from excavations in Israel came from W. M. F. Petrie's 1920s excavations at Tell Jemmeh, wrongly thought by to be ancient Gerar. This lekythos is between 25 and 30 cm tall, exceptionally tall for the type. It was found with other Aegean pottery in the enormous fort. The red-figure painting style dates the *lekythos* to the fifth century. Red-figured ware was produced in Athens for only a little more than a century and thus is invaluable for dating Palestinian stratigraphy. *(Courtesy Israel Antiquities Authority.)*

The delicacy and fine details such as the bow in the center sherd and the face in the sherd at the far right would have been impossible prior to the development of this technique in the Athens area. Techniques and styles in red-figure developed and changed so swiftly in their mere century of craft that the art form provides an excellent tool for archaeologists in Palestine, who use the pieces to understand stratigraphy. *(Courtesy E. Stern and Tel Dor Project. Photograph by Ze'ev Radovan).*



A bell krater with wine cooler inside, a tall cylindrical lekythos, a small squat lekythos, a lekanis, a skyphos, and a kylix. (*Adapted from The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin 31 [1972]: 9; drawing by Julia Iatesta.)*

ritual. Also rare are vessels for decanting the wine mixture from kraters to drinking cups: if Levantine consumers employed drinking vessels in the same manner as the Greeks, they must have used local pots in conjunction with Greek ones. So from a large variety of Attic vessels, we can see that Levantine consumers chose what suited their tastes and needs, combining an interest in fine Greek goods—and perhaps Greek practices—with local traditions.

Many vessels have painted themes indicating their role in the enjoyment of food and drink. Appropriately, the Greek god of wine, Dionysos, is a favorite subject. The red-figure bell krater fragment on the facing page shows the god seated alongside his young bride, Ariadne. Other fragments probably from the same vessel show figures preparing wine for the wedding feast. Another popular topic is the Greek drinking party called the symposion. *On the fragment shown on the facing page, we see a* symposion *scene that shows the party's entertainment: at left is the upper body of a seated musician playing the double flute; at right is the lower body of a woman standing with her hand on her hip. She may be a prostitute—another common* symposion *figure, who can be shown playing games or, as we may see here, dancing to flute music for the entertainment of male revelers. The function of and themes seen on these vessels suggest that the traditional Levantine drinking party called the* marzeah *was understood as a relative of the Greek* symposion, *encouraging the flow of select Attic vessels into Palestine in the Persian period.*

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The Hills of Benjamin

Benjamin remained largely unscathed by the wars of the Neo-Babylonian period. Biblical Mizpah (Tell en-Naṣbeh) became, for a while at least, provincial capital. There is virtually no evidence to suggest that the Persians, upon their arrival decades later, moved the regional administrative center for Benjamin and Judah elsewhere. Eventually Jerusalem may have regained this administrative stature, but, as explained above, certainly not until the time of Ezra or Nehemiah at the earliest.

Tell en-Naṣbeh was excavated in the 1920s and 1930s with an emphasis upon Late Iron II remains. C. C. McCown and J. C. Wampler published the work in the 1940s. A "palace" of the Neo-Babylonian period, storehouses, and a unique town plan demonstrate how important the site was in the early-to-mid sixth century. Remains, including sherds of late-sixth and fifth-century Attic wares, indicate occupation continued into the Persian period, affirmed by J. Zorn's recent reassessment of the finds (1993b; 2003: 442–45). The reuse of the so-called "palace" may have been as one of the *biraniyot* connected to peacekeeping operations along the north–south road from Yehud to Samerina.

Several other cities and towns show Persian-period occupation of note. Bethel (in the tribal territory of Ephraim) was excavated in the 1930s by W. F. Albright, a work renewed by J. L. Kelso in the 1950s (1968: 38–40). A part of the site was occupied in the sixth century—an occupation probably to be associated with the Neo-Babylonian period. The site seems to have been abandoned at that time until the fourth century, when the population in the region increased and Bethel was reoccupied. This is a site that cries out for more excavation in the future.

When J. B. Pritchard excavated at Gibeon, he assumed that site was limited to Iron Age occupation. He believed Gibeon was abandoned when Jerusalem fell (Pritchard 1959: 17–29, 1961, 1962, 1964: 39). However, the material culture reported in the excavation reports clearly indicates that occupation continued into the Neo-Babylonian period and probably into the early Persian period. Ceramic forms and seal impressions are not easily dated to the sixth and early-fifth centuries, but even in Neh 3 the people of Gibeon are among those listed as builders of the new wall around Jerusalem.

As at Gibeon, remains at Tell el-Fûl (probably Gibeah) demonstrate that life continued there after the Neo-Babylonian wars into the late-sixth and early-fifth centuries. Although Albright (1924) and Sinclair (1960) both believed the site was unoccupied in the Persian period, more recent excavations by P. W. Lapp (1981: 40) suggested that Stratum IVA was clear evidence for Persian occupation of the site. Indeed, this stratum included a fortress and a growing area of residential occupation dateable to the late-sixth and early-fifth centuries. The site was temporarily abandoned in the early years of the fifth century. Could this disruption in occupation have been associated with people supportive of the Egyptian revolt of the 460s, people who took advantage of a Persian interregnum—i.e., the death of Xerxes I in ca. 465 BCE? We may never know why Tell el-Fûl was abandoned at this time, only to be reoccupied in the later Hellenistic period (late third century).

There are other, smaller sites, of course, where occupation continued more or less peacefully from the Iron Age into the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods. Nebi Samuel east of Jerusalem has revealed some impressive Persian remains (Magen and Dadon 1996: 19–20). And the regional surveys, including the work of Magen and Finkelstein (1993), Kochavi (1972), and Govrin (1991), indicate that many small Persian sites dot the landscape. Additional discussion of these issues can be found in the work of O. Lipschits (1997) and J. R. Zorn (1993b).

Megiddo, Galilee, and the North

The cities and towns of the Galilee and the North were probably administered from Megiddo. Several other sites attained significant stature in the period, and administration may have shifted to Hazor or Acco or Kedesh. The responsibilities of these small district "capitals" may have been little more than collection points for grain, oils, or wines, all later exported, and for the collection of tariffs and taxes.

The pottery from the excavated northern sites parallels the ceramic assemblages from the Galilee and the southern Phoenician coastlands. These forms and wares differ from those known from Samaria and Yehud. Ephraim Stern has argued, on the basis of the pottery, that the population of the northern regions was predominantly Phoenician, or at least "strongly influenced by Phoenician culture" (2001: 374).

Remains of Persian-period occupation have come from a number of sites near Megiddo. A Phoenician sanctuary was discovered at Mizpe Yammim (Frankel 1993: 1062–63; Frankel and Ventura 1998). Several fortresses were found in the mountains at Saʾsaʾ and Gush Halav. Some other sites in the upper Jordan Valley were also occupied, including Tel Dan (Biran 1994: 270–71), Hazor, Tel Anafa, Ayelet ha-Shahar, Tell Kinnereth, and Beth Yerah. Regional surveys in the Beth Shean Valley collected Persian-period pottery at forty-four sites. A similar survey in the traditional region of the tribe of Issachar found Persian-period pottery at seventy-three sites. N. Zori, the archaeologist conducting these surveys, concluded that the population density during the Persian period was similar to the last years of the Israelite period before the onslaught of the Assyrians in the 720s BCE (Zori 1977).

Some sites have been more extensively excavated than others. Megiddo's Stratum I includes remains from three separate areas on the mound. There is a "fortress" with an open, central courtyard and surrounding rooms in Area C. The plan of that building is similar to other "strong points" erected in Abar-nahara after 460 BCE. The walls of the building were massive, built up and over the city's older fortifications. Excavators assumed, therefore, that the Stratum I town was unfortified, defended only by this fortified tower (Lamon and Shipton 1939: 83; Pritchard 1993: 512–13). In Megiddo's Area D, on the northern part of the tel, a building the excavators called a "barracks" was uncovered. It had three long narrow rooms and

was parallel to a second, nearly identical, building. No artifactual remains, however, could date the uses of these rooms.

Apparently, the city's Late Iron II offset-inset wall and two-chambered gate were repaired and reused in the early Persian period, and the barracks buildings were constructed to house the local Persian garrison, replacing the Stratum III Assyrian-style (open court) public buildings. In the mid-fourth century, the wall, gate, and settlement at Megiddo were probably destroyed when the Persians put down the Tennes Rebellion (a revolt of the Sidonian King Tennes in the mid-fourth century mentioned in Diodorus Siculus). The rebellion involved many Phoenician towns—perhaps including Megiddo. The fortress in Area C was built above this destruction and existed until the city's final demise at the hands of the Macedonians in 332 BCE, when the site was abandoned (Stern 2001: 377–78).

West of Megiddo, a small Persian settlement was found in Yokneʾam (Ben-Tor 1993: 806–7). Several storehouses were excavated, and from one there came a Hebrew-Phoenician ostracon. On the road linking Megiddo with Yokneʾam, two other Persian sites—Tel Abu Shusha (Mishmar ha-ʿEmeq) and Tel Qiri—were surveyed (Ben-Tor and Portugali 1987: 15–26). These sites were all located along a Persian-period highway. Population and the number of sites throughout the region increased in this period.

In the Upper Galilee, Hazor's Persian remains included a "citadel" on the acropolis at the southern end of the tel and some smaller installations nearby. The fortress measured 30 by 26 meters, and rooms on three sides surrounded an open courtyard. The building was destroyed but with no evidence of fire, suggesting to excavators that seismic forces may have leveled it (Yadin et al. 1958: 45–46; Dothan 1961). This destruction could as easily have been the result of military action. If troops assigned to Hazor were mutinous, other forces loyal to Persia may have been sent to bring them back in line. Whatever the cause of its destruction, the fort was rebuilt and reused. Another building, to the east at Ayelet ha-Shahar, was apparently a farmhouse; it was dated by coins from the mid-fourth century BCE (Reich 1975: 233–37). Other excavations undertaken there by A. Ben-Tor have shown that the central part of the "lower city" was used as a cemetery in this period (1997: 19–20).

Further south, at Taanach, Paul Lapp found a building with related storage pits. The pits contained locally-made Persian-period pottery, along with two Attic *lekythoi* (Rast 1978; 1992: 149–50). Beth-Shean's excavators attributed no levels to the Persian period (James 1966: 130–32). However, some Persian-period pottery was published in the final reports, along with some figurines, possibly attesting to a local religious shrine associated with a nearby water source and confluence of roads.

Recent excavations at Kedesh, located in the Upper Galilee, northwest of Hazor, have revealed significant Persian remains (Herbert and Berlin 2003). The excavators have interpreted their finds as including a large administrative complex from the Hellenistic, i.e., Seleucid, period. This complex sits atop a Persian-period building of similar layout (Herbert and Berlin 2003: 45). Herbert and Berlin make the case for Kedesh as a Persian "administrative center" in league with Tyre—the larger, regional capital on the coast (2003: 47). The population of Kedesh appears to have been Phoenician and Greek. The Jewish nature of the Galilee was not yet established in the post-Assyrian period.

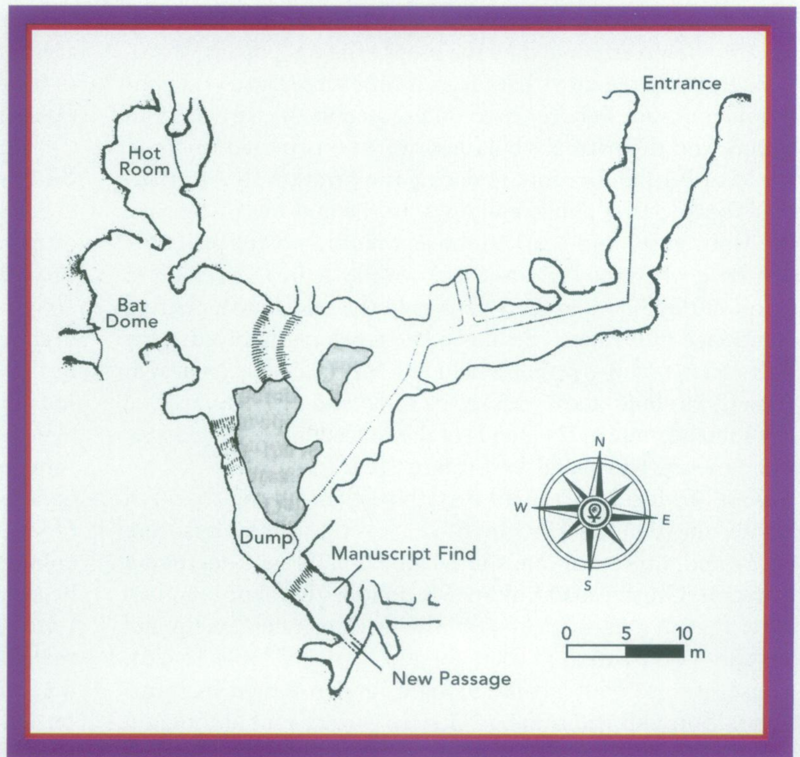
Samaria and the Central Hill Country

Scholars are beginning to focus more closely on the district of Samaria as it existed during the Persian period. It was a smaller area than the province "Samerina" administered under Assyrian or Neo-Babylonian control. Nothing existed that even remotely resembled the independent government known in the period of the Divided Monarchy of ancient Israel and Judah (late tenth through late eighth centuries BCE).

Ezra/Nehemiah list Sanballat, the governor of Samaria, as an "enemy of Nehemiah." According to Neh 2 and 4, Sanballat opposed the construction of a defensive wall around the city of Jerusalem. We assume this opposition simply continued the enmity between Judah and Samaria from the period of Assyrian hegemony, when Samerina was technically "at war" with Judah (late seventh century BCE). Josephus (*Ant.* 11) perpetuated this notion of competition between Judah and Samaria in his account of early Jewish history. Scholars have differing opinions on how and when this "enmity" between Samarians and Judeans began. The separation was rigidly in place in the Herodian period (Williamson 1987: 71), and the polemical nature of the biblical texts may reflect the perspective of textual redactors of that later time. The Samarians (no "t") of the Persian period are not to be confused with the Samaritans of the first century CE. Albertz suggests that by the end of the third century BCE many overtures had been made by the people of Yehud and by the Babylonian *golah* to win over the Jews of Samaria to worship in the Jerusalem temple (1994: 324–27). But it was earlier, soon after the conquest by Alexander the Great, when the Gerizim temple was built in Samaria as a potential rival to Jerusalem. This action may have sparked more intense "competition" between the two priestly establishments, but, in the Persian period Samaria and Jerusalem were both part of a larger Persian whole and stood to gain little from the sort of hostility we have come to associate with their relationship (cf. Albertz and Becking 2003).

The principal sites in the region are Samaria and Shechem (Cross 1966: 201–11). Samaria resisted the Hellenistic onslaught of Alexander the Great and was ruthlessly destroyed in 332/331 BCE. We also know new inhabitants moved into the city from Macedonia and immediately began to rebuild it. Hellenistic remains from that rebuilding are well known from archaeological work in the 1930s and 1950s. During that excavation, a layer of rich brown soil was discovered beneath the Hellenistic remains, covering Iron II ruins. Excavators suggested the brown soil meant this was once a lush garden surrounding the palace of the Persian-period governor, although no such confirming architectural remains have been unearthed (Avigad 1993: 1306). Pottery that continued forms and wares from Late Assyrian was found mixed with imported Greek wares of the sixth and fifth centuries.

Citizens of Samaria fled to Cave Mugharet Abu-Shinjeh in the Wadi ed-Daliyeh hoping to find safety in the politically tumultuous years just prior to Alexander's conquest. The coins, jewelry, papyri, and bullae they carried with them provide our main resource for understanding society in the second half of the fourth century BCE in Samaria. The cave, also known as Cave of the Father of the Dagger, yielded much of its contents to Ta'amireh Bedouin (known as the finders of the Dead Sea Scrolls) before archaeologists arrived in the 1960s. Finds indicate the cave was used in other periods beside Persian. *(Courtesy of Nancy Lapp.)*



Of greatest importance is the hoard of papyri and bullae discovered in a cave in the nearby Wadi ed-Daliyeh, a hoard deposited by citizens of Samaria who fled the city in the late fourth century BCE (Lapp and Lapp 1974: 18–24). Several other hoards of coins also verify that Samaria—the province—was one of the small, localized administrative units of Abar-nahara in the fourth cen-tury. The coins indicate the city's mint struck "small change" intended to supplement coinage from other regions, principally Sidon and Tyre located northwest of Samaria, on the Mediterranean coast. We also assume from the Daliyeh finds and the coin hoards that Samaria—the city—was important at the time and was almost certainly large. Later Hellenistic construction appears to have obliterated Persian remains, but perhaps renewed excavations in Samaria will one day be possible and evidence still underground will be uncovered.

Most of the documents from the cave in the Wadi ed-Daliyeh were legal and administrative. One document had seven bullae, meaning seven persons witnessed the execution of the papyrus document and attached their seals. The biggest fragment is six lines long and records the sale of a slave; the price was thirty-five pieces of silver. Three of the principals in the sale had Yahwistic names. The bulla shown here on the right depicts a Persian king fighting a griffin. The earliest date to between 375 and 365 BCE; the latest to about 335 BCE. The script provides the first set of absolute dates for fourth-century Aramaic cursive. *(Courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society.)*

A recently published "Samarian hoard" of coins provides additional evidence. The hoard, said to have been found in Samaria, contained Phoenician coins from early and mid-fourth-century Sidon, Tyre, and Arwad. There were also some local imitations of Athenian issues and a substantial group of coins from the local mint. No coins of Mazday (see below) were among the coins in the hoard, leading numismatists Y. Meshorer and S. Qedar to date the hoard to ca. 345 BCE (Meshorer and Qedar 1991: 65–80, 1999: 71).

Near Samaria was the ancient city of Shechem, associated with Tell Balatah, near Nablus. G. Ernest Wright's Stratum VI demonstrates limited Assyrian occupation at the site in the seventh century BCE. Although architectural remains from the Persian period are scant, a number of seal impressions, a coin, and some imported pottery all suggest that sixth and early-fifth-century Shechem was rather "well-to-do" and somewhat cosmopolitan (Wright 1964: chs. 9–10; Campbell 1993: 1353). More than 150 sherds of Attic black-glazed wares were found, as was a sixth-century coin

of Thasos and a number of well-made Persian seals and seal impressions. Excavators suggested these finds show Persian occupation extended from 600 to ca. 475 BCE. The Attic pottery, however, could easily date well into the late fifth or early fourth century (N. Lapp 1985: 19–43). In short, evidence from Shechem is inconclusive. Shechem was obviously a smaller town than Samaria and was not used for official Persian administrative functions in this period. The settlement was built over the ruins of the Assyrian town, exploiting the Spring of Jacob and the rich agricultural lands in the adjacent mountain valley.

A large and varied hoard consisting of nearly a thousand coins was also found at Shechem. The hoard contained issues from the local Samarian mint; coins of nearby mid-to-late fourth century Tyre; local imitations of Athenian drachms; and several coins from Sinope and Amisos in far-away Anatolia. Several coins bore the name of Mazday, who ran the local Samarian mint late in the Persian period and who also struck coins at Sidon in ca. 347–332 BCE. This hoard must date to a slightly later time than the hoard from Samaria (Meshorer and Qedar 1999: 71; Betlyon 1982: 14–20).

The remainder of the district, beyond the cities of Samaria and Shechem, shows considerable Persian occupation. Regional surveys conducted since 1957 have catalogued nearly 250 sites with Persian-period pottery. Most of these sites are in the northern and western parts of the district (Stern 2001: 428). At Qedumim some significant Persian artifacts have come to light, brought out of a cistern. The cistern, bell-shaped and coated with a thick layer of plaster, contained many potsherds, copper needles and loom weights from the Persian period. Represented among the sherds were Greek vessels of the fourth century BCE (Magen 1993: 1225).

Adam Zertal, one archaeologist who surveyed the area, found a number of sites with Persian-period pottery and architecture in addition to what he calls "Iron Age III"—722–535 BCE—of the Assyrian province "Samerina." He found a building complex with a large central courtyard with surrounding rooms and Persian pottery at Khirbet Merajjim, only ten kilometers north of Samaria (Zertal 2003: 389–90). Jellamet Wusta, a few kilometers even further north, is a similar site; half the pottery there was Persian. Khirbet Umm Qatan, located to the east on the fringes of the Desert Buqei'ah, was greatly disturbed by later occupation but may have had remains of the Persian period as well (Zertal 2003: 390–92).

Zertal's survey also identified a military camp and a fortress located in a valley about twelve kilometers northeast of Samaria. The el-Qa'adeh camp measured 70 by 70 meters, with a large central courtyard. The rooms from which this camp was administered form a sort of "casemate" construction on the perimeter of the courtyard. Zertal notes that the camp is somewhat similar to Assyrian-style military installations known from reliefs of the Assyrian kings (King 1915). Another similar fortress was surveyed at Khirbet Meras ed-Din. This building complex contained several forts, with central courtyards similar to Mesopotamian examples from Khorsabad and Nimrud (Lloyd 1987: figs. 140, 143; Zertal 2003: 394). This facility may have been reused by Persia as a major military installation in the vicinity of Samaria (Zertal 2003: 393–95).

A small site located to the northeast of Lod in the northern Shephelah is Tel Hadid. Cuneiform tablets discovered there identify it as a place to which Assyria deported Babylonians in the period 708–706 BCE (Na'aman and Zadok 2000: 182). This deportation was in line with Assyrian imperial policy, settling deportees from rebellious parts of Babylonia in communities along the Mediterranean's coastal trunk route and in "Samerina." These deportations are recalled in biblical texts, including 2 Kgs 17:24 and, later, Ezra-Nehemiah (Ezra 2:33; Neh 7:37, 11:34), where specific mention is made that Judeans settled at (Tel) Hadid in the Persian period. Some ceramic evidence has been found in addition to the Late Iron remains (Na'aman and Zadok 2000: 178, 182).

The Phoenician Coast

Persian-period occupation of the coastal regions just south of Phoenicia was dense. Achzib, at the northern extreme, was under the influence of neighboring Tyre. On Achzib's southern acropolis, a Persian-period settlement with floors, pits, and an assortment of Attic ceramic forms and figurines was found (Prausnitz 1993: 32; E. Mazar 1993: 35–36). To the east, in the hills, is Tel Kabri, where a substantial Persian site has been excavated above a town of Late Iron II (Kempinski and Niemeir 1994: 841).

On the coast, near Shavei Zion, underwater archaeologists have excavated a boat whose cargo included hundreds of clay figurines of a goddess, apparently Tanit-Astart. Some of the figurines bear the sign of Tanit, while others picture dolphins and other maritime symbols associated with the Persian-period religious cultus of Sidon, Tyre, and the western colony of Carthage. Neutron-activation analysis has proven that the cargo of figurines originated in the southern Phoenician coastal region.

Another shipwreck was found off the coast of Acco. That ship carried a cargo of wine in amphorae typical of other Phoenician sites. Laboratory testing of the amphorae—which still had raisin resin in them—indicates the clay came from sources between Tyre and Sidon. Amphorae from Etruria, Italy, and the Aegean basin were also found in this shipwreck (Linder 1973: 182–87, 1986: 409–15). Both shipwrecks underscore the fact that the fifth and fourth centuries were a time of international trade between the Levant and the central Mediterranean ports. Phoenician sailors were the economic "worker bees" in the Persian economy and its trade with the West.

Although still unpublished, excavations at Tel Acco have revealed extensive Persian remains that demonstrate the site's character as a prosperous administrative and commercial center. Two Persian-period strata were identified, and Attic pottery from the late-sixth through the fourth centuries was documented. Fragments of these wares are now in local collections, along with a fragment of a pedestal from the Egyptian

Pharoah Achoris (28th Dynasty, ca. 393–382 BCE). Although the pedestal fragment was not found *in situ*, the cartouche on it demonstrates the close relationship between Acco and the Nile Delta at this time. Coins from Cilicia, Sidon, Tyre, and Arvad were also found, including a hoard of mid-to-late-fourth century Tyrian coins (dated by Arie Kindler to ca. 364–332 BCE; Dothan 1993: 22).

Without question, Acco was a prosperous city in the Persian period. Excavators brought some well-constructed buildings to light, along with a pit containing cultic statuettes and a bowl bearing a Phoenician inscription. The inscription was a votive to Asherah, known also as Tanit-Astarte, patron goddess of Phoenician sailors and merchant-seamen. Greek pottery from Athens and other sites affirms a strong Athenian influence, not unexpectedly, since Athens was probably the principal trading partner for all southern Phoenician city-states in the fifth and fourth centuries. Acco's residential "blocks" give evidence of city planning and hint of Hippodamian influence. Houses, courtyards, ovens, storage pits, and silos were uncovered.

East of Acco, at Tell Keisan, similar finds attest to the wealth of that outlying settlement, although architectural remains are poorly defined (Briend and Humbert 1980). Keisan was just one of several excavated sites in the Acco plain. Together, they reveal a dense maze of towns and villages. Architectural remains, including some walls typical of *biraniyot*, have been found at Khirbet ʿUsa, at Gilʿam, and at Tell Birah, and tombs have been found at Beth ha-ʿEmek and Yasʿour.

Tell Abu Hawam, excavated in the 1930s by R. W. Hamilton (and by others both before and after), was a harbor town near the mouth of the Kishon River (Hamilton 1933, 1934). (It was partially due to this well-preserved site—and to Hamilton's careful work—that archaeologists realized they needed to reconsider sites originally rejected and assumed empty of Persian remains.) This site was apparently a planned one. Many of the walls were built using typical Phoenician-style masonry, that is, wall sections of rough fieldstones anchored at one-or-two meter intervals by ashlar pillars of one-stretcher-and-two-header design. A centrally-located administrative building had a long (thirty meter) façade facing the main street. E. Stern dated the two Persian strata to the fifth and early fourth centuries (ca. 500–385 BCE and 385–332 BCE respectively), but more recent excavations proposed a more complex stratigraphy, maintaining one break in 385 and another in 350 BCE. As might be expected from its location, the material culture of Hawam indicates a thriving commercial site (Finkielsztejn 1989: 224–34; Balensi et al. 1990: 125–36). It was also a site that supported the massive Persian military campaigns launched into Egypt.

From Achziv in the north to Tell Abu Hawam in the south, the Acco plain and its surrounding hills were densely populated with small settlements in the Persian period, many of these sites never previously occupied. The region was dominated by Tyre in this period.

This grotesque figurine discovered at Dor probably represents a temple prostitute. A few similar figurines have been found at other sites. *(Courtesy E. Stern and the Tel Dor Project. Photograph by Ze'ev Radovan.)*

This was the bird's-eye view of Persian-period Dor, an important site that has been thoroughly excavated. It yielded a rich repertoire of finds typical of the coast's syncretistic population, as well as some unique surprises (a "Punic" masonry wall, for instance). The building shown is a public one from the Persian period. *(Courtesy E. Stern and the Tel Dor Project. Photograph by Ze'ev Radovan.)*

Dor and the Plain of Sharon

South of the Carmel highlands was an area controlled by Dor and its Sidonian overlords. This coastal region included the adjoining Shephelah (the low foothills) as far south as modern Tel Aviv. Every conceivable place along the coast that could support an anchorage appears to have been utilized. At least thirty-seven sites have been identified with Persian-period occupation.

The Eshmunezer Inscription from Sidon mentions Dor and Joppa as subservient to Sidon. The inscription is on the sarcophagus of the Sidonian king, and, indeed, Dor was the site of a temple dedicated to Eshmun, the principal Sidonian manifestation of Baal. The inscription is echoed by Ezra 3:7, which speaks of Tyrians and Sidonians working cooperatively in the "sea of Joppa." All the smaller towns, including Dor, were apparently jointly administered by the larger Phoenician cities to the north. As at Tripolis in northern Phoenicia, the Phoenician

Twenty-two figurine heads found at Dor in various favissae and other contexts. *(Courtesy E. Stern and Tel Dor Project. Photograph by Ze'ev Radovan.)*

inhabitants of Sidon and Tyre were friendly with one another in this period. We must remember the Persians were in control, and Phoenician towns were not in a position to thwart Persian desires. There is little evidence of Phoenicians from Byblos and Arwad in these southerly towns.

Even later, in the fourth century—when Persia attacked Sidon because it sided with Tennes in his rebellion of ca. 350–348 BCE—the "outlying" towns suffered little. D. Barag (1966: 6–12) has suggested the region was devastated during this revolt. However, there is evidence to suggest that the Cilician satrap assumed command and control of the region until local authority could be reinstated. The Sharon Plain was undoubtedly involved in these political subterfuges. Some scholars have argued that semi-autonomous Sidonian control was replaced by centralized Persian control after the revolt.

J. Elgavish excavated Shiqmona (probably the actual southernmost point of Tyrian governance) and discovered two strata from the Persian period (1968; 1993: 1375–76). Shiqmona was the northernmost site south of the Carmel range. The site had well-built streets and a residential neighborhood that had been planned. Local pottery was found in abundance. Industrial activities from the late-sixth and fifth centuries were identified in one area. A larger building with a subterranean storehouse, perhaps a fortress, was erected above this level in the fourth century. In the storehouse, excavators found storage jars with Phoenician inscriptions detailing the delivery of wine from a site called Gat Carmel. Apparently, Shiqmona was destroyed by Alexander the Great. We can tell this from coins dated to the period ca. 332–325 BCE and sealed in an ash layer.

Tel Megadim is located south of Shiqmona along the coastal road. Several excavations have been conducted at the site, unearthing three Persian-period strata. Excavators exposed lengthy sections of the city's western, northern, and southern fortifications. There was an extensive casemate wall-system, and one street in particular, running parallel to that wall, suggests a well-planned street system. Common wares of Attic and East Greek pottery were found, along with figurines and arrowheads (Broshi 1993: 1001–3). Recent work by Samuel Wolff (1996: 748) brought more of the city's plan into focus. Wolff discovered great quantities of imported wares, enabling him to date the three levels to the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. The town took advantage of a harbor where vibrant trade was enhanced by excellent portside warehouse facilities.

Another object associated with apotropaic folk religion, this clay mask at least appears friendly. It was found in Area D2 at Dor, an area of Persian period warehouses where many Persian-period items were found, including a Bes vase. The mask was originally painted in bright colors, some fragments visible. *(Courtesy E. Stern and Tel Dor Project. Photograph by Ze'ev Radovan.)*

Significant Phoenician occupation was also evident at ʿAtlit, located only a few miles south of Megadim. Crusader ruins cover much of the ancient site (Johns 1993: 114–16). Underwater research has, however, revealed a great deal concerning the ancient harbor installations. The harbor had two anchorages separated by a breakwater. Similar constructions are known from Tyre and several other Phoenician sites. Excavators have suggested that the dual anchorage was intended to accommodate Sidonian vessels on one side and foreign vessels on the other. Heavy ships may have had to offload goods onto lighter vessels to make their way into a shallower harbor. Another suggestion is that the two harbors may have been reserved for commercial and military fleets, respectively, as was the case at Carthage. Underwater excavation at ʿAtlit has uncovered three concentrations of amphorae from Tyre and Sidon, typical Phoenician biconical styles, plus others from the East Greek islands (including Samos, Chios, and Cnidus; Raban and Linder 1993: 118–20). All the amphorae date from the mid-fifth century BCE. Was the harbor abandoned after this time? Or could the harbor have been affected by a military disaster perhaps related to one of the Egyptian revolts in which some Phoenician cities may have participated? There are also important Phoenician remains (i.e.,imported pottery and coins) of the Persian period from the cemetery excavated by C. N. Johns in the 1930s (Johns 1933).

Continuing southward, another prominent coastal town is Tel Dor, excavated by Ephraim Stern (1994). Dor is the largest and probably the most important site in the region, not only for its importance then but also because it illustrates the progression through the Persian and into the Hellenistic period that followed. Two Persian-period strata have come to light in a city very neatly laid out according to the Hippodamian Plan—a town plan most frequently characterized by a gridiron design of long, narrow blocks (insulae) intersecting at right angles. Another characteristic was the division of the town into functional areas—sport, residential, industrial, cult, commercial. Stern has cited parallels from Berytus in Phoenicia, Olynthus in Macedonia, and the Punic site of Monte Sirai in Sardinia. Hippodamos himself was from Miletus and wrote out the principles of the design in the fifth century—the century after it was laid out in Dor! It appears Dor's insulae connected the public square immediately inside the city gate to the city's centrally-located public buildings. In addition to a residential quarter, industrial remains were unearthed, the industrial area also following the orthogonal layout of the Hippodamian

Plan. Hearths filled with ash, bronze and iron slag, and glass waste were found near a "tower." Such a tower, or fortress-like structure, was typical of Phoenician sites in Abar-nahara. Other industrial remains, most notably crushed murex snail shells used in purple-dye manufacture, were found in pits. These facilities were always placed "down wind" and far from residential quarters because of the strong smell accompanying dye manufacture.

Ceramic assemblages from Tel Dor include what may be the largest groupings of Greek pottery found in Israel. Hundreds of Attic, Corinthian, and East Greek forms were found. Figurines taken from a *favissa* (repository pit for discarded cult objects) in Area B attest to the cults of Baal and Asherah. Masks and amulets and figurines attest to another cult, that of Bes, originally Egyptian but popular in Phoenicia, judging by the quantity of goods bearing his "likeness." The assemblage in the Area C *favissa* is perhaps unique in Israel. This *favissa*'s figurines are unmistakably in the archaic Greek style, not a Persian or Phoenician style, and are associated by Stern with the remains of a Greek temple he dates to the second half of the fourth century BCE. The fortification system appears to have been destroyed in the mid-fourth century, perhaps in the Sidonian revolt of ca. 350 BCE. Sidon, under the leadership of ʿAbdʿashtart I, was defeated in its alliance with Egypt, resulting in some temporary interruptions in coin production (1994: 164).

Just east of Dor was the site of Nahal Tut, a square fortress measuring 55 by 55 meters. The fort comprised a large open courtyard surrounded by a casemate wall. Excavators were able to uncover in its entirety a well-built tower in the northwestern corner (other towers, less well preserved, were in the other corners). In addition to a few weapons, a number of iron farm implements were found, including a plowshare, pickaxes, scythes, sickles, and shearing scissors (Alexandre 1996: 49–50). A few kilometers further east was another fortress, ʿEn Hofez, with a very similar assemblage of material culture. Both fortresses appear to have been destroyed in the time of Alexander the Great. Both were probably facilities used to stage and equip Persian forces for their forays against the Egyptians (Alexandre 1997: 53–54). Forces are not moved into combat without proper training and equipment; these small sites, in association with larger sites to the north (such as Acco), were part of an extensive series of installations where forces were received from around the empire and prepared for forward movement into harm's way.

E. Stern also excavated the remains of Tel Mevorakh, to the south of Tel Dor (1978). Three Persian strata were recovered, dating from the mid-fifth through the fourth centuries BCE. The site was reminiscent of many others—dominated by a large building with an open courtyard containing storage pits. The casemate walls surrounding the site were built in typical Phoenician style—carefully constructed header-and-stretcher ashlar pillars reinforcing wall sections of fieldstone fill. The community supported itself with agriculture.

Nearby, at the mouth of the Alexander River, Mikhmoret contained remains of Phoenician architecture destroyed in the mid-fourth century, about the same time as the ill-fated Tennes rebellion. Phoenician pottery was intermixed there with imported Attic wares, brought into Phoenicia in the fourth century in increasing quantity (Isserlin 1961: 3–5). A second excavation uncovered a large public building, its walls preserved to a height of two meters in some places. Attic wares found on the floors of the building date its use to the late fifth and fourth centuries BCE. This installation was apparently a fort that overlooked the harbor. A fragment of a cuneiform tablet from Babylon, dated to the fifth year of Cambyses (ca. 525–524 BCE), was found in the rubble. The tablet recorded the sale of a slave girl for fifteen silver shekels and might be associated with commercial activities at the site or with the movement of Cambyses' forces through the area to Egypt when the Great King attacked, attempting to extend Persian hegemony over the Nile Valley (Porath, Paley, and Stieglitz 1993: 1043–46).

Yet another Phoenician site, Tel Michal, was excavated just south of Mikhmoret. Tel Michal (or Makmish) was excavated by Nahman Avigad (Avigad 1960: 90–96). He discovered remains of a Phoenician sanctuary a few hundred yards north of the site and, a few hundred yards north of that sanctuary, a cemetery of similar age. Zeʾev Herzog (1993a: 1038–40) supervised excavations on the site's cliff-edge "high mound." From the end of the sixth century, Tel Michal served as a trading post and "way station." A fortress was situated at the northern edge of the high mound and the rest of the site contained storage silos and pits. Excavators speculate that Tel Michal was headquarters of a permanently stationed military unit. The penultimate phase of the fort's use is dated by a coin of ʿAbdʿashtart I of Sidon, from the period of the 370s–350s BCE. A final occupation phase was a limited use of the fortress, ultimately destroyed by the armies of Alexander the Great.

Extensive Persian remains have also been unearthed at the anchorage of Apollonia-Arsuf. Although some sources refer to this site as Hellenistic, the ceramic assemblages recovered are clearly Persian in date. The pottery has been well published by Fisher and Tal (1996: 213–14; Roll and Tal 1999). It shows clear continuity between the Persian and Hellenistic periods (Roll and Ayalon 1993: 73–75).

Over and over again, up and down the coast, we see remains of sites with well-planned residential areas and Phoenician religious and cultic facilities. Local residents worked in industries supporting two basic activities: (1) trade, principally with Greece and East Greece; and (2) logistical support for Persian military operations in war and in peace, in the Levant and in Egypt. Over time, the continued contact with Greece and East Greece may have led local leaders to seek closer relations with cities such as Athens and Corinth. These blossoming relationships probably threatened the imperialistic Persians.

From the late-sixth century until Alexander's arrival near the end of the fourth, more and more settlements were established. It was a period of prosperity. The damage from the Neo-Babylonian wars was overcome, and a new economy fueled by monetary expansion took hold. As prosperity increased, so did the population. Greeks, East Greeks, and Phoenicians mixed freely throughout the coastal region, establishing a strong merchant class that maintained the vibrant economy of the eastern

Mediterranean Basin. These towns along the coast are not Jewish towns. They are, however, towns important to the economy and to the support of ongoing military operations against Egypt.

The Material Culture of Persian Period Palestine

Pottery

Ceramic analysis is one of the basic tools of Syro-Palestinian archaeology. Ever since Petrie dug at Tell el-Hesi in 1890, making an effort to separate the layers he found, ceramic analysis has been a principal means of dating stratigraphy in archaeological excavations (1891). Pots are studied for their ware (i.e.,the clay from which the pot was made), their form, their provenance, and their decoration.

The progress of pottery change in Persian-period Palestine varies from region to region. In the central hill country of Yehud and Samaria, forms and wares from Late Iron continue well into the Persian period. But along the coast and in the north new wares soon appear, wares that fire in a yellowish-green color as opposed to the tan or red colors more typical of the Iron Age and probably indicative of different clay sources. Along the coast, forms also evolve, although many forms from Late Iron continue. The general rule: old traditions fade faster on the coast as new wares as well as new forms—mainly due to the influence of imports—grow in importance; while inland, in the hill country, local traditions do not change quickly, or drastically, for either wares or forms, but they do show obvious change eventually.

Local (that is, produced in Palestine) pots of the Persian period are, generally speaking, not well made, and they are utilitarian. Bowls, holemouth jars, cook pots, lamps, and any number of smaller jug/juglet or cup forms are known. Two important sites for studying these local pots are Tel Dor (Stern 2000) along the Phoenician-controlled coast, and Tell el-Hesi (Bennett and Blakely 1990) in the southern Shephelah. Both of these sites' Persian periods were recognized and carefully excavated, meaning that more ceramic forms are known and attested stratigraphically at these two sites than at most. Despite the fact that most excavators in bygone decades tended to ignore Persian-period pottery—perhaps not so interesting as the hand-burnished pots of the Iron Age or the beautifully painted wares from the Middle and Late Bronze periods—the forms of larger Persian-period storage jars and amphorae are quite well known because this was a period when international commerce increased exponentially.

Even so, the slow changes for most types of local Persian-period pottery forms make it extremely difficult to date precisely, if based on its own merits. However, this does not mean that archaeologists turn to local wares to date the strata. They usually turn, instead, to the vast array of imported pottery that came from the West. A few forms arrived from the East (Assyria, Phoenicia, Egypt, and Persia), but the majority came from mainland and East Greece. Many pots from the important trading outposts of the Cyclades, for example, are known from sites in Palestine's coastal region and north, such as Tell Sukas, al-Mina, and the better-excavated Phoenician towns.

But it is Attic (from the Athens area) ceramic traditions that dominate the imported pottery known from excavations. Modern methods of trace element analysis confirm the origin of the pots, especially the more luxurious ones, as Athenian. These finds coincide with the increase in Greek immigration during the Persian period. Greeks lived not just at trading colonies such as Tell Sukas or al-Mina, along the northern coast, but also in Phoenician towns all down the coast, including Acco and Joppa. At those sites such great quantities of Athenian pottery have been recovered that some excavators surmise settlements there must have held merchants' warehouses or shops.

The pottery helps tell the larger story of Persian-period Palestine and introduces the next chapter of her history—the great and growing interest in all aspects of Hellenic culture throughout the eastern Mediterranean by the time Alexander arrived (Stern 2001: 518–21). It should be noted that Palestine's Persian period almost exactly paralleled Greece's classical period, the high-water mark of the Greek vase painting we still hold in highest regard. No wonder this decorative art, conveying Greek culture through fabulously-detailed figures that sometimes even "told a story," caught the eye of coastal populations who, apparently, see eagerly syncretized all kinds of religions and cultures. At the same time, the highly figurative art would not have received the same warm reception in the inland areas where Jewish populations lived; their religious injunctions forbade the portrayal of human figures.

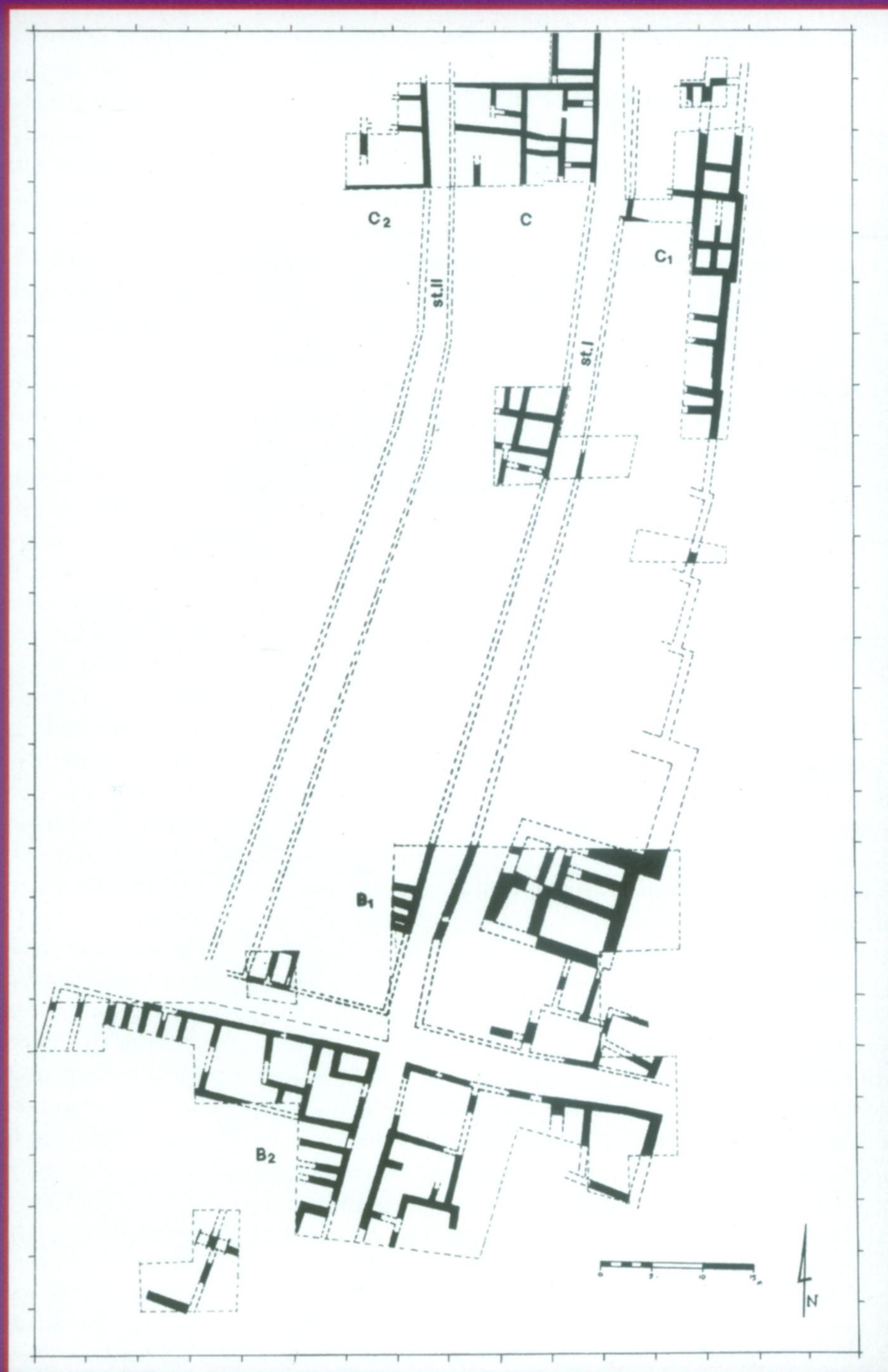
Very little pottery manufactured in Persia has been found in Palestine. Persian wares were poorly made, were not widely imitated, and apparently were not brought to the region in great quantity. This is probably because the Persians did not colonize the region but remained content to rule from afar, through proxies. Also, ceramics were not valued in Persian culture, which put artistic and technological emphasis on metalware and its development. From a practical standpoint, ceramica is heavy and would have had to be brought overland, whereas boats brought the western imports. But Persian influence was not absent from Palestinian ceramics: potters in Palestine imitated, in clay, designs from handsome Achaemenid metalware such as the popular rhyta (rhyton) drinking (literally, pouring) vessel often styled after animal heads.

Local wares and forms that continue Iron II (including Assyrian) and Neo-Babylonian traditions are found mainly in the hills of Yehud and Samaria. Different local clays—some red, others greenish-yellow—were used in the Galilee as well as along the coast (Gitin 1990). Eventually, the Iron Age pottery traditions found in the hills were joined by new forms that imitated vessels from Cyprus, East Greece, and mainland Greece.

By the fifth century, Attic pottery flowed into Phoenicia and Palestine. It was widely used and widely imitated, with varying degrees of success. The flood of Athenian pottery suggests that there was more activity than mere trade. Surely, Greek mercenaries were employed by the Persians in "military

The Hippodamian Town Plan

One aspect of architecture of the period is becoming increasingly recognized, however. That is the town plan known as the "Hippodamian Plan," discussed above in the description of Dor. The streets of a town or city laid out according to this plan are always laid out in a gridiron pattern, but there are other characteristics as well, all of them reflecting efficiency and order. Towns are divided into areas according to their function—residential, commercial, cultic, industrial, or sport. Although this form of town planning became common in Palestine in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the plan made its appearance during the late-sixth century at Tel Dor and perhaps even earlier at some other sites in Palestine. Among the several other sites where hints of it have been found are Shiqmona, Tel Megadim, Acco, Nahariya, Tell Abu Hawam, Ashkelon, and Ashdod. Many of the Persian-period sites described above and elsewhere as "well-planned" show links to the orthogonal design scheme that is the plan's chief characteristic. But not all of the plan's hallmarks are found at every site: Several sites have a broad straight thoroughfare, sometimes parallel to a casemate wall; and several sites have streets set at right angles to one another, that is, symmetrical blocks; and a few sites were apparently divided into zones by function. Interestingly, Dor, where the plan is perhaps clearer than any other place in Israel, was laid out at least several decades before the day of Hippodamos, indicating the idea was not original with him but only credited to him. "His day" happened to be the era of classical Greece and its idealizations, hence "his" town plan—epitome of neatness and efficiency and order—was widely implemented. The famous plan has been noted, among other places, at Olynthos, Rhodes, and Hippodamos' own hometown of Miletus, which, incidentally, was sacked by the Persians in 479.



The Hippodamian town plan was not created by Hippodamus of Miletus, although he is credited with the design, nor did it originate in the Persian period, although this is when it took hold in Palestine. The gridiron design can be seen already in Assyrian Megiddo, but it becomes the dominant design along the coast. Dor is a prime example: regular blocks (insulae) are arranged between streets intersecting at right angles. Buildings are according to an identical plan, and the town is arranged according to function, that is, public buildings are separated from residential areas—commercial is in one section, industrial in another, cultic in yet another. *(Redrawn after Stern 2000: 158, fig. 93.)*

Phoenician masonry wall. This construction technique was not new in the Persian period but this is when it became common, especially along the coast. Every one or two meters the fieldstone rubble wall was strengthened by a pillar of ashlars (dressed stones), usually piled in header-stretcher fashion. Corners also were made of ashlars. Some walls were two meters high or more. This example is from Dor. *(Courtesy E. Stern, Tel Dor Project. Photograph by Ze'ev Radovan.)*

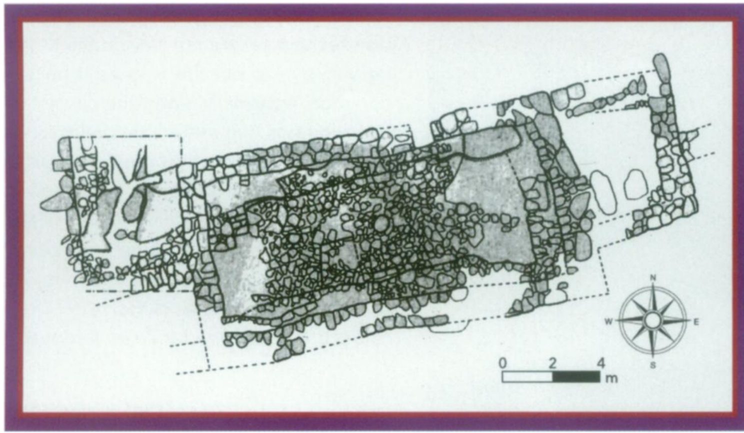
operations other than war"—patrols and peacekeeping operations throughout Palestine. This was particularly true following the great Egyptian revolt. In fact, red-figure cups and *lekythoi* of the mid-fifth century were recovered in quantity at military sites in the south near the Egyptian border, including Tell Jemmeh and Tell el-Hesi.

All sorts of goods were traded through Palestinian ports. Wine, olive oil, wood, iron, wool, copper, tin, and clay are mentioned in bills of lading even from the early-fifth century. Local merchants valued these goods in their commerce. But there was an especially ready market for Greek imports among the Greek soldiers, merchants, and settlers who were immigrating into coastal cities and towns. Greek influence was already great when Alexander's armies finally came to Palestine in 332/331 BCE, the pottery record reminds us.

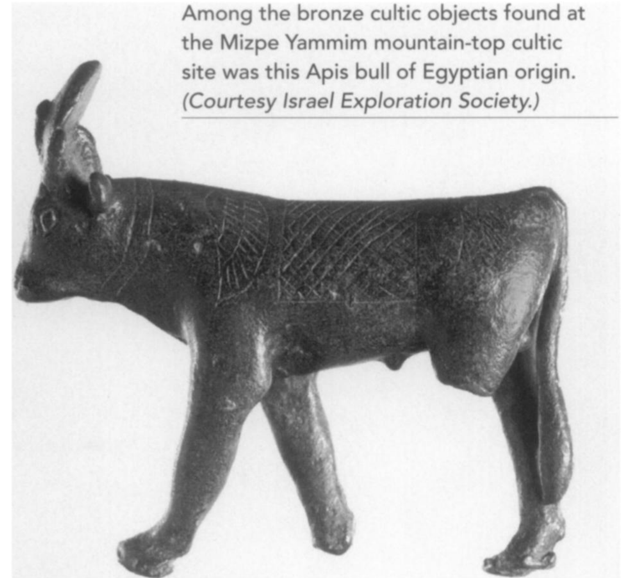
Architecture

Not a lot of architecture can be definitively dated to the Persian period. As stated several times already, some sites' Persian strata were poorly excavated because for several decades Persian-period remains were not valued or not identified. Also, because Persian remains were so close to the surface—or on top of it—at so many sites, architectural materials either eroded or "disappeared" to secondary use in new construction elsewhere. So, although many sites show occupation during the period, scholars know little of the architecture.

The fortress with central open courtyard, and often with a casemate wall, is probably the structure that characterizes the period. As preceding pages show, it has been found, with variations, at site after site: Hazor, Megiddo, Acco, Shiqmona, Megadim, Tel Mevorakh, Mikhmoret, Tel Michal, Ashdod, Tell Jemmeh, Tell el-Farʿah, Tel Seraʿ, and at Tell es-Saʿidiyeh in Jordan, as well as other sites too numerous to mention. It generally follows the Mesopotamian "open court" plan probably brought to Palestine by the Assyrians and familiar to the Persians. That plan, as its name suggests, features a large open courtyard surrounded by rooms on all sides. In Persian Palestine, when these buildings "came down" for whatever reason, the replacement structure was usually built following the original "footprint," although



Set on a mountaintop with spectacular scenic views—Mt. Tabor to the south, Mt. Hermon to the north, and the Mediterranean to the west—this temple at Mizpe Yammim held a perfect cultic position and was evidently reused as such. The buildings (temple, courtyard, and fortress) date to the Persian period and were built in two phases. As the plan shows, the main room held three column bases and two *bamot* (platforms). Benches lined the walls. Many animal bones (mostly sheep and goats plus a few pigs) were found as well as objects from various periods. Persian finds included juglets and bottles and various coarse ware typical of the Upper Galilee, although the cult practiced here appears to have been Phoenician. *(From NEAEHL 3, 1061; courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society.)*



Among the bronze cultic objects found at the Mizpe Yammim mountain-top cultic site was this Apis bull of Egyptian origin. *(Courtesy Israel Exploration Society.)*

insets and outsets of wall lines were typically eliminated in the replacement structure. Eventually, the system of *biraniyot* developed, incorporating these structures and sometimes used for administrative as much as defensive purposes. It is significant that many *biraniyot* were almost identical. The structures usually incorporated locally available building materials: for instance, Tel Jemmeh's, in the south, was made of mudbrick, Tel Dor's of kurkar sandstone. Most were made local limestone. Thick walls were common; some at Tel Jemmeh were slightly more than two meters thick.

Only a few administrative-type buildings differ from this plan, including the so-called Lachish "residency" and the Phase II Citadel at Beth-Zur. Y. Aharoni described these two buildings as combining the open-court house type of the Neo-Assyrian period with the more Syrian-style *bit-hilani* type (1978: 266–75). As Stern points out, this fusion of two styles would be appropriate because it is one of the characteristics of provincial Persian palaces (2001: 468).

Apparently, few settlements in Persian-period Palestine were fortified with perimeter walls. Instead of perimeter walls, "strong points"—the fortresses described just above—provided for the common defense. Most towns that did have some sort of defensive wall were along the coast, Dor probably being the best example. Jerusalem's famous wall, built (or rebuilt) in the time of Nehemiah, functioned to defend the city and to provide security for a garrison for locally-assigned Persian or allied forces. Thus far the Jerusalem wall line has been identified in only a few places.

Some defensive wall systems remained from the Assyrian period. Both offset-inset and casemate-type walls are known. Excavators have dated the destruction of the offset-inset city fortifications late in the period—the fourth century. These walls were usually not rebuilt but were replaced by *biraniyot*. Some Iron II Judean fortresses were rebuilt and reused. Most of this (re)construction dates earlier—from the first half of the fifth century, when major forts were built along the coastal highway. All of these fortresses were part of an imperial defensive strategy focused on Egypt and the maintenance of imperial control from Mesopotamia westward to the sea.

A few city gates can be definitively dated to the period. Dor's two-chambered gate, attached to its offset-inset wall, is well known. A similar gateway and wall remained in use at Megiddo, even though both structures probably dated originally from the Assyrian period. Lachish maintained a gateway rebuilt upon Late Iron II foundations, although the new threshold was built of undressed stones and did not duplicate the earlier threshold, of well-dressed ashlars. Not enough is known of the Persian-period fortifications built in Jerusalem to know exactly what the gates looked like.

One Phoenician masonry technique, though not limited to the Persian period, can be noted up and down the coast, especially in the outer walls and interior divisions of casemates. This is the wall built of both ashlars and fieldstones. Sections of piled fieldstone are strengthened every meter or 1.5 meter with ashlar (dressed stone) piers usually laid in header-and-stretcher fashion, that is, one stone lengthwise and two widthwise. Some walls of this type in Palestine have been preserved to a height of over two meters. At Dor, in one public building, there has been found a variation: instead of ashlar pillars, large monoliths were used. This variation is typical of Punic construction from the western Mediterranean (Stern 2001: 465).

Religious Institutions and Objects

The most famous "temple" of the Persian period is, of course, unknown archaeologically. One of the most important purposes of the returnees to Jerusalem and Yehud was to rebuild the

Before the actual excavations, several bronze cultic items were discovered at Mizpe Yammim. Some were Egyptian objects, popular in Phoenicia and along the coast. Among them was a bronze situla with a Phoenician inscription to Ashtarte. It may be either Persian or Hellenistic. *(From* NEAEHL *3, 1063; courtesy Israel Exploration Society.)*

Temple. We can only speculate that this important shrine was modeled on a plan somewhat similar to its original Solomonic form but probably smaller and without much finery. As discussed above, Jews returning from Exile to the ruined Jerusalem were sidetracked from temple construction by immense projects and problems on every side. The Bible indicates they may have first focused on providing housing and reestablishing infrastructure and their "businesses" before finally focusing on the Temple. The prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah make clear that prophetic invective was required to convince Joshua, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, the governor, to pay significant attention to the Temple project. We assume it was built on a typical Canaanite/Phoenician model, with entry into a large, long room beyond which was the *debir*, or "holy of holies." There is a prophetic description of the temple in Ezekiel 40–48. But we know little of the actual dimensions or accoutrements of the early Second Temple. We know only of its successor in the Herodian period.

The so-called "Solar Shrine" at Lachish is the only large temple excavated from this period in Palestine. J. L. Starkey suggested the building was a sanctuary dedicated to "one of the later intrusive cults introduced during the Persian regime." Because the building is oriented to the east, he surmised it was part of a solar cult (Tufnell 1953). No objects in the building identify what deities were worshipped there. Probably there was also an outdoor altar associated with the shrine.

Excavator Ephraim Stern labels this bearded figure with a large moustache and high, flat-topped hat a diety. The figure was probably broken, customary treatment for votive offerings, before being placed in the favissa (repository pit) found preserved between two city walls, one Hellenistic and the other Persian. *(Stern 2000; 164–67; courtesy E. Stern, Tel Dor Project. Photo by Ze'ev Radovan)*

The smaller Sarepta temple (of two temples) excavated by J. B. Pritchard is a good example of a local Phoenician shrine of medium size. It is one-third the size of the Lachish structure, measuring only 6.4 by 2.6 meters and on an east–west orientation (Pritchard 1975: 131–33). Plastered fieldstone benches lined

Three female figures. The two outside females are pregnant, the one in the middle holds her child. Note the Egyptian headdress. These ceramic examples were found at Dor, but others like them have been found at several sites especially along the coast. *(Courtesy E. Stern and Tel Dor Project. Photograph by Ze'ev Radovan.)*

the sides of the room and were probably intended for votive objects, not for seating. A small, raised platform in the western wall probably served a similar purpose. The door was in the eastern wall, opposite this platform. Figurines, pottery, and at least one glass seal were found in the temple, as were several inscriptions. One was on a small ivory plaque dedicated to the goddess Tanit-Ashtarte—the Persian-period syncretism of Asherah, Anat, and Astarte. This same goddess is known simply as Tanit in the western Phoenician colonies in North Africa, Sicily, Sardinia, France, and Spain. Her emblem was incised on the glass seal found at the site.

Another medium-sized shrine was found at Tel Michal and excavated in the 1950s by Nahman Avigad. This building was oriented on a north–south axis and measured 15 by 5–6 meters. This measure included two rooms representing two phases of construction, both Persian. The shrine, probably associated with the fortress located further south on the mound, contained dozens of votive figurines. Most were clay, some were stone. Statuettes in Egyptian, Persian, and Greek styles were found, as were limestone incense altars, glass beads and various paraphernalia associated with offerings. Many houses and workshops were located nearby. A storage jar bore the letters *lbʾl Šmn*, "belonging to Baʾl Šamem"—a manifestation of Baal worshipped in the Phoenician cities. The site is in an area granted by the Persian Great King to Sidon (Herzog 1993a: 1041).

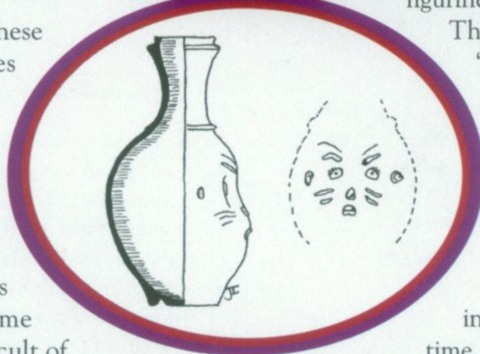
A third medium-sized shrine was found at Mizpe Yammim. This one bears some resemblances to the others, except that it was "molded" to fit the topography of this mountainous site. It is a simple long-room temple with storage rooms on either end. The main room measures 6 by 13.7 meters. Like the Tel Michal temple, it was built in two phases and has benches along the walls. Many sheep and goat bones were found along with votive artifacts (small figurines), an Egyptian spatula bearing an inscription to Phoenician Astarte, and a stone statuette of Osiris, Horus, and Isis (in the form of Hathor; Frankel 1993: 1061–63; Stern 2001: 483–84). Religious beliefs in the Phoenician population were diverse and extremely pluralistic, as the finds at all of these temples attest.

E. Stern has discussed some very small shrines he calls "chapels" (2001: 485). They are found at Dan (where there are several), Tel Michal, and in the northern cemetery of Achzib. Stone stelae depicting them have been found in several places. These chapels were probably Phoenician places of worship used during Late Iron as well as in the Persian period. Similar cultic spaces are known from sites in Phoenicia, from the Phoenician settlements on Cyprus, and from Punic sites further west. The chapels measure about one meter by one meter and housed a statuette or stone stela before which the offerings were laid. Worshippers prayed outside. Similar shrines, but even smaller, have been found, often comprising only a niche in a wall. Clay

Horus, the child god of Egypt, was another deity recognized at Dor. *(Courtesy E. Stern and Tel Dor Project. Photograph by Ze'ev Radovan.)*

models of chapels had been used in various places in Palestine for several hundred years, although apparently their popularity peaked in the Persian period.

Building remains archae-ologists interpret as a temple have been found a few miles south of Dor, at Eliachin. The finds indicate the site was an important cult center from the latter half of the fifth century BCE. Among the finds are a large limestone statuette, pottery from the Persian and Hellenistic periods, a bronze cymbal, and some bronze bowls. The bronze items were inscribed with dedications "to the Ashtorim" or "to the Ashtorim of the Sharon," probably the principal local goddesses of these fertility/agricultural shrines.



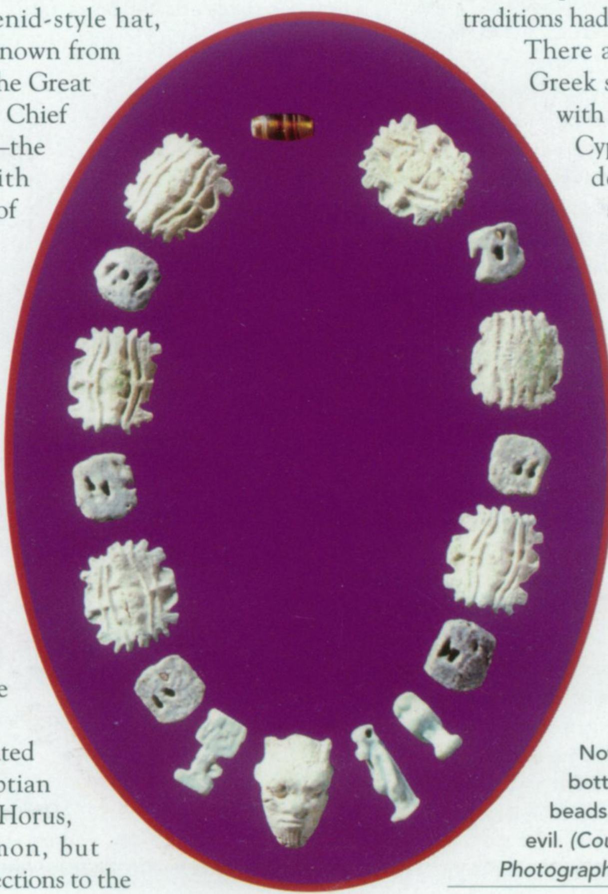
Long before the Persians arrived from the east, Bes came to Palestine from Egypt, a deity easily at home in the superstitious, syncretistic societies of the coast. His popularity apparently peaked during the Persian period. He was the center of the popular apotropaic folk cult, in which people wore jewelry and adorned their houses as well as public shrines with the grotesque in an effort to ward off evil. Bes is often seen with the "eye of Horus" another apotropaic object that originated in Egypt. *(Courtesy E. Stern and Tel Dor Project. Photograph by Ze'ev Radovan. Drawing by Julia Iatesta.)*

Many clay figurines have been found in these coastal sanctuary contexts. The figurines were produced from the same clays as the pottery vessels found there. Male figurines found there typically depict a bearded deity wearing a conical hat and seated on a throne. A variation of this figure depicts a Phoenician headdress. These are undoubtedly representations of the god Baal. All the *baʿalim* had some connection to storms and to the fertility cult of the Canaanite-Phoenician cultic world. Some male figurines display a more Achaemenid-style hat, typical of the depictions of riders known from Persian realms. This figure may be the Great King himself, depicted in his role as Chief Priest in the cult of Ahura Mazda—the Persians' great universal deity with whom they syncretized the deities of their subordinate peoples.

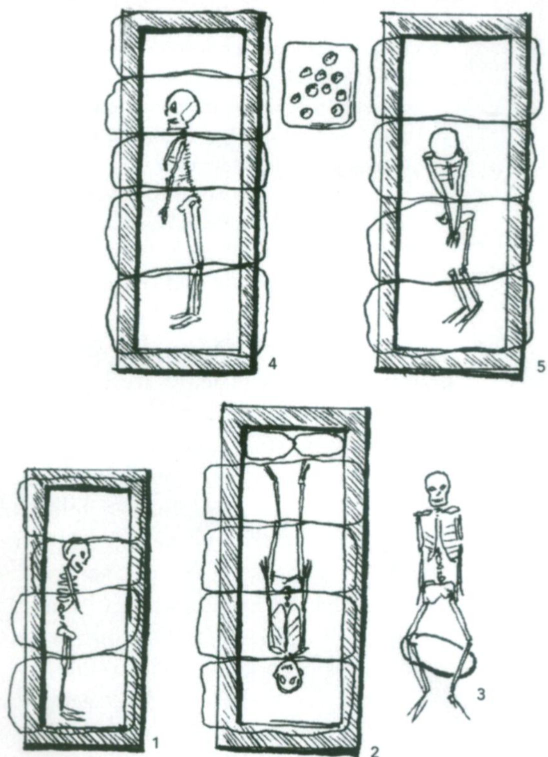
The majority of the female figurines associated with the shrines are fertility-related. Some depict pregnant women or deities; some depict the female with a child on her shoulders. These figurines are found in Phoenicia, Palestine, and Cyprus. Some bear the ubiquitous "sign of Tanit"—the goddess' triangular "body" topped by arms outstretched then raised from the elbow. This indigenous cult was strong among the farmers of the coastal plain and the "more fertile" north.

Egyptian deities are well represented because Phoenicians included Egyptian gods in their worship. Figurines of Horus, Isis, and Hathor are most common, but representations of the bull with connections to the gods Apis, Anubis, Bastet, Ra, and Ibis are also known. Some of these deities are depicted in bronze figurines that were probably imported from Egypt. The onomastica include examples meaning "servant of Ptah," "servant of Osiris," and "servant of Isis," for example. Stern has argued that these names represent a symbiosis between Phoenician religion and the Egyptian cult (Stern 2001: 58–100, 478–507). This sort of syncretism had been going on for years, probably as early as the Late Bronze Age, culminating in the Persian and Hellenistic periods. By this time, many of the distinctions among the deities of the complex pantheons typical of Late Bronze traditions had completely disappeared.

There are many other figurines made in a Greek style. These figurines show affinities with examples from Greece, East Greece, Cyprus, and the Cyclades. They depict deities in Greek-style dress. Some specific deities can be identified, including Apollo, Hermes, and Hercules. Many heads of figurines in this western, or Greek, style were found in a Tel Dor *favissa*, suggesting to Stern that it was attached to a "temple that served the Greek segment of the city's population" (Stern 2001: 502–3). At some coastal sites, figurines in a Cypriot style were also attested. Among these figurines is a series depicting Hercules, who was locally identified with Baal-Melqart—the patron deity of Tyre and Acco.



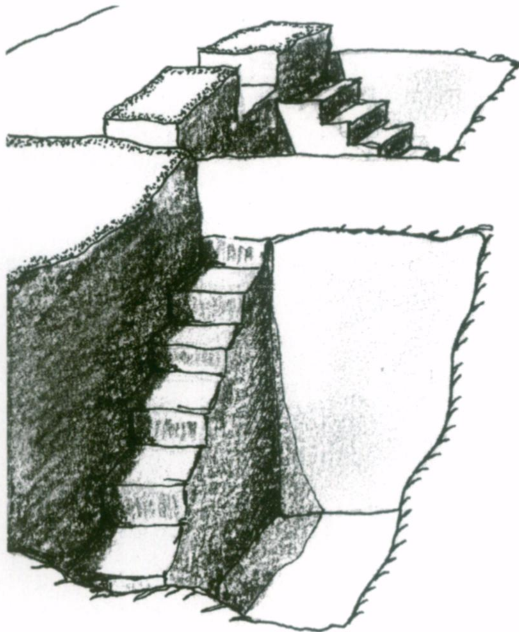
Note the grotesque Bes face at the bottom of this necklace of amulets and eye beads intended to protect their wearer from evil. *(Courtesy E. Stern and Tel Dor Project. Photograph by Ze'ev Radovan.)*



Although R. A. S. Macalister mislabeled as "Philistine" these five Persian period tombs when he uncovered them at Gezer early in the early twentieth century, his neat compilations of their contents provide a rich resource. They show us a variety of contemporary items in one context. His original sketches included the location of every item from every grave, identified by letter. Four were "built" cist graves, dug in the ground and lined with masonry, then covered, as shown, with large stone slabs embedded in "cement." He determined that the fifth (grave no. 3) was that of a man based on its grave goods. The graves were found near each other but not so close together in the formation the drawing might suggest. All held mutton bones. In fact, the oval object under the knees of the figure in no. 3 is a whole sheep (or its remains). *(After Macalister 1912: 290, fig 151; drawing by Julia Iatesta.)*

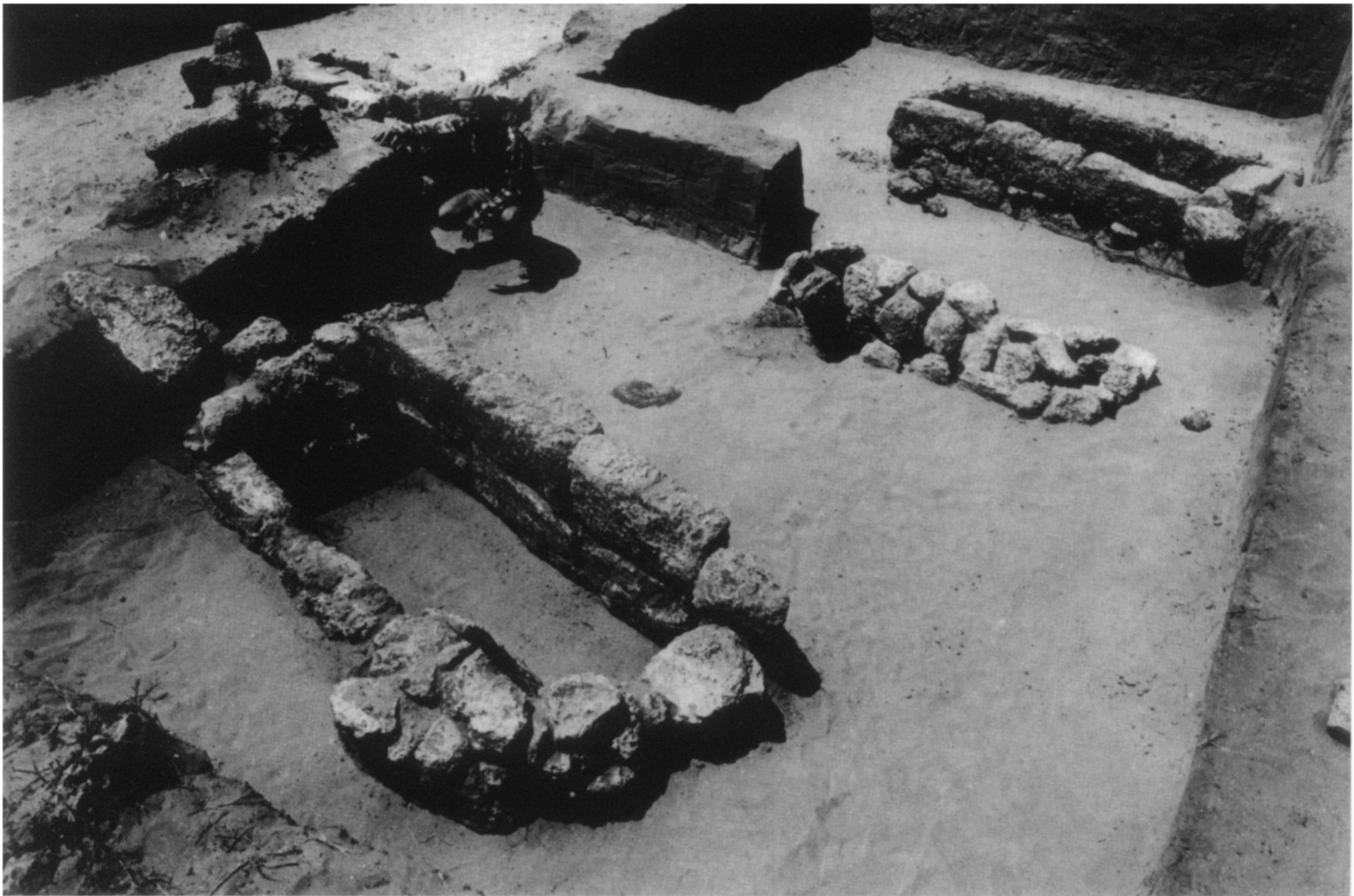
Grave #2 was plaster-lined and held the skeleton of a man "about forty years of age," according to Macalister, who included what he considered the tomb's principal finds in his drawing, followed here. They include, clockwise from the top right: "a remarkable little pot of black ware" with four handles and a cover; a bone chisel-pointed spatula (two verticals in the center of the drawing); a bone case containing a fragment of lead; a fibula ("safety pin"); a needle; a ring; an agate scaraboid seal (Assyrian design not visible in drawing); and two alabaster vases (of six). *(After Macalister 1912: 291–92, pl LV; drawing by Julia Iatesta.)*

Grave no. 4 held the skeleton of a woman and a rich assortment of objects, especially metalware. Clockwise from the upper right-hand corner: a silver anklet (one of two she was wearing) with animal heads at the ends; a plain bronze ladle; a bronze mirror with a bunch of grapes in relief on its back; a bronze pot; a bronze bracelet; a few beads; some nondescript bronze fragments; an 18th Dynasty scarab (top, bottom, and side views); a carnelian seal showing a priest, crescent, winged disc, and sphinx; a silver bowl; a silver vase; a silver saucer. Not drawn were some alabaster bowls and an iron knife in the remains of a wooden haft. *(After Macalister 1912: 292–93, fig. 154; drawing by Julia Iatesta.)*



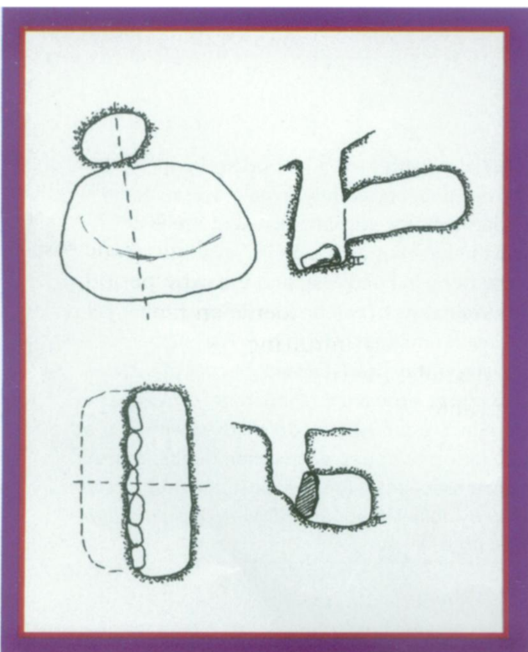
▲ Two very different burial forms were found in several cemeteries in the area of Akhziv (biblical Achzib), on the coast almost at the Lebanon border. One cemetery was on the sandstone ridge near Kibbutz Gesher ha-Ziv. Another cemetery was at Minet Akhziv, on the shore near Tel Akhziv. On the sandstone ridge, the tombs were rock-cut shafts, some with steps, as shown, descending to the small openings of the burial chambers, blocked with slabs. Beyond the slabs another few steps led down to square chambers with pits in the centers of the floors. Large niches in the rear walls held skeletons. Apparently the tombs were vandalized long ago. On the shore were pit burials, as shown. Most were for single burials, some for double. These graves contained jars, jewelry, and figurines. Similar jars were found close to the tombs, outside them (Stern 1982: 68–69). Recently, past excavations, including Ben-Dor's in the 1940s, have been reanalyzed due to the rich repertoire of Phoenician material (Dayagi-Mendels 2002), but owing to incomplete surveying and other problems, the tombs could not be closely dated. *(Drawing by Julia Iatesta after Herzog et al. 1989: 153–65, 420, pl. 40.)*

◄ At Tel Michal, twenty-seven jar burials were uncovered. All but two, apparently female, were infants or children under four. The technique was to break off an end (usually the base) of a storage jar (average length 80 cm), slide the body in head first, and then cap the open end with fragments of the broken jar or another jar or, in one case, with unbaked clay. In rare cases a hamra brick or kurkar stone was used. Excavators classified the storage jars into three types: bag-shaped, elongated, and basket-handled. In a grave where two children were buried together, three jars overlapped each other. Beads, bronze rings, and bronze bracelets were the most common grave good. (*Drawing by Julia Iatesta after Davies, Kostamo, and Jyring 1989: pl. 40.)*



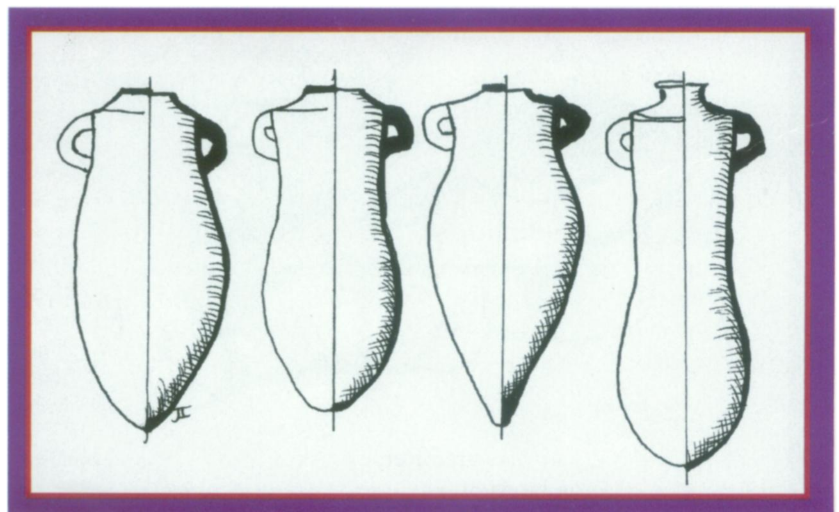
At Tel Michal, fifty-one cist burials of various types were found among the total 111 Persian period burials. These shown were walled with stone but others were walled with mudbrick. Stones in larger graves were usually hewn (about 65–70 cm by 19–20 cm by 32–35 cm) and laid in two courses; thus the depth inside was about 65 cm. They had a variety of roofing, including flat slabs, fieldstone, and wood. Some held wooden coffins, as iron nails attest. A few were made of kurkar stones stood on end on the kurkar bedrock. In all but one, the interred lay extended on their backs. *(Davies, Kostamo, and Jyring 1989: pl. 37.)*

Shaft graves come in a variety of types. These two are from Gezer (Tomb 153; top) and Lachish (Tomb 183; bottom). (*Drawing by Julia Iatesta.)*



Aerial photo of Atlit's cemetery. The cemetery holds burials from several eras. Those from the Persian era are similar to the rock-hewn shaft graves found at Achziv and described above. Most are from the fourth and fifth centuries, as shown by their grave goods, including Phoenician silver coins, Attic pottery, Egyptian amulets, and scarabs of various sources and styles. *(From* NEAEHL 1, 115; *courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society.)*

Jars of various size, shape and quality are found in tombs. These four were found in Tomb 16 at Atlit. (*Drawing by Julia Iatesta after Stern 1982: 69.)*



pendants, glass, jewelry, lamps, limestone altars, kohl sticks and other cosmetic paraphernalia, decorative metalware, plus pottery plain and fine—all have been found in cemeteries and tombs. Together, they indicate burial practices in Palestine, especially on the coast, have as much to do with cultural preferences as with religion. As might be expected, there are several different grave types, representing the various cultural influences that came together in Palestine. Along the entire length of the coastal plain excavators have found shaft-tombs as well as freestanding "built" tombs. These tombs are typical of Greek and Phoenician lands, including Cyprus, and contain a fair amount of imported pottery and a few anthropoid sarcophagi—one near Acco at Shavei Zion and another at Gaza. Further inland, but also found along the coast, another form of tomb is more common—cist graves, which may be either cut into rock or freestanding. These tombs are more clearly Mesopotamian and Achaemenid in form and type. The material culture associated with these graves is likewise "Eastern" in nature (Stern 1980: 90–111). Palestine is unique as a place where these two burial traditions—the shaft-tombs from the west and the cist graves from the east—come together in the cultural practices of the period. Some regional graves, particularly the Phoenician types, prefer the use of sarcophagi, probably imitating Egyptian traditions. These techniques parallel the traditions already seen in other material cultures (Iliffe 1935: 182–86; Prausnitz 1982: 31–44; Zorn 1993a: 216–24, 1997: 214–19; Elayi and Haykal 1996).

An apotropaic folk cult was widely popular among Levantine populations. It promoted the warding off of evil spirits by various superstitious practices. At many sites, the grotesque image of Bes is found on figurines or vases or items of jewelry, along with figurines of Ptah or misshapen figurines of birds. Faience and glass beads, amulets, and pendants were popular—anything that would scare off evil spirits, since that is the purpose of apotropaic objects. Young girls, especially, wore the pendants and other jewelry to "ward off the evil eye." "Bes jars" probably had the same purpose and are known from Dor, Tell el-Hesi, and Tell es-Safi.

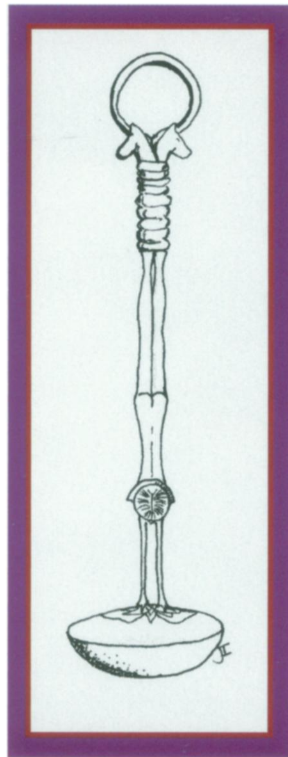
Burial Customs

Religious beliefs and customs are often expressed in burial techniques, including the kinds of material goods or offerings buried along with the deceased. Weapons, figurines, statuettes,

Glass, Metals, and Bone Artifacts

As we have already seen, the imported objects discovered at sites in Palestine came from Phoenicia, Egypt, Persia, and Greece. Given the increasing tempo of trade in expanding monetary economies, growth from the sixth into the fourth centuries BCE should come as no surprise. As one would expect,

This sketch of the ladle show in the photo below allows its lotus leaf and bull-protome designs to be seen. Horse protomes and bull protomes, especially in back-to-back designs such as the one on the ladle, were a Persian architectural tradition that appeared throughout the Empire in many non-architectural design applications.



the incidence of imported goods is more prevalent along the coast at port sites. Imported goods eventually traveled inland along major trade routes and highways, particularly toward major inland cities and towns, including district capitals such as Samaria, Megiddo, or Jerusalem. We also see an increase in the flow of imported goods from the middle of the fifth century and onwards. This increase is related to the cessation of overt hostilities between the Greeks and the Persians, and the defeat of Egypt's rebellious Inaros.

Imported goods included household materials of all kinds, from cosmetic articles, i.e.,kohl sticks or alabastron-shaped vessels for perfumes and powders, to bowls and jewelry. Handles for knives or daggers fashioned from ivory or bone came from either Phoenicia or Egypt; others examples were locally made imitations in a Phoenician-Egyptian style. Achaemenid silver and gold jewelry was found in Jerusalem, Gezer, and Ashdod. Wrist bracelets were common, with simple circles of metal, sometimes chains, ending in ibex or ram heads.

Weaponry

With the presence of military forces in the region by the early-fifth century BCE, one would expect to find stores of weapons at various sites. Stern has argued, "it was only in the fourth century BCE that fighting took place in the coastal region following a brief period of domination by the Egyptians, or following the rebellions of Phoenicians and the satraps .... Some artifacts remaining from these conflicts have been uncovered in the region" (Stern 2001: 531). Greek literary sources and the preponderance of military fortresses suggest that such artifacts might easily have been brought into Palestine early in the fifth century, if not earlier. Arrowheads or dagger blades need not be associated with destruction layers to account for military activity.

Most of the weapons found at Palestinian sites were indeed arrowheads. So-called "Irano-Scythian" points, manufactured from bronze with a side barb, and in either socketed or tanged form, were common throughout the entire Empire. Both tang types are known from strata dating the fall of Jerusalem in 587/586 BCE. Both types continued in use and grew in popularity in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. Greek-style arrowheads eventually appeared in Palestine in small quantities. Greek army helmets of the fifth and fourth centuries have been recovered from underwater excavations near Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Dor. Locally-produced iron arrowheads are also known, but not in the quantities of the bronze "Irano-Scythian" types.

Additionally, some metal objects, including metal bowls, ladles, chalices, and strainers, were found in Persian contexts. These utensils were among the standard repertoire of kitchens and homes in the period. Common people, especially in the north, adopted an Assyrian custom of placing a metal bowl in the tomb with the deceased. Deep, round bowls with rosette decorations were commonly used in this way. Metallic forms were also often copied in glass or clay. Most of the bowls known in Palestine were probably made in Phoenicia or locally imitated.

Ladles were part of wine-drinking sets, and were very common in the Persian period, when banquets were one of life's supreme pleasures (recall Esther). The silver ladle found in Tomb 650 at Tell el-Farʿah (south) is uncommonly beautiful, a luxury item, and combines the influence of several cultures. A nude, swimming girl with arms outstretched was a typical motif in Egyptian cosmetic spoon design. Here, the girl is still "swimming"—her outstretched body the handle—but the spoon is no longer flat, no longer a cosmetic dish. Now it is a ladle for serving wine. The girl grasps a lotus, a typical Egyptian motif, with her hands while her feet rest on a base that develops into a fluted column topped by two back-to-back animal heads—a Mesopotamian design used in royal palatial contexts and recalling bull capitals found Persepolis and Sidon. At the very top is a ring. "She" weighs 159.2 grams and was discovered in 1928. The silver Achaemenid-style bowl with flaring rim, found in the same tomb, repeats the ladle's lotus motif in its twenty-four pointed leaves. The bowl was first cast, then gone over with a fine point to outline the design. It has an omphalic center, that is, convex—the better to sit securely. The ladle and bowl remain together, now in Jerusalem's Rockefeller Museum. *(Rockefeller Museum note, cat #1140, 1141; courtesy of the Israel Museum and the Israel Antiquities Authority.)*

Coins

Coins were first introduced in the seventh century BCE in Asia Minor. Their initial use was probably to facilitate the payment of taxes to local governing authorities. Fixed weights of silver, gold, or electrum (a naturally occurring alloy of gold and silver) were weighed by governmental authorities to fixed scales and then stamped with a symbol representative of the jurisdiction striking the coins. The metals were heated into liquid form to guarantee the proper weight, and then, while still warm and soft, a hammer struck a die inscribed with the appropriate symbols.

As Persian hegemony moved westward, Persian authorities came into closer contact with coined money. They realized the advantages of coinage not only for the payment of taxes due their government, but also to facilitate the exchange of goods and services (Betlyon 1992: 1079–82). The old barter economy was slowly replaced by a fledgling monetary economy. This transformation would take centuries, particularly in inland areas far from prominent trade routes and access to the sea and international trade. But this change in how the world did "business" began in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE.

Tomb 650 at Tell el-Farʿah (south), which held the silver ladle and bowl, also held twelve bronze joints and angles, as well as two metal rods. As they were being cleaned at the Rockefeller Museum, the curator noticed that some of the angles were incised with a letter—assembly instructions, he realized. Thus, replacing the missing wood, he reconstructed the couch (plus a stool, not shown), determining the width by the metal cross-roads. He calculated the height from photographs by excavator Flinders Petrie that showed the bronze pieces of one leg in position in the tomb. The couch is 47 cm in height and 185 cm in length. Ox-hide strips may have been the "springs." *(Rockefeller Museum note, cat #M1142; courtesy of the Israel Museum and the Israel Antiquities Authority.)*

Noting the find spots of YHD coins and seals and seal impressions is a primary method of scholars seeking to establish the perimeters of Yehud as well as its sphere of influence. At first, YHD coins, like those minted along the coast, imitated Athenian coins, that is, they copied the Athenian owl and olive leaf motif. But very quickly the owl was replaced by a falcon and the olive leaf by a lily—easily recognized as a Jerusalem temple motif. Sometimes an owl was joined with a tiny lily. The Greek letters were replaced, first by Aramaic ones and eventually by Hebrew ones, suggesting a strengthening of Yehudite identity. Compared to the coastal mints, those in Yehud apparently used few motifs. *(Courtesy of the Israel Museum.)*

The obverse features a male head in the oriental-style. The reverse features an owl and a small lily. *(Meshorer 1967: pl. I:1.)*

The iconography on this unusual coin, a drachm, has been much discussed by scholars. The reverse pictures a deity seated on a winged wheel and holding a falcon. Beside him is the YHD legend. On the obverse (not illustrated) is a bearded head with a crested helmet. The reverse resembles various contemporaneous coins and has led to several unsatisfactory suggestions regarding the identity of the deity, including Zeus. *(Drawing by Julia Iatesta after Meshorer and Qedar 1967: pl. I:4; Meshorer 1991: 2–6.)*

The coins that circulated in Persian Palestine were struck on three differing weight standards: Most of the commerce in the eastern Mediterranean used the Athenian standard, in which a silver *tetradrachm* weighed 17.5 gram, a measure that divided into four drachms of approximately 4.3 gram each. The official Persian standard was based on the gold *daric*; gold *darics* were struck weighing 4.3 gram, and each gold daric divided into twenty silver *sigloi* weighing 5.6 grams each. Lastly, the Phoenician standard was based on the silver stater of 13.9 grams; this denomination was divided into twenty-four parts, of which the largest was the half-stater of 6.5 grams. Coins struck in local Palestinian mints, including Gaza, Ashkelon, Jerusalem, and Samaria, were struck on either the Phoenician or Athenian standards. Throughout the late fifth and fourth centuries, most mints changed their weight standards to the Athenian standard, which was more useful in commerce than the Persian or Phoenician standards. This pattern is true in all the mints from Phoenicia to Palestine to Cyprus.

Gold coins were struck only on the authority of the Great King of Persia. The minting of silver coins was also highly restricted by Persian authorities. Gold *darics* must have circulated in Palestine throughout the period of Persian domination; only a few of these coins, however, have been found in archaeological contexts: one from Samaria and another from a site in Transjordan. Few gold coins are ever found on digs; they were extremely valuable, and people took care of them, seldom losing them. Gold coins were also a source for gold jewelry and for new coins in later periods. So gold tended to be reused thoroughly in subsequent time periods. Biblical references to these coins appear in 1 Chr 29:7 and Ezra 8:27. The reference in Chronicles mentions *adarkonim*, probably derived from the word daric and referring to offerings for services in the Temple in the time of King David (Betlyon 1992; Stern 2001: 558). This reference is surely an anachronism that more accurately refers to the Second Temple period. Some have translated these passages as references to silver drachms, which is erroneous.

Although Greek coins circulated widely throughout Palestine and Phoenicia, few have been recovered from archaeological contexts. The earliest Greek coin to be found in the region was struck on Kos in the early sixth century BCE; it was found in the Ketef Hinnom excavation, in Jerusalem. An Athenian coin of the sixth century was recovered at Giv'at Ram, also in Jerusalem. An early coin of Aegina from the Cyclades was found by G. E. Wright at Shechem (Campbell 1993). The familiarity of the people with these coins and growing popular acceptance of coinage for business transactions led some small local mints, including Samaria, Gaza, and Ashkelon, to imitate the most popular Greek types, principally the Athenian tetradrachm.

The Persian Crown granted the privilege to coin money in silver and bronze to four Phoenician cities: Arwad, Byblos, Sidon, and Tyre. Arwadian coins were initially struck on the Persian standard, changing to the Athenian in the fourth century. Byblian coins bore lengthy inscriptions on the model PN *milk gubl*, "proper name, king of Byblos" (Betlyon 1982: 116). Both of these mints were in far northern Phoenicia, and few of their coins have been found in Palestine. Coins of Sidon and Tyre, however, are found in great number.

The Sidonian mint began striking coins in the mid-to-late fifth century, using Persian and Phoenician images on

A Brief History of Coins in the Levant

Coinage developed more slowly in the Levant than it did in Greece. The earliest use of coined money in the Near East (outside of Anatolia) can be dated to the fifth century BCE, with locally-made coins appearing in the last quarter of the fifth and subsequently in the fourth centuries BCE. Coinage was not just a tool of economic development and commerce. Images and inscriptions on coins were also ideological and political symbols. The oldest coins found in Palestinian archaeological contexts come from early-sixth-century mainland Greece and Anatolia (East Greece). Cities and towns that were granted the privilege of opening a mint adopted specific symbols to represent themselves. Athens, for example, struck coin types depicting the goddess Athena on the obverse, with an owl, olive branch, and the inscription ΑΘΕ, "Athens," on the reverse. Phoenician and Palestinian mints also adopted symbols and inscriptions to identify themselves. Tyre depicted their local manifestation of Baal riding on a sea horse above the waves of the sea. Sidon used the symbol of its maritime supremacy, showing a war galley, often in front of the crenellated walls of the city.

The process by which coins became acceptable as "legal tender" was long and tedious. Documents from various sites, including the Wadi ed-Daliyah, indicate that commercial transactions in the fourth century were still commonly undertaken using weighed amounts of silver—ingots, wire, and the like—especially in inland areas. Coined silver, bronze, and gold were accepted in the marketplace more and more in the fourth century BCE, but coinage was not universally accepted as a part of the economy until the first and second centuries CE. Even then, people "cut" Nabataean silver coins to obtain silver.

its types. A common Sidonian "double-shekel" depicted the war galley of the Sidonian navy at sea on the obverse, with a reverse type showing the Persian Great King riding in a chariot drawn by horses and followed by the King of Sidon in his role as high priest of the royal cult. These coins bore abbreviations of the names of various Sidonian kings and dating systems that corresponded to regnal years. An inscription from the Bostan esh-Sheikh, near Sidon, was published in the 1960s and mentioned several previously unknown names of Sidonian kings. These rulers' names correspond amazingly with the king list from the aforementioned inscription (Betlyon 1982: 23–24, n. 5; Dunand 1965: 105–9). Sidonian coins were struck on the Phoenician standard except for two periods in the fourth century when Sidon probably joined with Cypriot cities and some other Phoenician, Egyptian, and/or Palestinian towns in revolt against Persia. One of these revolts was organized by the renegade Sidonian king, Tennes, who turned his back on the citizens of his own city. In the aftermath of its participation in revolts against the Great King, Sidon temporarily lost its privileges to strike coins. Sidonian types appeared twice under the name of Mazday, satrap of Cilicia, and acting satrap of Abar-nahara.

Tyre also struck a great many coins in the period, including the small change that fueled the economy of Acco. Tyre's types depicted the god of the city (usually called Melqart, "king of the city") riding on a winged seahorse above the waves of the sea. On the reverse is a galley with soldiers/marines on board, above a dolphin and a murex shell—representative of Tyre's trade in royal purple dye.

Coins of Sidon and Tyre were found all over Palestine, particularly at sites along the northern coast. They are known also at some of the major inland sites, including Hazor, Beth Yerah, Megiddo, Gezer, Lachish, Beth-Zur, Samaria, and Shechem. At least eight coin hoards from Levantine sites included large numbers of Phoenician coins.

These Phoenician coins were struck in silver and bronze. They were the "small change" to facilitate commerce and normal economic exchange throughout the region. Coins of Sidon and Tyre—the two most prominent Phoenician cities of the era—were recognizable all over the eastern Mediterranean basin. Throughout Abar-nahara, the right to strike coins was also granted to some smaller mints, including Gaza, Ashkelon, Jerusalem, and Samaria. Gaza struck large silver denominations, analogous to the coins of the Phoenician city-states. Jerusalem and Samaria, on the other hand, struck only small silver coins on the Phoenician and later Athenian standards.

The Gaza and Ashkelon coins are usually referred to as "Philisto-Arabian," or "Egypto-Arabian" in the older numismatic literature. More recent literature refers to them as "Greco-Phoenician," "Greco-Persian," or simply "Palestinian." The major harbor towns of the southern coast used these coins as their "small change." The types often imitated the coinage of other cities, using Athenian symbols, and other images, such as the bust of Janus. Lions attacking rams, bulls, griffins, horses with or without riders, owls, goats, and all sorts of real and mythological creatures are depicted. There is little consistency in these types. Most of these coins were struck in the fourth century, some surfacing in the Wadi ed-Daliyeh cave where the coins could be dated by the epigraphic finds to ca. 345–335 BCE. A few of these coins bear abbreviated names of the mint cities, including *ʿza* or *ʿz*, for Gaza, and other variations for Ashdod or Ashkelon. Some scholars suggest that Dor may also have had a small mint to strike supplementary coinages as well.

Jerusalem's mint supplied small silver denominations to supplement the larger denominations that were imported from larger, regional mints. Characteristic of these coins, however, is the ethnic *yhd/yhwd* or *yehud*, the Aramaic form of the name of province, Yehud (or Judah). A number of different symbols appear on the types, including helmets, lilies, and falcons. Most of these coins were found at sites near Jerusalem, including Ramat Rahel, Beth-Zur, and Jericho. These fourth-century coins also bear inscriptions mentioning the personal names *yehizqiyyah happeha*, "Yehizqiyyah, the governor." Other coins bear the name *yehohanan hakohen*, "Jonathan the priest" (Betlyon 1986: 633–42; Mildenberg 1979: 183–96; Meshorer 1982). Nehemiah 12:22 mentions the names of several priests who served in the temple in Jerusalem, including one named *yehohanan*. Of special interest is the Beth-Zur coin, depicting the Ptolemaic eagle or the head of Ptolemy opposite one another. Albright suggested that the coin was struck by a priest who was a friend of Ptolemy of Egypt and who settled in Egypt in ca. 282 BCE. This coin continues types initially struck in the Persian period which are also produced under Alexandrine patronage in the early Hellenistic period.

Several enigmatic coins with the ethnic *yehud* depicted a bearded male figure in a Corinthian helmet. Another example depicted a bearded male riding in a winged chariot and with a falcon in his left hand. Some numismatists have suggested that these coins may have been struck under the authority of Farnabazus or Datames when they were preparing for war against rebellious Egypt in the 370s BCE (Meshorer 1982). Or perhaps, as D. Barag has suggested (1991: 261–65), these coins were intended as military *specie* used by the Persian general Bagohi to pay mercenaries ordered to Jerusalem to maintain order in a conflict between priestly families mentioned in Josephus (*Ant.* 11).

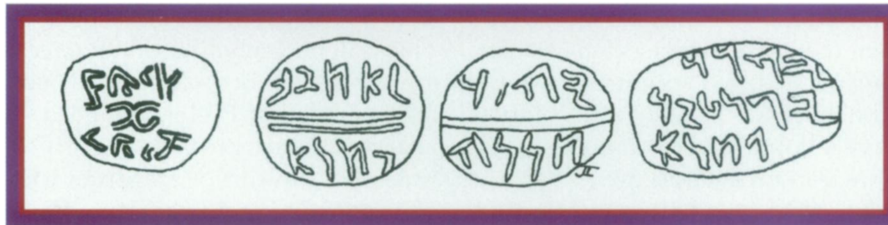
The remaining coins from the region were struck in Samaria. All of these small silver coins were struck in the fourth century. Several hundred of these coins, struck on many different types, were found in and around Samaria and the regions under Samaria's jurisdiction.The hoards also included Phoenician types of the fourth century. A great many types are known, including variations on Cilician types, Babylonian-Persian motifs, and images of more local origin. Various inscriptions mention several personal names, as well as the name of the province, Shomeron, and two of

its governors, Sanballat and Ishma'el. The study of these small coins is continuing, after the recent publication of the major coin hoards (Meshorer and Qedar 1991, 1999).

The variety of coins struck in the fourth century clearly demonstrates the widespread acceptance and interest in coined money. Coins, as a means of exchange, found their way into the Levantine economy in the late fifth and fourth centuries BCE. This was a strengthening economy, growing out of the wars and uncertainty of the late-seventh and early-sixth centuries. There can be no doubt that the economic situation in the mid-fourth century was far stronger than it had been two hundred years earlier. Although there had been times of peace and times of unrest and war, trade continued to increase, and coastal regions were more strongly connected to Greece than ever before. The eventual coming of Alexander the Great and Hellenization simply accelerated developments which were already under way.

Seal Impressions

Many seal im-pressions and seals have been found in Persian-period contexts in Palestine. Some of the seals and seal impressions are imports from Babylonia, Egypt, Greece, and Persia. Others are locally made. The local seals either imitated the styles of the more expensive imports or mixed those styles in hybrid forms. Some of the seals known from Palestinian contexts are official seals or sealings from the administrators of the regions of Yehud, Samaria, Ammon, and Phoenicia (Stern 2001: 543).



So many seal impressions, some on bullae but most from jar handles, have been found at Ramat Rahel that it has been suggested the site was an administrative center in the Persian period. Here are four examples. All contain the legend Yehud plus a personal name plus the word *phw'* (governor). In some cases one of the elements of the legend is missing. In others a monogram appears. The writing is Aramaic (with rare exception). They are probably all official. *(Drawing by Julia Iatesta after Stern 1982: 202.)*

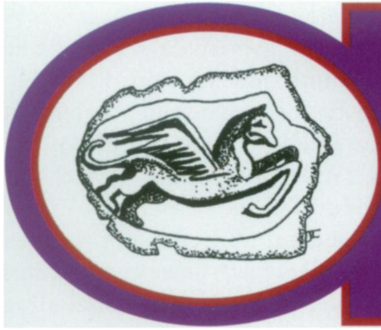
Few cylinder seals have been unearthed at Palestinian sites. However, a large corpus of sealings has been recovered from all parts of the land. Many of the Achaemenid sealings had some official governmental function. Most of these were found in the cave of the Wadi ed-Daliyah and were probably from the administrators of fourth-century Samaria. Babylonian seals have often been found in purely Persian contexts, with easily dateable Attic pottery of the fifth or fourth centuries BCE. The seal types are typical and known from corpora of seals from other Babylonian contexts. They include priests in cultic settings, busts of winged lions, stags, rams, birds, and the common scene depicting the king fighting with two horned animals or lions (Stern 2001: 536–37).

This stone seal with an Aramaic inscription was found at Gibeon. If it were octagonal it would imitate the Babylonian style. The people of Gibeon were listed in Neh 3 as helping to build Jerusalem's new wall. *(Drawing by Julia Iatesta after Stern 1982: 201 #328.)*

A few sites revealed Egyptian sealings dateable to the twenty-sixth through the twenty-ninth dynasties. Most of these examples were found at sites along the coast, except for a small group of seals unearthed at Gezer. These regions had easy access to Egypt, although relations between Persia and Egypt were often strained during the fifth and fourth centuries. Commercial ties were important to the Persian strategic goals of increasing their economic power throughout the eastern Med-iterranean basin.

Locally made seals that imitated imported seals were generally non-epigraphic in style—that is, they did not contain any writing. The seals mirrored types evident in the newly minted coin series. Of special note are the more than 170 bullae recovered from the Wadi ed-Daliyeh, where Samarian officials fled before the armies of Alexander (Avigad and Sass 1997). A few of these bullae still held the papyrus scrolls to which they were originally attached. Some bore the name of Sanballat, the most prominent governor of Samaria. Sanballat may have had several sons, grandsons, or great-grandsons of the same name; we should not assume that all "Sanballats" are the same person.

Frank M. Cross noted that some of the Wadi ed-Daliyeh seals were produced in a markedly "Greek" style. The motifs mirror coin types used in Phoenicia, but also demonstrate that Athenian ties to the Persian East were strong. Some seals depict Greek deities, including Zeus, Hermes, Aphrodite, Athena, Heracles, and Nike (Cross 1969: 45–69, 1974: 17–29). The population of Samaria in the mid-fourth century BCE was obviously quite cosmopolitan. The region's citizenry combined the indigenous Israelite population, who had survived multiple deportations, with more recent arrivals who had immigrated into the region under Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian auspices. Others arrived in Samaria during its period of Persian



A griffin on a bulla is typical of Persian period Samaria, as we now know from various hoards uncovered (some of them unprovenanced) as well as from the finds from the Wadi ed-Daliyeh. Attic motifs and Persian motifs both were common. Not shown in the drawing is the combination of Paleo-Hebrew and Paleo-Aramaic writing on this bulla (at the bottom). *(Drawing by Julia Iatesta after Meshorer and Qedar 1999: 16.)*

A standing nude male holding a staff would be a typical combination of Greek and Eastern motifs; the naked male the Greek contribution and the staff the Eastern contribution. *(Drawing by Julia Iatesta after Meshorer and Qedar 1999: 16.)*

hegemony (Leith 1997). Some may have come to Samaria and its environs by reason of trade or commerce; others surely came as a result of military operations or peacekeeping functions authorized by the Great King. Recall that military escorts were authorized for official missions, such as the appointments of Ezra and Nehemiah. Surely similar escorts visited or were posted to Samaria as well. Similar seals were discovered at many sites along the coast and at some of the larger sites located on the principal highways leading inland from the port cities.

Among the locally made seals are all those that bear names of one of the districts of the satrapy Abar-nahara, including Yehud, Samaria, and Ammon. Some seals mention only the name of the district. Others link the place name with the personal name of a governmental official. From Yehud, for example, a seal was found with the name of "Shelomit, the maidservant of Elnathan, the Governor" (Meyers 1985: 33–38). Other seals mention individuals including "belonging to Elʾazar," or "belonging to Baruch, son of Shimʾi." Samarian sealings mention Sanballat, and a certain "Isaiah, the son of Sanballat." Official sealings from Yehud are inscribed in Aramaic, usually with a plene spelling of the district's name: *yhwd*. Some scholars have argued that these seals are to be associated with the Hellenistic period. However, the numismatic record leads us to conclude that the seals reading Yehud in Aramaic are to be considered Persian, with the spelling Yehudah, in Hebrew, preferred later in the Hellenistic period. This was the time when the paleo-Hebrew script came to predominate in Jerusalem and its environs (Cross 2003: 138–45; Betlyon 1986: 633–42).

The Persian Period: An Overview

Because of recent archaeological work, much more is becoming known of Palestine in the Persian period. Archaeologists are learning more about the pottery of the period, enabling excavators to more accurately date and phase the strata from their sites and to understand what happened during various occupational phases. Ephraim Stern has argued that because of these extensive field explorations, he has "considerable confidence that the majority of these settlements was destroyed one or more times during this period" (Stern 2001: 576). Indeed, almost all Persian period sites have at least two major phases of occupation: Early Persian, dating from 539 to 450 BCE; and Late Persian, dating from 450 to the coming of Alexander in 332/331 BCE. Some sites have three or more phases of occupation; Tell el-Hesi's small settlement—a military/logistics outpost—had five phases. We should not assume, however, that all phase changes came as a result of military actions.

Throughout the years from 539 to 332 BCE, population increased in the region and new sites were founded. By far the most densely populated region of Palestine was the coastal plain, where new towns grew up in great profusion along the major coastal highways and wherever port facilities could be constructed. Growth was clearly connected to international trade. Trade with Egypt, Cyprus, and with the Greek islands and mainland flourished.

Palestine, Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Syria formed the satrapy as formed under Cyrus the Great. None of these regions was "independent" under Persian rule, although their degrees of autonomy may have varied. Phoenicia's seapower was essential to Persia's interests in the eastern Mediterranean basin. Sidon was the site of the Persian king's western palace; excavations have unearthed capitals in the Susan Persian style in the form of bull-protomes (Harden 1971: 50–51). This may have been Persia's "forward command post" in its expansion along the coastal trunk route (Betlyon 2004: 464), and towards Egypt. Suffice it to say, Persian control over the Levant was complete soon thereafter. Darius I dealt with a series of revolts when he came to power in 522–520 BCE, including a possible insurrection in Jerusalem. Indeed the earth was "shaking" as the prophet Haggai foretold, but Zerubbabel was unable to assert himself as the "chosen" of Yahweh. Darius I very capably administered his vast realm, after reorganizing it, ruling in consultation with his counselors from Persia and appointing loyal satraps to oversee the satrapies. Persia did not create vassal kings to rule subjugated countries.

When Egypt revolted, the southern Levant, including Palestine, became a vast training area and "power projection

platform" in which Persian forces were received and supplied and from which they moved to combat their Egyptian enemies. A number of sites, including Tell el-Hesi, Tell esh-Shariah, and Tell Jemmeh, were probably logistical bases supplying food, clothing, weapons, and the necessary combat service and combat service support in the great campaign against Egypt (Betlyon 1991: 39–42; 2004: 464; Bennett and Blakely 1990: 134–37). Acco and the adjoining plain were used as a marshalling point for forces mobilized to move into Egypt in 374 BCE; the area may have been used in this same way in ca. 457/456 BCE and at other times. The material remains that might herald such an "assembly area" would be difficult to find archaeologically. The final staging area for the invasion of Egyptian territory was undoubtedly the region south and southeast of Ashdod and Ashkelon, where many of the logistical bases were found.

Persian forces moved into Egypt in ca. 457 BCE and broke the Greek/Egyptian siege of Memphis—the Persian capital of Egypt. Egyptian forces were defeated; and the Delian League's troops retreated to the north. Greek forces would not bother the Persians in Egypt again. The Great King then took extraordinary steps to hold on to the Near East, including Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine. He sent Ezra to Jerusalem to satisfy local desires for religious autonomy, and he also inaugurated an expensive program to guarantee the security of the southwestern satrapy. A series of fortresses were built in all major population centers and along major trade routes in ca. 460–440 BCE. These forts, called *biraniyot* in 1–2 Chronicles, were the "keystone" in Persia's "military operations other than war" (Betlyon 2004: 465). The fortresses were of varying sizes yet demonstrated tremendous homogeneity and efficiency. They were built for peace-keeping operations: guarding industrial sites, patrolling highways and junctions, supporting local authorities, rebuilding infrastructure, and caring for important public installations such as water supplies, as well as the collection of taxes (Betlyon 2003: 274–75; 2004: 465). These operations significantly changed Persia's approach to imperial satrapal governance. These military posts, with small, professional military units, greatly reduced the likelihood of revolt. With little fear of more rebellion, the Persians could turn their attention to more pressing economic issues, attempting to increase their market share of trade in the eastern Mediterranean. This commercial activity was a viable weapon in the fight against Athenian efforts to control the monetary economies in the Aegean/Mediterranean sphere of influence.

Some anomalies in the coinage of Sidon during the 370s and 360s may indicate that revolts occurred in the early fourth century as well. These "revolts" may have been little more than wars of ideas, involving angry protests, "strikes," and refusal to pay taxes—they did not need to include total military devastation of sites to have been serious enough to require the deployment of troops. Images of the Persian king were expunged from Sidonian coinage and replaced by the likeness of the local leader (Betlyon 1982: 12–14). It was at this time that Sidon sheltered the Egyptian king Tachos who was trying to evade Persian capture (Judeich 1892: 166–209).

Another rebellion was instigated in the time of Tennes, ca. 352/351 BCE. Artaxerxes III tried to put down the revolt, but failed (Kienitz 1953; Ghirshman 1954: 2–11; Vandier 1954: 189–90). Sidon fell to the Persians either in this campaign or in the second effort to suppress the fighting, in 345 BCE. Some scholars have suggested that this insurrection involved various Palestinian sites, including Hazor, Megiddo, Atlit, Lachish, and perhaps Jericho (Barag 1966: 7). This campaign resulted in a short-lived period of renewed Persian hegemony over Lower Egypt and the Nile Delta. Upper Egypt, however, remained under the control of a native-born Egyptian monarchy. By 343 BCE Artaxerxes III restored some of Persia's tarnished glory (Frye 1963: 119). But Darius III was ill prepared to thwart the oncoming Macedonian armies in 332/331 BCE.

The coastal sites dominated by the Phoenicians and actively involved in trade with the Aegean are well documented. There is less information, however, on all that occurred throughout Judah and Samaria. In some ways, it was a time of revolt and change. Some archaeologists look for the evidence of revolts only in destruction layers. They lack the foresight to understand the yearning of the human spirit for freedom. Intellectual movements among people do not necessarily yield "destruction layers" and evidence of burned buildings or artifacts. Such is the difficult, unpredictable nature of the Persian period in Palestine. People were grappling with major existential issues, as the Jewish religious literature attests. They were also living through a major transformation in the life and culture of the eastern Mediterranean world.

The Persian-period material culture of Palestine is a mixed phenomenon of local, Egyptian, Phoenician, Cypriot, Greek, Syrian, East Greek, Mesopotamian, and Persian cultural horizons. Slowly but surely, the population of Palestine grew, as communities recovered from the terrible wars of the late seventh and early sixth centuries. In the midst of great economic changes, early Judaism evolved from its older Hebrew roots and became firmly established in Yehud and Samaria. New texts were read and studied, including the entire Torah, many of the prophetic scrolls, some of the Writings, as well as a new history probably written by a Jew who had never been in Exile—the Chronicles (Welch 1935: 157; Levin 2003: 243–45). The perspectives of the Jewish community in Jerusalem made way for change, reflecting the background of Jews who returned from Exile to rebuild Yehud as well as others who never left the land. The Samarians were part of this latter group, as were the Jewish communities in Jerusalem, Benjamin, and neighboring Yehud.

Their archaeological story is complex, but thrilling. It reflects something new happening in central Palestine, as East and West meet along the coast, setting the scene for continued transformation and growth in the Hellenistic and Roman periods that followed.

Abbreviations

AASOR Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research.
NEAEHL *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, 6 volumes, edited by E. Stern. Jerusalem: Carta, 1993.

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