From Crisis to Recovery: The Influence of Warfare and Administrative Reforms on Settlement Patterns from the Late Persian Period to Ptolemy II in the Land of Israel

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Abstract

The current article re-evaluates the pottery assemblages of sites in the southern Levant in order to distinguish, for the first time, between those occupied in the late 4th century BCE, namely in the late Persian period or in the very early Hellenistic period, and those occupied in the early 3rd century BCE – roughly during the reign of Ptolemy II. The insights gained from this re-evaluation are used to outline changes in settlement patterns during the transition between the Persian and the Hellenistic periods and to address the nature of the transition between the periods – whether it was smooth and accompanied by a period of prosperity as was argued by previous archaeological studies, or whether it was a period of instability and decline as seen from literary evidence.

Introduction

The defeat of the Persian Empire and the conquest of Persian-held lands by Alexander the Great was swift. The Macedonian conquest was relatively peaceful in the southern Levant. Alexander faced significant military resistance only in Tyre and Gaza when he arrived in the region. Although soon after the conquest a revolt broke out in Samaria, it was quickly quelled[1].

From a political point of view, the Macedonian conquest reconfigured the geopolitical map of the region for decades. Most historical studies stress that this period of transition was not simple. Constant struggles between the Diadochi in the territory of Coele Syria and Phoenicia, and later on during the Syrian wars suggest the possibility of a temporary decline[2].

1 Meyers – Chancey 2012, 7–17; Lipschits et al. 2014, 135.

2 E.g., Abel 1935; Hengel 1981; Grainger 1991, 50–51; Grabbe 2008; Fischer-Bovett 2021; Bar-Kochva 1976, 76–77.

However, even in these studies, the early 3rd century is described as a period of urbanization, economic growth, and prosperity[3]. The written evidence emphasizes the political events that affected the upper ruling classes – who naturally were more exposed to change than the lower classes. Concerning the Ptolemaic administration and the impact of the struggles on the hinterland territories, it is commonly accepted that, in general, local populations were allowed to remain on their land and continue with their daily lives. Thus, at least potentially, local communities went on with their ways of life and possibly with the prevailing local economic structures. Indeed, this trend seems evident through the relatively fragmentary written sources.

Nevertheless, there is a point of discrepancy in the current state of research. In contrast to historical sources, archaeology supplies a wealth of data on the lives of ordinary people and rural communities. Indeed, archaeological studies depict a different picture. They argue for the lack of destruction in the transition between the Persian and Hellenistic periods, that most sites remained settled, and that, in fact, during this time, we may see numerous new sites built, pointing to an age of prosperity[4]. This discrepancy between the picture drawn by the historical sources of economic decline and some instability and the archaeological studies that depict an era of prosperity is at the heart of the current contribution[5]. Our departure point is archaeological, and we aim to draw a more balanced picture of the transition from the Persian to the Hellenistic periods in the Land of Israel.

Previous archaeological studies suffered from several shortcomings. First, most studies concentrated on data emerging from field surveys which are known to be inaccurate and supply only rough dating[6]. In most surveys, no distinction was made, for instance, between early and late Hellenistic periods[7]. Furthermore, until recently, no distinction was drawn between locally produced pottery of the Persian and early Hellenistic periods, except for the Galilee, which was prolifically published[8]. For this reason, many sites could not have been accurately dated – especially those in the inland where imported pottery is rare. Thus, it was not possible to distinguish between sites that were built (or destroyed) in the late Persian or early Hellenistic periods. Consequently, discussion of the Persian–Hellenistic transition could only be made in broad terms[9].

This situation has changed in the past few years. First, due to the excavation of Khirbet Qeiyafa, it became possible to distinguish between local pottery of the late 4th and early 3rd century BCE[10]. Furthermore, numerous salvage excavations of sites from this period were conducted and, more importantly, published. In addition, research on the Galilee in the Persian and Hellenistic periods is now at its peak[11]. With so many new known sites, it is currently possible to discuss settlement patterns in this period based on excavated sites without including problematic data from surveys.

We recently adopted an approach that utilized these changes to review the nature of the transition between the late Persian to the early Hellenistic periods in the highlands of Judah and Samaria and the Shephelah region[12]. It appeared that in these regions, the transition was not

3 E.g., Meyers – Chancey 2012: 13–23; Kasher 1990: 14–29; Zangenberg – van de Zande 2010.

4 E.g., Carter 1999; Tal 2006, 15–163; Faust 2007; Lipschits – Tal 2007; Lipschits et al. 2014.

5 We thank Andrea Berlin and Benedikt Eckhardt for reading an earlier version of the paper and for their comments. Any possible mistakes are, of course, our own.

6 See, e.g., Faust – Safrai 2005; Garfinkel – Ganor 2010; Paz et al. 2010, 39.

7 Faust 2007, 28–29; Lipschits et al. 2014, 134.

8 See Berlin 1997a; Berlin 1997b; Berlin 1997c; Herbert – Berlin 2003; Berlin et al. 2014; Hartal et al. 2016; Berlin – Herbert 2021.

9 Berlin 1997b; Carter 1999, 233–248; Faust 2007; Lipschits – Tal 2007; Finkelstein 2010.

10 Sandhaus – Kreimerman 2015.

11 Berlin – Herbert 2021, and see above.

12 Sandhaus – Kreimerman 2017; Kreimerman – Sandhaus 2021; Sandhaus 2018; Sandhaus 2021.

smooth. Some sites, especially those of administrative nature, were destroyed or abandoned. Other sites showed an occupation gap – pointing at a period when they were abandoned, while some sites continued to exist without a break. Still, it seems that no new sites in these regions were built within this time frame. Berlin and Herbert's recent discussion of southern Phoenicia also showed considerable changes in settlement patterns[13]. As could be surmised, these conclusions stand in contrast to most previous archaeological studies of the period.

Our intention in the current paper is to continue studying the effect of the transition from Persian to Hellenistic rule on the population of the Land of Israel by examining settlement patterns across the entire area. There is reason to believe that the varying economic importance of the different regions, the resources available in each area, and the proximity to roads, might have played an essential role in the way these sites were affected by the transition[14].

Methodology

In practical terms, we will now examine excavated sites from the later Persian to the early Hellenistic period. The sites are first dated according to the numismatic evidence and pottery, and when available, by other finds. Then, the nature of the transition between the periods can be assessed. For the reasons mentioned above, we have classified the transition into four categories:

- Sites that existed continuously in both periods.
- Sites inhabited in both periods but rebuilt according to a new plan in the second one.
- Sites that were abandoned during the transition between the two periods.
- Sites that were constructed in the second half of the discussed period.

For sites to be included in the analysis, they had to fulfill two criteria:

- The presence of sufficient architectural remains that can be verifiably attributed to these periods.
- The existence of a publication that includes detailed stratigraphy and pottery plates accompanying the architecture analysis.

Consequently, we excluded from our analysis sites where the pottery sherds or stamp impressions uncovered could not be associated with architectural remains, and sites in which such finds originated from fills, pits, or an unclear stratigraphic context.

It is worth noting that adherance to this methodology considerably reduced the number of excavated sites that could have been considered[15].

The sites are examined according to geographical areas and within each area from north to south. Data regarding the Shephelah and the Central Hill region were discussed in detail elsewhere[16], and so were data from southern Phoenicia[17], which are summarized here in brief.

The Coastal Plain

Giv'at Yasaf: Remains of the Persian period were found in several areas of the site. Area C, at the top of the mound, was occupied by a large structure, perhaps a farmhouse. On the southern slope in Area D, a large open courtyard bounded by massive walls was found. On the western slope, Area B, a domestic structure with agricultural installations was uncovered. All structures continued to exist with minor changes into the Hellenistic period (2nd century BCE)[18].

13 Berlin – Herbert 2021.

14 See also Berlin 2019.

15 For fuller lists of sites known from the period, see NEAEHL; Berlin 1997b; Tal 2006; Faust 2018.

16 Sandhaus – Kreimerman 2017; Sandhaus 2018; Kreimerman – Sandhaus 2021; Sandhaus 2021.

17 Berlin – Herbert 2021.

18 Rochman-Halperin 1999.

'Akko: In the Persian period, the city was concentrated mainly on the tel and its immediate vicinity[19]. The remains on the tel consisted of Strata 5 and 4 of the 4th century BCE. The remains are of domestic structures and one massive administrative building built partly of hewn stones[20]. By the late Persian period, the settlement had already expanded to areas around the tel. In the Hellenistic period, probably during the early 3rd century BCE, the city moved closer to the shore, and the tel was abandoned. The harbor area was settled only in the late part of the 3rd century and in the 2nd century BCE[21].

Tel Keisan: The site was occupied by a structure at the end of the Persian period (Phase 3a). According to the excavators, the structure was abandoned around 380 BCE; a piazza following a new plan was built in Phase 2b[22]. However, all the pottery of Phase 2 is Hellenistic. Thus, the transition between Phases 3a and 2b must have been later, although it is unclear when exactly this occurred.

Shikmona: A small structure, perhaps a citadel, was constructed in the second half of the 4th century BCE. The structure was violently destroyed, and the numismatic evidence suggests that the destruction occurred during the reign of Alexander the Great or slightly later. Most probably it was a Persian citadel destroyed by Alexander. Alternatively, it could have been a citadel constructed by Alexander and destroyed slightly later. It seems that the citadel was reconstructed in the Ptolemaic period[23].

Tell Abu-Hawam: Stratum IIA at the sites represents a Persian settlement that was probably destroyed in 385–383 BCE after it was sacked as part of the fighting between the Persians and the Egyptians over Tyre. The city was reconstructed (Stratum IIB); in this phase, massive fortifications were constructed, and the city was built according to the Hippodamic plan. This phase probably lasted until the Macedonian conquest. The site was reconstructed in the Hellenistic period following a new plan with a possible occupation gap between the phases[24].

Tel Dor: This was a sizeable fortified site during the Persian period. Transition to the Hellenistic period was rather smooth, and the town plan was maintained. New structures, some of them probably of a public nature, and a city wall were constructed[25].

Tel Tanninim: Architectural remains of this relatively large site were exposed only in limited areas. Although scanty, there seems to be a continuity between the remains of both periods[26]. Nevertheless, one should treat these conclusions with caution.

Tel Mevorakh: A large building complex occupied the site in the final phase of the Persian period (Stratum IV). The site was abandoned about the mid-4th century BCE and resettled only in the 2nd century BCE[27].

Tel Michal: This was an important site during the Persian period. On the tel (Stratum VII dated to the first half of the 4th century BCE), a fort as well as domestic and industrial structures were built. In this phase, the settlement was planned and developed. In Stratum VI, dated to the second half of the 4th century BCE, the settlement maintained the same layout, and it was

19 Stern 2016, 229–230, fig. 11.1

20 Dothan 1976; Dothan 1993, 22.

21 Berlin – Stone 2016; Stern 2016, 229–230.

22 Nodet 1980; Briend 1980

23 Elgavish 1968, 47–54.

24 Stern 1968; Finkielsztejn 1989; Balensi et al. 1993, 9.

25 Nitschke et al. 2011, 143–144.

26 Eger 2006, 22–25, 45–46, 54; Yankelevitch 2006.

27 Stern 1979: 25–28.

not disturbed until the end of the 4th century BCE[28]. In the first half of the 3rd century BCE, a large fortress and a massive industrial winepress were erected. The structures were arranged according to a different plan and do not show direct continuity with the layout of the previous settlement[29].

New evidence provided by further excavations on the northern hill reconfigured our understanding of the site's stratigraphy. Evidence of the Persian occupation is widespread over the entire kurkar ridge, including the northern hill[30]. This hill was occupied in the early Persian period by a cemetery, but in later phases, it was turned into an industrial, commercial and administrative area which reached a peak when pottery and metal workshops as well as storage and administrative buildings became widespread in the area[31]. This phase is dated to the second half of the 4th century BCE until its decline when Apollonia replaced it in importance[32].

It is difficult to understand whether the site was occupied in the 3rd century BCE, and what was the settlement's extent. Clearly, most of the site was abandoned. According to the excavator, habitation layers were identified in one of the buildings, but the activity is related to the 2nd century BCE according to numismatic evidence. On these grounds, the excavator suggested that, due to the lack of destruction levels, the building was in use without changes from the 3rd century BCE until the mid-2nd century BCE[33].

Jaffa: Persian and Hellenistic settlement remains were extensively excavated at the site. At the end of the Persian period (Visitor Center Phase V), a planned city existed in Jaffa[34]. The next construction (Visitor Center Phase IV) is dated to the 3rd century BCE and follows a new plan[35].

Holot Rishon Le-Zion: This is a crucial site for understanding the transitional phase in the Coastal and Sharon plains. Several excavations were conducted on the site, yielding Persian and early Hellenistic remains[36]. Stratum II features a farmstead with pottery dating to the 5th or 4th century BCE[37]. Stratum I contains a new farmhouse with a different plan that was erected and used between the last quarter of the 4th to the first quarter of the 3rd century BCE[38], more precisely after 301 until 270/280 BCE[39]. Based on the material evidence analyzed in the frame of the historical events, Tal proposed that the site was abandoned together with Jaffa/Joppa and Ashkelon in the first quarter of the 3rd century BCE, suggesting that this was a regional phenomenon that had not been mentioned in the historical record[40].

Tel Yaʿoz: Excavations uncovered the remains of three buildings built of alternate ashlar piers filled with field stones. Two were discovered in Areas C and D, dated to the Persian period[41], and a third one was found in Area A, yielding Hellenistic pottery in the foundation

28 Herzog 1989a, 88–114.

29 Herzog 1989b, 165–173.

30 Gorzalkzany 2006 contra Herzog et al. 1989, 5.

31 Gorzalczany 2006, 12–14.

32 Gorzalczany 2006, 19.

33 Gorzalczany 2006, 14.

34 Burke et al. 2014, 44.

35 Burke et al. 2014.

36 Peilstöcker 2000; Tal 2005; Tal 2014.

37 Tal 2005; Tal 2014, 38.

38 Tal 2014, 35.

39 Tal 2014, 545.

40 Tal 2014, 54.

41 Segal et al. 2006; Fischer et al. 2008.

trenches of walls[42]. After our re-evaluation of the published material, we can conclude that the building in Area A should be dated to the 2nd century BCE and not any earlier. A thick layer of ash covered the buildings in Areas C and D, and the pottery within suggested a date in the late 4th century BCE.

Yavneh-Yam: Domestic structures of the Persian period (Stratum VII) exposed at the site were abandoned in the late Persian period (not later than the arrival of Alexander the Great). The site was resettled with a different plan in the Hellenistic period, but this probably occurred after a certain occupation gap[43].

Ashdod: The city was settled in the Persian period and contained pits, installations, domestic structures and pottery kilns[44]. It is unclear when the site was abandoned, but the pottery found in the kilns is similar to that found in other coastal sites in contexts dated to the late 4th century BCE. New excavations reported three pottery kilns of the Hellenistic period[45]. If this is the case, Ashdod shows a continuity pattern.

Ashkelon: This was one of the significant southern sites in the region. The site shows urban planning and well-built structures in the late Persian period (Grid 38: Phase 10, Grid 50: Phase 3; Grid 57 Phases 4–3)[46]. However, the construction date of this phase is not precise, and it might have been built only in the Hellenistic period. According to numismatic data[47], the phase ended in 290, as evidenced in one area that had been destroyed by fire. The city was soon reconstructed[48].

The North

Banias: While there is limited evidence of occupation at the site during the Persian period[49], much more pottery is found from the Hellenistic period (albeit with no known architectural remains). Written evidence indicates that a shrine already existed there in the Ptolemaic period[50].

Kedesh: A massive administrative center was constructed around 500 BCE. The complex was abandoned in the late 4th century BCE, perhaps due to Alexander's conquest and occupation. A short time later, the same building complex was reoccupied, probably by the Ptolemies[51].

Tel Anafa: Several domestic structures belonging to a small settlement were exposed at the site. The settlement was probably founded in the early 3rd century BCE, possibly during the reign of Ptolemy I[52].

Mizpe Yamim: The Phoenician sanctuary at the site was active from the 5th to the mid-4th century BCE. It was probably abandoned around the time of the Macedonian conquest[53].

42 Fischer et al. 2008: 134, fig. 14.

43 Fischer 2005, 183–190.

44 Dothan 1971, 38–39; Kee 1971; Dothan – Porath 1982, 41–44; Dothan 1993, 101–102; Ben-Shlomo 2005; Mazar – Ben-Shlomo 2005, 59–61.

45 Varga 2005.

46 Stager et al. 2008, 236. 283–290. 316–317. 321–322.

47 Gitler 2008.

48 Stager et al. 2008, 236. 283–290. 316–317. 321–322.

49 Tzaferis 1992, 132*–133*.

50 Berlin 1999, 29–31; Berlin – Herbert 2021.

51 Berlin – Herbert 2012; Berlin – Herbert 2013; Herbet – Berlin 2003; Berlin 2021; Berlin – Herbert 2021.

52 Herbert 1994, 13–14; Berlin 1997a, 7–9. 18–19; Herbert et al. 1997; Berlin – Herbert 2021.

53 Berlin – Frankel 2012, 59; Berlin – Herbert 2021.

Sassa: Many shards and large fragments of vessels from the Persian period (5th–4th centuries BCE) were excavated. The Hellenistic remains were meager and unstratified[54].

Hazor: An impressive citadel was constructed in Area B (Stratum III) in the 7th century BCE and re-used during the Persian period (Stratum II). According to the pottery, the Persian citadel was abandoned sometime in the early Hellenistic period, either in the late 4th or early 3rd century BCE. Later, a smaller Hellenistic citadel was built at this spot[55]. Further remains dating to the Persian period on the tel indicate that there were two phases of occupation; the first phase was when pits and cemeteries covered the site[56] and were sealed by domestic rural houses in Area G[57], and the second phase was on the northern slopes in area M, dated to the 4th century BCE[58]. The settlement was abandoned with no signs of violence.

Ḥorbat ʿUẓa: A large settlement, five hectares in size, was excavated. The remains are relatively scant, but fills from the period were found everywhere. The settlement continued to exist until the end of the Persian period, and the site was then settled from the second half of the 3rd century BCE. There is probably an occupation gap at the site between the two phases[59].

Naḥal Tut: A massive citadel was excavated at the site. It was constructed during the late 4th century BCE, probably immediately after the Hellenistic conquest, and it could have served as a storage depot for the Macedonian army. The author suggests crediting the construction of the fortress to Alexander at the time of his siege of Tyre (333–332 BCE) and its destruction to the time of the revolt of Samaria a year later (332–331 BCE)[60].

Horvat ʿEleq: A fortified complex was constructed in the late Persian or early Hellenistic period, probably in the 4th century BCE. However, as the publication of this site is only preliminary, more accurate construction and abandonment dates are still unavailable[61].

Ḥorvat Roẓeẓ: Four domestic structures were excavated from the late Persian settlement. The excavator dated the settlement to the 4th century BCE, although he also noticed shards from the 3rd century BCE[62]. In our opinion, a few other vessels could also be dated either to the very late 4th or to the early 3rd century BCE[63]. The site was abandoned either slightly before the time of Ptolemy II or during his reign.

The Shephelah and the South

These sites were discussed in detail elsewhere[64]. They are therefore discussed here briefly in order to complete the presented data.

Rosh ha-ʿAyin: A large building, possibly of an administrative nature, was uncovered. It was constructed in the Persian period and abandoned in the very late 4th or early 3rd century BCE[65].

54 Stepansky et al. 1993, 71–73.

55 Yadin et al. 1958, 45–63.

56 Yadin 1972; Sandhaus forthcoming.

57 Yadin et al. 1958; Yadin 1972.

58 Sandhaus forthcoming.

59 Smithline – Getzov 2009, 149–150.

60 Alexandre 2006, 182; 2014.

61 Peleg-Barkat – Tepper 2014; Tepper – Peleg-Barkat 2019.

62 Yannai 2010, 135.

63 Yannai 2010, Fig. 15, 3, 4, 13–14.

64 Sandhaus – Kreimerman 2017; Kreimerman – Sandhaus 2021.

65 Haddad et al. 2015.

Gezer: Based on published material, Stratum IV is represented by a few domestic remains dated to the 5th and 4th centuries BCE[66]. Stratum III was represented mainly by coins and no architectural remains; however, Gitin proposed a meager occupation in the late 3rd century BCE (Stratum III)[67]. A current overview and re-interpretation of the stratigraphy of the Persian and Hellenistic phases is being carried out by Berlin and Sandhaus, based on the unpublished material from the HUC and Tandy excavations. Based on their analysis, the dog cemetery likely dates to the 5th or 4th centuries BCE (Stratum IV) and was overlain by a pottery workshop and kiln, datable from the later 4th to the early 3rd centuries BCE (Stratum III), after which the site was abandoned for several decades[68].

Khirbet Qeiyafa*[69]: In the late Persian period, the site was occupied by several domestic structures built in Areas B and C[70]. These structures were abandoned in the late 4th century BCE, probably shortly after the Macedonian conquest[71]. In the early 3rd century BCE, new domestic structures were built at the site, although in different areas (Areas D and F)[72]. These buildings were abandoned during the reign of Ptolemy II[73].

Khirbat el-Keikh*: According to the excavator in preliminary articles, this settlement was constructed in the early Persian period at the latest and continued without interruption until the early Roman period[74]. A re-interpretation of the stratigraphy refines the processes that occurred in the site. Domestic structures built in the 4th century were abandoned by the end of the century, and two new buildings with a new plan that were built on top of the former by the early 3rd century BCE were abandoned by the mid-3rd century BCE[75].

Khirbat Shumeila*: A large building built in the Persian period was excavated. According to the excavators it continued in use until the early Hellenistic period without interruption and was abandoned shortly afterward[76]. A re-interpretation of the stratigraphy depicts remains of rural installations and a pottery workshop occupied in the 4th century and abandoned in an organized way at the end of the century. A subsequent stratum with new domestic structures was built on top of the former one with a completely new plan. These buildings were abandoned by the mid-3rd century BCE for several decades[77].

ʿAzekah*: Three structures that were constructed in the late Persian period were excavated at the site — two in Area W1 and one in Area S. The two buildings in Area W1 continued with no interruptions until the mid-3rd century BCE, while the abandonment of the structure in Area S is associated with the end of the 4th century BCE[78].

Maresha: The site was one of the primary mounds in the Shephelah region. During the Persian and Hellenistic periods, the site was part of the Idumean territory. Although

66 Dever et al. 1970, 65–68; Dever et al. 1974, 83–86; Gitin 1990, 18–20. 31–32. 229–37; Barag 2014; Gilmour 2014, 16–17.

67 Gitin 1990, 19 and chart, p. 38.

68 Berlin – Sandhaus in preparation.

69 Sites marked with * are studied in detail in Sandhaus 2022.

70 Freikman – Garfinkel 2014, 101–28; Garfinkel – Ganor 2009, 73–78; Kang 2014, 66–76; Garfinkel 2021; Sandhaus 2022.

71 Farhi 2014; Sandhaus – Kreimerman 2015, 251–54; Sandhaus 2022.

72 Hasel 2014, 241–75; Kang 2014, 66–76; Sandhaus 2022, Kreimerman in preparation.

73 Farhi 2014; Sandhaus – Kreimerman 2015, 251–54; Sandhaus 2018; 2022.

74 Kogan-Zehavi 2009; Kogan-Zehavi 2014a; Kogan-Zehavi 2014b.

75 Sandhaus 2018; Sandhaus 2020; Sandhaus 2022.

76 Kogan-Zehavi 2014b.

77 Sandhaus 2018; Sandhaus 2020; Sandhaus 2022.

78 Lipschits et al. 2012; Shatil 2016, 113. 127; Sandhaus 2018; Sandhaus 2020; Sandhaus 2022.

fragmentary, available archaeological remains demonstrate that the site was densely occupied in the Persian period, mainly on the upper mound. However, some remains were found in the lower city, in the tower (Area 100) and its vicinity, in subterranean cave 75, and Area 940, southeast of the upper city[79]. It is unclear how the settlement of the Persian period came to an end; in one place, a layer of ashes was mentioned in the reports, but it is unclear if it is part of the site-wide destruction (or destruction at all)[80]. Occupation continued through the period of Alexander the Great and into the Ptolemaic era[81]. The construction date of the upper and lower cities that were both well-planned cannot be determined with accuracy and need not be the same (the upper city could have been built first). Yet, it seems probable that the lower city had already been built by 280 BCE, during the reign of Ptolemy II[82]. At this stage, it became a major administrative center of the Ptolemaic regime, as known from archaeological and epigraphic finds and the Zenon papyri[83].

Lachish: According to the excavators, Lachish was a significant site in the Persian and Hellenistic periods[84]. However, at the current state, it is impossible to re-evaluate the nature of the transition at the site[85].

Tel ʿEton*: Most of the excavated remains are dated to the late Persian period[86], although some early Hellenistic pottery (contemporary with the late phase of Khirbet Qeiyafa) appears on the surface. Therefore, it seems that either the activity at the site shifted from one area to another or became more limited during the transition[87].

Tel Hesi: Betylon argued in favor of a military logistic center at Tell Hesi during the Persian and early Hellenistic periods – abandoned no later than 275 BCE[88]. Unfortunately, there is still no final publication of the architectural remains and the finds retrieved from the Hellenistic levels. Furthermore, the architectural remains discussed by Betylon consist primarily of refuse pits and structures re-used from previous periods. Therefore, currently, Betylon's suggestion is questionable at best.

En Gedi: According to the excavators, Stratum IV is dated 350–340 BCE[89]. We believe that it could have ended also several years later. It also appears that the site was abandoned in the early 3rd century BCE[90].

Beersheba: The site is characterized by pits dated to the Persian period, in which dozens of ostraca were found. Evidently, some of the ostraca date to the last years of the Persian rule in the region[91]. Some of these pits were sealed by a Hellenistic Temple, allegedly constructed in the late 4th or early 3rd century BCE[92]. However, all the finds, including pottery, stamps and coins, are dated to the 2nd century BCE. Thus, it seems reasonable that the temple was

79 Eshel 2007; Kloner – Stern 2007; Kloner 2010, 13–14.

80 Kloner 1993, 948–949; Kloner 2010, 8.

81 Kloner, personal communication.

82 Kloner 2008; Kloner 2010; Kloner – Zissu 2013, 47–51.

83 Kloner 2008.

84 Ussishkin 2004; Fantalkin – Tal 2004; Fantalkin – Tal 2006.

85 For a detailed discussion, see Sandhaus – Kreimerman 2017; Kreimerman – Sandhaus 2021.

86 Faust et al. 2015, 113.

87 Sandhaus – Kreimerman 2017; Sandhaus 2018; Sandhaus 2020; Sandhaus 2022.

88 Betylon 1991.

89 Matskevich – Stern 2007, 193–197; Stern 2007, 198–242.

90 Kreimerman – Sandhaus 2021.

91 Aharoni 1975, 156–157; Naveh 1973; Naveh 1979.

92 Derfler 1993.

built later, maybe only in the 2nd century BCE, suggesting a gap in Beersheba during the early 3rd century BCE.

The Central Hills

These sites were discussed in detail elsewhere[93], so, they are referenced here briefly in order to complete the presented data.

Shechem: The re-evaluation of the pottery of the site suggests that Stratum V ended in the late Persian period. Stratum IV should therefore be dated from the very late 4th to the early 3rd century BCE (before Ptolemy II) and Stratum III to the early Ptolemaic period[94]. No significant architectural remains from Stratum V are known[95]. In Stratum IV, the city was reconstructed on a large scale and completely rebuilt again in Stratum III[96].

Samaria: Although two expeditions extensively excavated the site, regretfully, no good correlation exists between the architectural and material remains. Although pottery from both the Persian and early Hellenistic periods was found, it is impossible to delineate the exact changes that occurred at the site in the transition between the periods based solely on archaeological finds. Two major construction phases should probably be dated to the early Hellenistic period. In the first stage, rounded towers were added to the Iron Age fortification system, which was probably re-used. At a later stage, the city was reconstructed following a new plan, including a new fortification wall and a grid of domestic structures; it is unclear if this phase should be dated to the 3rd or 2nd century BCE[97].

Mount Gerizim: The site served as a cultic precinct in the Persian and Hellenistic periods. The establishment of the site is securely dated to the mid-5th century BCE. It seems that the site continued without a break until the late 3rd century BCE, at which point it was rebuilt according to a new plan[98].

Wâdī ed-Dâliyeh: A cave at this site was probably used as a shelter for refugees fleeing Samaria after Alexander's conquest[99]. The assemblage of finds counterparts the earlier phase at Khirbet Qeiyafa, which is in keeping with the excavators' interpretation.

Jerusalem: Detailed summaries of the finds uncovered in Jerusalem were published[100]. Few architectural remains can be associated with the Persian and early Hellenistic periods. Published reports of the Shiloh excavations record some remains of dwellings with a few floors attributed to the Persian–early Hellenistic period (Strata IX and VIII)[101]. Until recently, the consensus among scholars was that only the upper part of the City of David was inhabited. However, new evidence from excavations in the Givati parking lot led to a re-interpretation of the finds of the Persian and Hellenistic periods in Jerusalem[102]. Persian period occupation was identified in the re-use and clearances of some of the rooms of the previous ashlar building destroyed in 586 BCE[103]. Remains of a massive building and a few structures associated with

93 Sandhaus – Kreimerman 2017; Kreimerman – Sandhaus 2021.

94 Sandhaus – Kreimerman 2017.

95 Campbell 2002, 299–309.

96 Campbell 2002, 311–42.

97 Crowfoot et al. 1942, 24–31; Crowfoot et al. 1957; Cross 1974; and see Tal 2006, 20–22 for discussion of the chronology.

98 Magen 2007, 157–212; Magen 2008, 167–180.

99 Lapp – Lapp 1974, 7–29.

100 See Finkelstein 2008, 501–520; Finkelstein 2009, 9–13; Lipschits 2009; Lipschits 2011, 163–175; De Groot 2012, 173–175; Ussishkin 2012, 101–130; Ristau 2016, 15–28; Shalev at al. 2021.

101 Shiloh 1984, 14. 20–21; Berlin 2012; De Groot – Bernick-Greenberg 2012; Zuckerman 2012.

102 Shalev et al. 2021.

103 Shalev et al. 2021.

the early 3rd century BCE were also uncovered in the excavations of Gadot and Shalev[104], and in those of Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets[105]. After a thorough analysis, Shalev and his colleagues proposed that the Persian period town re-used Iron Age structures and occupied the Western Hill, not only the Eastern Hill as was thought earlier[106]. As for the early Hellenistic period, the research is just at its starting point. It seems that, in the meantime, there is insufficient published material to discuss the settlement nature in each of the periods or the changes that took place in the transition between them.

Khirbet er-Ras: One excavated structure was from the late Persian period and continued to exist without a break until the early Hellenistic period[107].

Ramat Rahel: A large administrative complex built in the early Persian period was uncovered at the site. It might have suffered destruction at the end of the period. No architectural remains from the early Hellenistic period were found[108].

Har Adar: A large building uncovered here was interpreted as a fortress and it probably remained in continuous use during the transition between the 4th and 3rd centuries BCE[109].

Ḥurvat ʿEres: The fortress at the site was most probably built in the late Persian period and abandoned in the early Hellenistic period, presumably during the time of Ptolemy II[110].

Beth Zur: Although it is difficult to attribute the pottery to a stratified context, the evidence from the coins and the pottery suggests that the site was occupied both in the Persian and Hellenistic periods, possibly without interruption[111].

Jabel Nimra: A massive, two-phase building was excavated at the site. The later phase was destroyed by fire at the end of the 4th century BCE[112].

Discussion

Figure 1 summarizes the results in graphic form. The above survey shows that 41 sites[113] existed in the late Persian period compared to 28 in the early Hellenistic period, a decrease of 32%. Furthermore, only 11 out of 41 sites (27%) continued with no interruption and without any considerable change in plan[114]. 23 out of 41 sites that existed in the Persian period were abandoned in the late 4th century BCE, about 55% of the number of total sites[115]. Out of these, 17 were abandoned for a prolonged period of time (or abandoned altogether), and six others show at least a short occupation gap before their reconstruction in the Ptolemaic period (before or during the reign of Ptolemy II). Only three new sites were established from scratch during the transition – Tel Anafa, the Paneion, and Nahal Tut (which was also destroyed).

104 Shalev et al. 2021.

105 Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets, personal communication.

106 Shalev et al. 2021.

107 Gadot 2015.

108 Lipschits et al. 2011, 34–37.

109 Dadon 1997; Gitler 1997, 80–81.

110 Mazar – Wachtel 2015, 239–240.

111 Sellers et al. 1968.

112 Hizmi – Shabtai 1994.

113 Note that Lachish, Jerusalem and Tel Hesi are not included in the count as the nature of the transition is unclear. We decided to keep them in the review here due to their importance.

114 Note that for five of these sites evidence is not clear cut (see **fig. 1**).

115 Note that two of the sites – Ḥorvat Roẓeẓ and Rishon Le-Zion – might have been abandoned only in the early 3rd century.

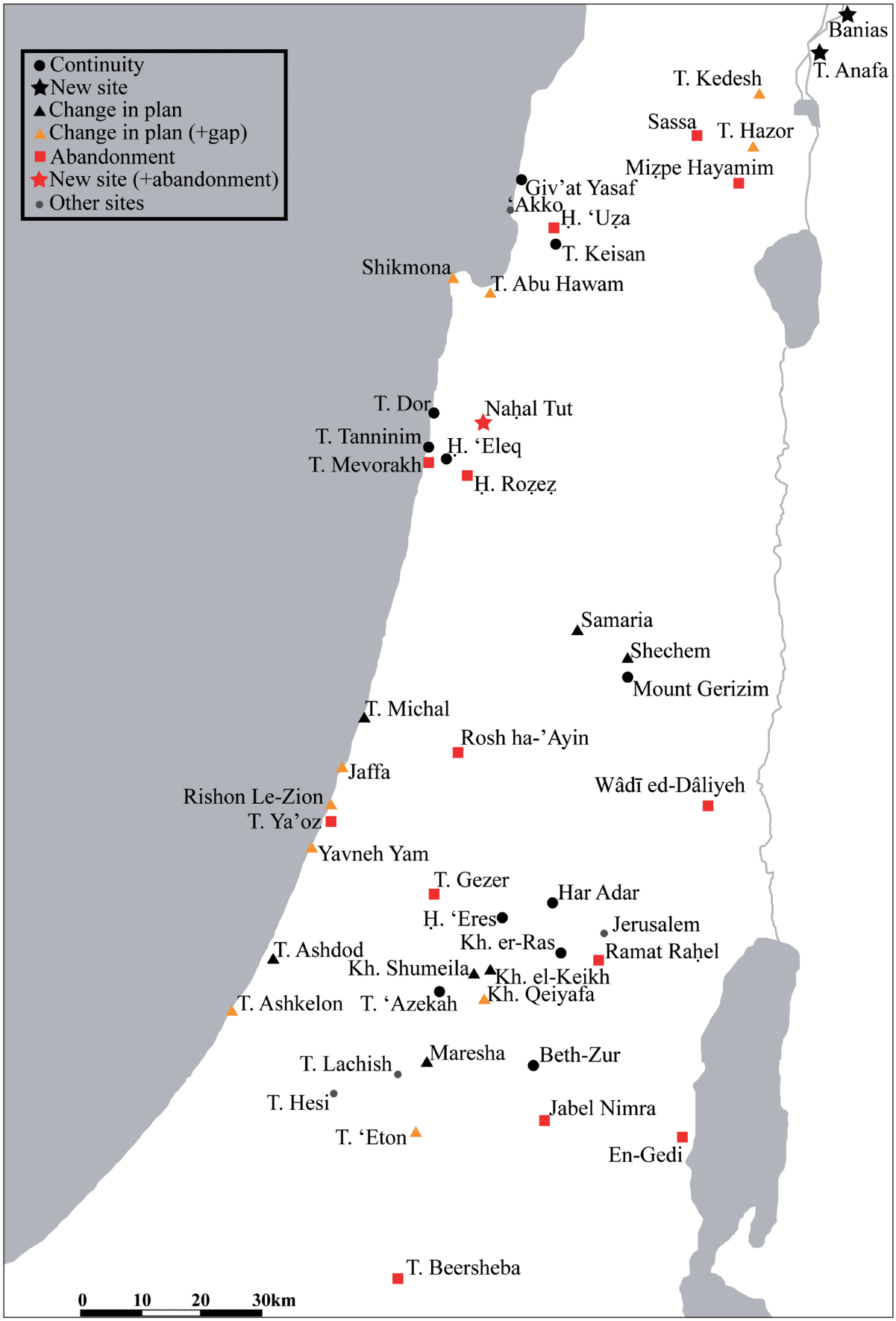
Continuity
New site
Change in plan
Change in plan (+gap)
Abandonment
New site (+abandonment)
Other sites
Banias
T. Anafa
T. Kedesh
Sassa
T. Hazor
Mizpe Hayamim
Giv'at Yasaf
'Akko
Ḥ. 'Uza
T. Keisan
Shikmona
T. Abu Hawam
T. Dor
Naḥal Tut
T. Tanninim
Ḥ. 'Eleq
T. Mevorakh
Ḥ. Rozez
Samaria
Shechem
Mount Gerizim
T. Michal
Rosh ha-'Ayin
Jaffa
Wâdī ed-Dâliyeh
Rishon Le-Zion
T. Ya'oz
Yavneh Yam
T. Gezer
Har Adar
Ḥ. 'Eres
Jerusalem
Kh. er-Ras
Ramat Raḥel
T. Ashdod
Kh. Shumeila
Kh. el-Keikh
T. Ashkelon
T. 'Azekah
Kh. Qeiyafa
T. Lachish
Maresha
Beth-Zur
T. Hesi
Jabel Nimra
T. 'Eton
En-Gedi
T. Beersheba
0 10 20 30km

Fig. 1

To sum up, the settlement patterns show a sharp decrease of about 50% in the number of sites in the late 4th century BCE, with a partial recovery in the early 3rd century BCE. How can these trends be explained? In order to understand these patterns, a closer look at the military and administrative activity in the area is required[116].

After the death of Alexander, the Land of Israel was overrun several times by various armies. The first was Perdiccas, who invaded Egypt in 321/320 BCE and faced Ptolemy Soter. His soldiers assassinated him[117]. Next, probably in 320 BCE[118]. Ptolemy Soter captured Syria from Laomedon, the first satrap of Syria. Several different sources describe the events; while Diodorus claims that Ptolemy sent a general named Nicanor who marched into Syria and took Laomedon captive. *Appian's Syrian Wars* (52) argues that it was Ptolemy himself who arrived in Syria with a fleet to negotiate with Laomedon. After the latter refused to hand Syria to Ptolemy in exchange for a large sum of money, he seized him[119]. Be the actual events as they may; it is clear that Ptolemy was able to conquer Syria and position some garrison troops in it[120].

In 315 BCE, Antigonus captured Phoenicia from Ptolemy Soter, probably after the latter retreated from all the Syrian cities except Tyre. Antigonus then began building ships to besiege Tyre and, in the meanwhile, stormed and captured the cities of Joppa (Jaffa) and Gaza. After a siege lasting for a year and three months and ending in the autumn of 314 BCE, Ptolemy's garrison in Tyre agreed to evacuate[121]. In 312 BCE, Ptolemy, with Seleucus, launched a campaign to regain the lost territories in Phoenicia. They first faced the forces of Demetrius, Antigonus' son, near Gaza, and after winning the battle, captured the city. They continued northwards and captured cities in Phoenicia either by siege or negotiations, and later also captured Sidon and Tyre[122]. In the same year, Demetrius again marched against Ptolemy and defeated Cilles, a general that Ptolemy sent against him. After hearing the news about Antigonus' decision to join his son with large forces, Ptolemy retreated to Egypt. On his way to Egypt, he razed four prominent cities to prevent them from falling into his enemies' hands: Akko, Jaffa, Samaria, and Gaza[123].

In 306 BCE, Antigonus gathered a large army and marched to Egypt. At Gaza, he was joined by Demetrius with additional forces, and they crossed the Sinai desert to face Ptolemy, but they failed to cross the Nile and retreated to Syria[124]. While Antigonus and Demetrius were busy with other events leading to the Battle of Ipsus, Ptolemy captured Syrian cities aside from Tyre and Sidon. Due to a rumor of Antigonus' victory, he retreated to Egypt but left garrisons in the central Syrian cities. The fact that Tyre and Sidon remained in Demetrius' hands probably allowed him to send a force to devastate Samaria at about 298/296 BCE[125]. Ptolemy was able to exploit the situation after the Battle of Ipsus to retain the territories he

116 See summary on the Ptolemaic foreign relations in Fischer-Bovet 2021.

117 *Diod.* 18, 29. 33–36; Errington 1970: 65; Roisman 1984, 380.

118 See Wheatley's 1995 study concerning dating, especially important is the numismatic data from Sidon.

119 *Diod.* 18, 43.

120 Wheatley 1995.

121 *Diod.* 19, 58. 59. 61; for chronology see Wheatley 1998, contra Errington 1977.

122 *Diod.* 19, 80–86; *Plut. Demetr.* 5; see also McKenchie 2018, 42.

123 *Diod.* 19, 93; *Plut. Demetr.* 6; Champion 2014.

124 *Diod.* 20, 73–76; *Plut. Demetr.* 19.

125 *Hier. Chron. a. Abr.* 121.

captured in Syria. Several years later, he was able to capture Tyre and Sidon[126] *Josephus* tells the story in which Ptolemy takes over Jerusalem by deceit. He then transferred prisoners from Samaria and Judaea to Egypt[127].

Although these events were the last known struggles of the Diadochi in Syria, after the death of Ptolemy I Soter and Seleucus I, rivalries resumed in a series of wars – ›the Syrian Wars‹. In 274 BCE, Ptolemy II invaded Syria, but his troops ultimately retreated. Antiochus, in response, planned to invade Egypt but eventually abandoned his plans due to an economic crisis[128]. There is no evidence of armies crossing through Palestine during the Second Syrian War, although there might be evidence of a Ptolemaic maritime invasion of northern Syria and Cilicia[129].

This summary demonstrates that the period under discussion could be divided into two parts from a military point of view. The first part between 321 and 296 BCE is one of unrelenting military confrontation. The second part, from 296 BCE to the end of the reign of Ptolemy II, is one of relative stability with no record of open battles.

Although many battles were fought in this fiery period, most of them took place in the central Levant or Egypt, and only a few were fought in the southern Levant. The destruction of cities in the southern Levant was also a relatively rare event. Antigonus stormed and captured Jaffa and Gaza, Ptolemy I destroyed Akko, Jaffa, Samaria, and Gaza upon his retreat, Demetrius captured and destroyed Samaria and Ptolemy I captured Jerusalem (through deceit) and deported prisoners from Samaria and Judaea to Egypt. Notably, except for the Samaritan revolt and the evidence found in the cave at Wadi ed-Daliyah, none of these other events could be recognized archaeologically. Jaffa and ʻAkko do not show continuity between the Persian and early Hellenistic periods, and these changes might be associated with the described events. However, it should be stressed that no violent destruction by fire could be traced in the reports.

The effects of warfare and siege are well-known. The cities that resisted and their surroundings were affected dramatically by warfare. If a city was conquered, some people might have been executed, and sometimes, but not always, the city was destroyed[130]. The population of the conquered cities was at times expelled to other areas[131]. When it was long enough, the siege itself could bring about starvation, the outbreak of epidemics, and societal tensions within the city[132]. While the large cities were besieged, the countryside was severely damaged. The besieging army had to feed itself either by using the supply in storehouses of nearby towns that gave access to these resources either wilfully or after a raid, or the produce in the fields could be harvested and consumed[133]. Livestock and slaves were also targeted and captured, mostly as a form of booty[134]. In many cases, the besieging army used to intimidate the local population and loot abandoned houses for spoil[135], or create pressure on the besieged

126 *Diod.* 21, 5; *Polybius* 5, 67. It seems that Demetrius was able to keep Sidon and Tyre after the battle of Ipsus (*Plut. Demetr.* 32) and that these cities were captured eventually by Ptolemy I, but the dating cannot be inferred with certainty from the literary sources. For two different suggestions for dating based on numismatic evidence, see Lorber 2012 and Wheatley 2003 with references to earlier works and other suggestions.

127 *Ios. ant. Iud.* 12, 1.

128 Bernard 1990, 532–536; Hölbl 2001, 40.

129 Grainger 2010, 122–124.

130 Eph'al 2013, 48–68; Kreimerman 2016; Kreimerman 2022.

131 van Wees 2010; van Wees 2011.

132 Foxhall 1993; Eph'al 2013, 48–68.

133 Garlan 1975, 137–145; Chandezon 1999; Chaniotis 2005, 122.

134 Chandezon 1999, 198–199; Kreimerman 2022.

135 Chandezon 1999, 196.

ruler and force him to fight or surrender. Sometimes, this pressure also consisted of damaging crops, fields, and agricultural installations[136].

Such actions demoralized the besieged people and created internal turmoil in the cities. In turn, this situation made travel on the roads unsafe and the cultivation of the fields risky. These processes harmed trade and significantly reduced the yield of the fields. The latter effects were felt even if the siege was unsuccessful and the besieger had to retreat. Therefore, after a period of warfare, the attacked area had to coup with less available financial resources, but with a higher demand for such resources, since ruined cities, fortifications, villages, fields, and orchards had to be rehabilitated[137].

Yet, more relevant for our case is that the area was overrun at least eleven times by armies. As the carrying capacity of marching armies was limited, most of the food had to be acquired while on the road. The food was either purchased or retrieved from the land. Furthermore, soldiers did not always behave morally and sometimes ravaged the land they were passing through or stayed at for personal profit[138].

In other words, conflicts involve both military and economic aspects. The acquisition and exploitation of new territories, as well as the potential of seizing booty, were fundamental considerations when it was decided to wage war[139]. Military power was used to increase economic wealth, which, in turn, was used to increase the military and political power of the state[140]. Coele Syria and Phoenicia were highly prized territories for both strategic and economic reasons and, therefore, control over them was disputed between the Seleucids and Ptolemies[141]. Due to the economic importance of Coele Syria and Phoenicia, armies crossed through the area repeatedly, causing the economy to be exhausted and drained. Notably, according to the written sources, the main sites that were hit were ʻAkko, Jaffa, and Gaza, located on the coast – probably the most important area from an economic point of view.

Economically, the period could also be divided into two. In the first time frame, between 333 and 296 BCE, economic investments were relatively low. There is no evidence to suggest that Alexander was much bothered with administrative issues and continued to use the same administrative system of the Persian Empire throughout the conquered lands[142]. It seems that Ptolemy I also retained the organization and administration of his territories as they were in the Persian period[143]. The Aramaic ostraca from Idumea also indicates that the same tax collection system as in the time of the Persian administration was used during the first decades after the Macedonian conquest[144].

Besides quelling the Samaritan rebellion in Samaria and settling some Macedonian soldiers, we do not know about many other administrative actions in the late 4th century BCE. Possibly, the city of Gerasa was founded by Alexander or by his general Perdiccas. The evidence for this theory is from the Roman period[145], and it was suggested that the association of the city

136 Foxhall 1993; Hanson 1998; Chaniotis 2005, 122; Eph'al 2013, 48–54. Due to the physical difficulty in destroying crops and cutting trees, some scholars suggested that the economic effect might have been marginal (Foxhall 1993; Hanson 1998), but some scholars believe that the damage could be formidable (see Thorne 2007, with references therein). However, the actions demoralized the besieged people and created internal turmoil in the cities.

137 Chaniotis 2005, 127–128.

138 Grainger 1991, 50–51; Austin 2001, 92; Chaniotis 2005, 124–125.

139 Austin 1986, 460–461; Finely 1999, 204–207; Chaniotis 2005, 129–140.

140 Garlan 1975, 183.

141 Austin 1986, 461.

142 Bosworth 1993, 229; Shipley 2000, 39; Welles 1965, 219.

143 Hölbl 2001, 25–26.

144 Lemaire 2007, 56.

145 Welles 1938, 423; Seyrig 1965, 25–28; Cohen 2006, 248. 404.

with Alexander and Perdiccas is a mere legend and that the city was founded by Antiochus III or Antiochus IV[146]. It is also possible that Perdiccas established forts in Transjordan[147].

The lack of investment in the development of the economy is probably due to the diversion of all existing means to waging war. Settlements in the region had to recover from the repeated campaigns that exhausted their supplies and damaged the fields. Any surplus had to go into sustaining and recovering the existing settlements rather than to the foundation of new settlements or investments in infrastructure and beauraucracy.

Only from the time of Ptolemy II do we see more investment in the foundation of cities, minting, and administration. Nysa-Scytopolis (Beth-She'an), Akko (Ptolemais), Philoteria (Bet Yerah), and Philadelphia (Rabat Ammon) were founded[148]. Archaeologically, we know that Akko expanded beyond the limits of the tel already in the Persian period (but grew in size in the 3rd century BCE), and Nysa-Scythopolis was probably a relatively small settlement in the early 3rd century BCE[149]. Indeed, it is possible that these foundations were mainly a formal procedure that included granting minting rights rather than establishing cities from scratch[150]. In Bet Yerah, evidence of the early phase, probably from the mid-3rd century BCE, comes from Rhodian amphorae handles, pottery forms, and coins found mainly in fills. There is no clear mid-3rd century BCE architectural phase[151].

Generally, the Ptolemaic regime recognized and was dependent upon local elites, giving them a certain level of autonomy in handling local matters and respecting earlier arrangements[152]. However, we do see much more involvement in the affairs in the area[153]. This direct involvement is especially evident in the Zenon Papyri, where a high Egyptian official, Zenon, was sent to Palestine to take care of economic and administrative matters and improve the economic yield of the area. Another attestation for the extension of the Egyptian bureaucracy down to the village level is also seen in the decree of Ptolemy II issued in his 24th year[154].

It should be noted that despite Ptolemaic involvement in the local affairs, its control was still limited, which is best exemplified by the affair in which Zenon bought slaves from two brothers in Maresha. Three slaves escaped and returned to their former owners who demanded further payment before returning them to Zenon. Zenon's pleas to local officials seem to have been ineffective, suggesting that local elites and strong families retained much of their power against the central administration[155]. Clearly, the existing elites used their power to hinder any attempts to reorganize the economy that would, naturally, come at the expense of their influence.

To summarize, the second period from approximately 296 BCE to the end of the reign of Ptolemy II is characterized by more economic and administrative investments, especially seen in the massive construction activities at Tel Michal, Kedesh, Shechem, possibly in Samaria and especially in Maresha[156]. These investments explain the partial recovery of the settlement system. Yet, growth was not the only characteristic of this period. Some sites, including

146 Lichtenberger 2003, 315–316.

147 Fuks 1983, 15–16.

148 Fuks 1983, 22–23; Tal 2006, 6.

149 Mazor – Atrash 2017; Mazor et al. 2018.

150 Tal 2011.

151 Tal 2018, 115–117.

152 Bevan 1968, 157–158; Bagnall 1976, 9–10; Manning 2003, 130–133; Grabbe 2008, 186; Grabbe 2011, 86–90.

153 Grabbe 2008, 173–176.

154 Grabbe 2008, 215. 292–293; Berlin – Herbert 2021.

155 Tscherikower 1937, 40–42.

156 See a detailed discussion on southern Phoenicia in Berlin – Herbert 2021.

Ḥurvat ʻEres, Khirbet Qeiyafa, and possibly Ḥorvat Roẓeẓ, Tel ʻEton and Rishon Le-Zion were abandoned during this period, bringing the total number of sites at the end of Ptolemy II's reign to 25, still over 30% less than the number of sites in the Persian period.

Conclusions

One of the aims of the paper was to explain the alleged differences between a picture of decline and stagnation drawn from historical sources and a picture of prosperity drawn from archaeological evidence. Our analysis has demonstrated that, in fact, both sources draw the same picture, namely that while the transition from the Persian to the Hellenistic period in Israel was not violent, it was not smooth either and was generally characterized by decline.

The eighty years from Alexander's conquest to the end of Ptolemy II's reign could be divided into two. The first period is from Alexander's conquest until the end of the struggles of the Diadochi. Historical and archaeological evidence shows that this period was dominated by massive armies continually crossing over and ravaging the land with no means left for investment and development. Indeed, few new sites were founded, no changes were made in the administration, and the abandonment of many of the sites indicates that this was a period of instability, insecurity and decline.

The second period is after 296 BCE and throughout the reign of Ptolemy II. Literary evidence shows that cities were founded and that Egypt's general regime was involved in administrative matters in the land of Israel. Still, local elites retained much power. Some of the abandoned sites before 296 BCE were resettled, although not necessarily by the same people who abandoned them. Nevertheless, the number of sites was still 30% lower than in the Persian period, and there is no evidence of growth in settlement size (except possibly in Maresha) or the expansion of sites beyond the mounds. In other words, while it is not entirely inaccurate to describe these periods as a time of prosperity, the prosperity is only relative to the situation in the late 4th century BCE.

New studies applying the same approach to later phases of the Hellenistic period were published in specific areas and are being conducted in the present in order to evaluate the growth and prosperity of settlement sites in the Hellenistic period[157].

The changes in our understanding of the transition between the Persian and early Hellenistic periods were facilitated mainly by the adopted methodology. As previously shown, excavation data are much more reliable than those collected in surveys. They also allow for more accurate dating of the examined sites. It is worth considering applying similar methodologies to other periods and trying to consider giving up the use of surveys altogether as a means for studying settlement patterns in such a densely excavated area as Israel.

157 Sandhaus 2018; Sandhaus 2021; Sandhaus 2022.

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