

The Emergence of Early Phoenicia

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Abstract

The transition from the Iron Age I to the Iron Age IIA during the 10th century BCE was a period of profound political and socio-economic transformations in the Levant. One of these developments was the emergence of early Phoenicia. In its course, Phoenicia emanated as an interface of international exchange connecting Mediterranean and continental economies of the Levant (for the latest synthesis examining Phoenicians see Sader 2019). This had a profound impact on the societies of the Southern Levant in general and ancient Israel in particular. Phoenician influence was not just marginal for the history of ancient Israel but developed into an integral component of Israelite economic and political history.

KEYWORDS: Phoenicians, Mediterranean connectivity, maritime trade, corporate communities, Iron Age I–IIA

1. Introduction: Who Are the Phoenicians?

Studying the emergence of “Phoenicia” is hampered by the fact that this notion defies easy definition.¹ What is to be considered “Phoenician”? What constituted

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the identity of people that we think of as “Phoenicians?” The preeminent aspect of what we call today “Phoenician” is its etic nature. The notion was entirely constructed by someone else and not by the “Phoenicians” themselves. There is no evidence that “Phoenicians” saw themselves as a distinct people or an ethnic group during the Iron Age (Quinn 2017). Rather, in self-representations they identified themselves with their communities as “Byblians,” “Sidonians,” or “Tyrians.”

In some approaches, the definition of “Phoenician” is reduced to a narrow set of reified cultural subsets such as the alphabetic textual record of the first millennium BCE and its occurrences, focusing on “Phoenician” texts, writing, and language. Others address the archaeological evidence and the distribution of particular artifacts that are, often on grounds of historical assumptions rather than archaeological evidence, considered “Phoenician.” Yet another debate focuses on the question whether the Phoenician phenomenon should include the second millennium or only the first millennium BCE (Hachmann 1983; Killebrew 2019). The literature dealing with the subject of defining “Phoenicians” and “Phoenicia” is vast (Pastor-Borgoñon 1988–90; Winter 2010).

The corpus of material culture assigned to the “Phoenicians” is extensive, yet often uncritically identified as such and perpetuated in archaeological research. Much of the assumed material “Phoenician” heritage comes in fact from collections and the antiquities market. Handling such decontextualized texts and archaeological artifacts has created “mega-catalogues” of “Phoenician culture” (Vella 2014: 25), yet provided little insight into the identity and historical development of the ancient societies involved. Original local political distinctions, different dialects, and regional variations of the material culture have been often lumped together with little regard to their change over time and the identities and aspirations of the peoples that lived in and created what we consider the “Phoenician world.”

It is heuristically interesting to compare “the Phoenicians” with “the Greeks” and their diverse ethnic and cultural distinctions. Jonathan M. Hall has demonstrated that “Hellenic identity” developed through a long and complex process (Hall 2002). While many aspects of “Greekness” are essentially different from what we know empirically about “the Phoenicians,” there seem to be comparable elements of homogeneity and dissent, rivalry and accordance, in the use of cultural practices endowed with shared symbolic signification in both worlds.

1.1. What, Then, Is the “Phoenician” in the Approach Here?

This paper is not operating with an assumption of “Phoenician” ethnicity. To be meaningful in human interaction, identity in antiquity was first of all a social

construct and only secondarily an ethnic phenomenon with genetic kinship.² Rather than reifying the concept of “Phoenician” culture through a catalogue of archaeological artifacts, “Phoenicia” represents in this view social, economic, political, and technological practices that changed dynamically over time. This is what Ayelet Gilboa (personal communication) calls the “Phoenician process.” The preeminent aspect of early “Phoenicia” on which this paper focuses is the political economy of its communities and their mercantile character with its specific integration of entrepreneurship and trade with agriculture and manufacture.

I argue that a distinct differentiation of commercial and political structures emerged in Iron Age II that came to characterize the internal organization of individual and independent “Phoenician” civic states (Sherratt and Sherratt 1993: 361). In following suggestions by Bourdieu and Giddens, I am focusing on processes of structuration of practices and habitus that produced and reproduced the symbolic and material ordering of the social world that was conceived by external observers as the “Phoenician” or “Sidonian” way (Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1993: Chapter 2). Early “Phoenician” communities mirrored one another in their political economies, in the – conscious and unconscious – practices of production and reproduction of their material culture, and in their habitus connected with urban and architectural expressions, their ceramics and their symbols. These practices were mutually recognizable but did not imply political unity or integrated ethnicity. The purpose of this paper is to discuss these practices in their changes over time during the Early Iron Age.

1.2. Chronology

In this paper, the “Early Iron Age” of the Southern Levant is understood as lasting from Iron Age I through Late Iron Age IIA. The paper does not focus on chronological issues. Over the last 15 years, major studies have provided new insights into the development and the relative date of early Iron Age ceramics in the northern region of the Southern Levant and Phoenicia. The main contributions derive from the studies of Ayelet Gilboa and Eran Arie (Gilboa and Sharon 2003; Arie 2006; 2013a; 2013b; Gilboa 2018). These works have analyzed the stratified evidence from Dor and Megiddo, providing a backbone for the relative chronology and stratigraphy of our study region as outlined in Table 1. The column “Southern

2. Recently demonstrated once again by a comprehensive DNA study of individuals who were archaeologically “Vikings” but genetically “Saamian” (Margaryan et al. 2020; see also Barth 1969; Emberling 1997; Jones 1997; or Haber et al. 2020).

Phoenicia” refers to the chronology established by the Dor Expedition (Gilboa and Sharon 2003).

Table 1. Chronological overview.

Periods used here	Alternative terminology	Southern Phoenicia	Approximate absolute dates
Late Bronze Age IIB	Late Bronze Age IIB	LB IIB	Ends 1200/1190 BCE
Late Bronze Age III	Iron Age IA or Late Bronze Age/Iron Age I transition	LB Ir	1200/1190–1130 BCE
Iron Age I	Iron Age IB	Ir1a early Ir1a late Ir1a b Ir1b	1130–975/925 BCE
Iron Age IIA early	Iron Age IIA	Ir1 2	975/925–880 BCE
Iron Age IIA late		Ir2a	880–830/800 BCE

The increasing numbers of radiocarbon dates for the early Iron Age have resulted in a more precise comprehension of the absolute chronology (Table 1), also allowing a better correlation of the archaeological record with historical data. The chronology, however, is far from being settled. The interpretation of the absolute dates and their impact on reconstructing the history of ancient Israel and its neighbors is still the object of vigorous debate.³

2. Early Iron Age I Settlement Patterns

Early Phoenicia emerged with a particular political economy⁴ that developed during the Iron Age I along the Mediterranean coast of the central Levant that was to become the land of “Phoenicia” and its periphery. Archaeological correlates for this process are the settlement patterns and the material culture of small urban communities with an emerging entrepreneurial trading sector embedded in agriculture and manufacture.

Substantial changes in the settlement pattern mark the beginning of Iron Age I in the northern coastal plain of the Southern Levant. The archaeological data for the reconstruction of the settlement pattern derives from the excavations

3. Mazar 2005; 2008; 2011; Sharon et al. 2007; Finkelstein and Piasezky 2011; Toffolo et al. 2014; Fantalkin et al. 2015.

4. This approach recurs to Max Weber’s concept of political economy (Sozialökonomik) (Weber 2019: 64).



Fig. 1. Map of excavated and surveyed archaeological sites relevant to this paper.

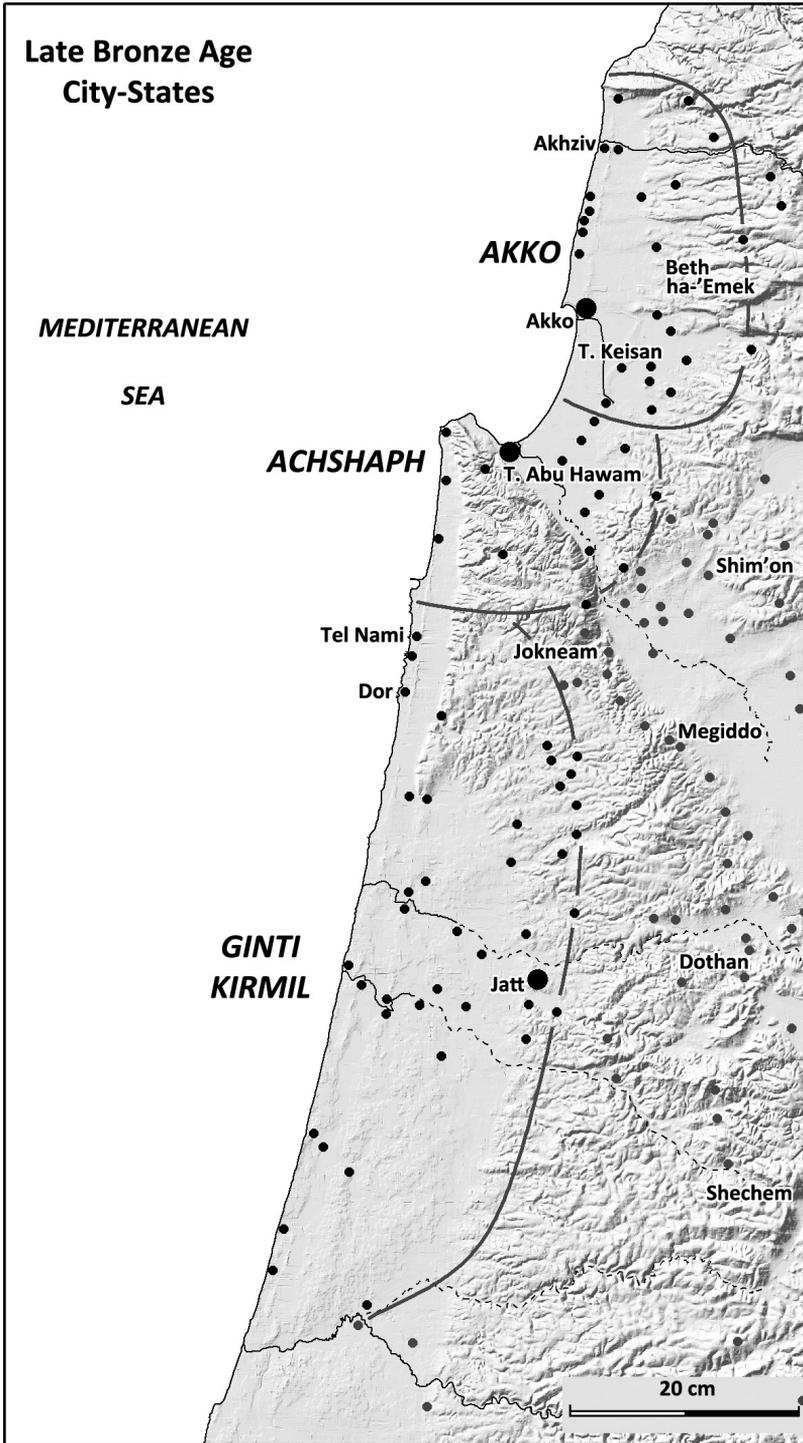


Fig. 2. Map of Late Bronze Age polities on the northern coast of the Southern Levant with approximate outlines of their territories.

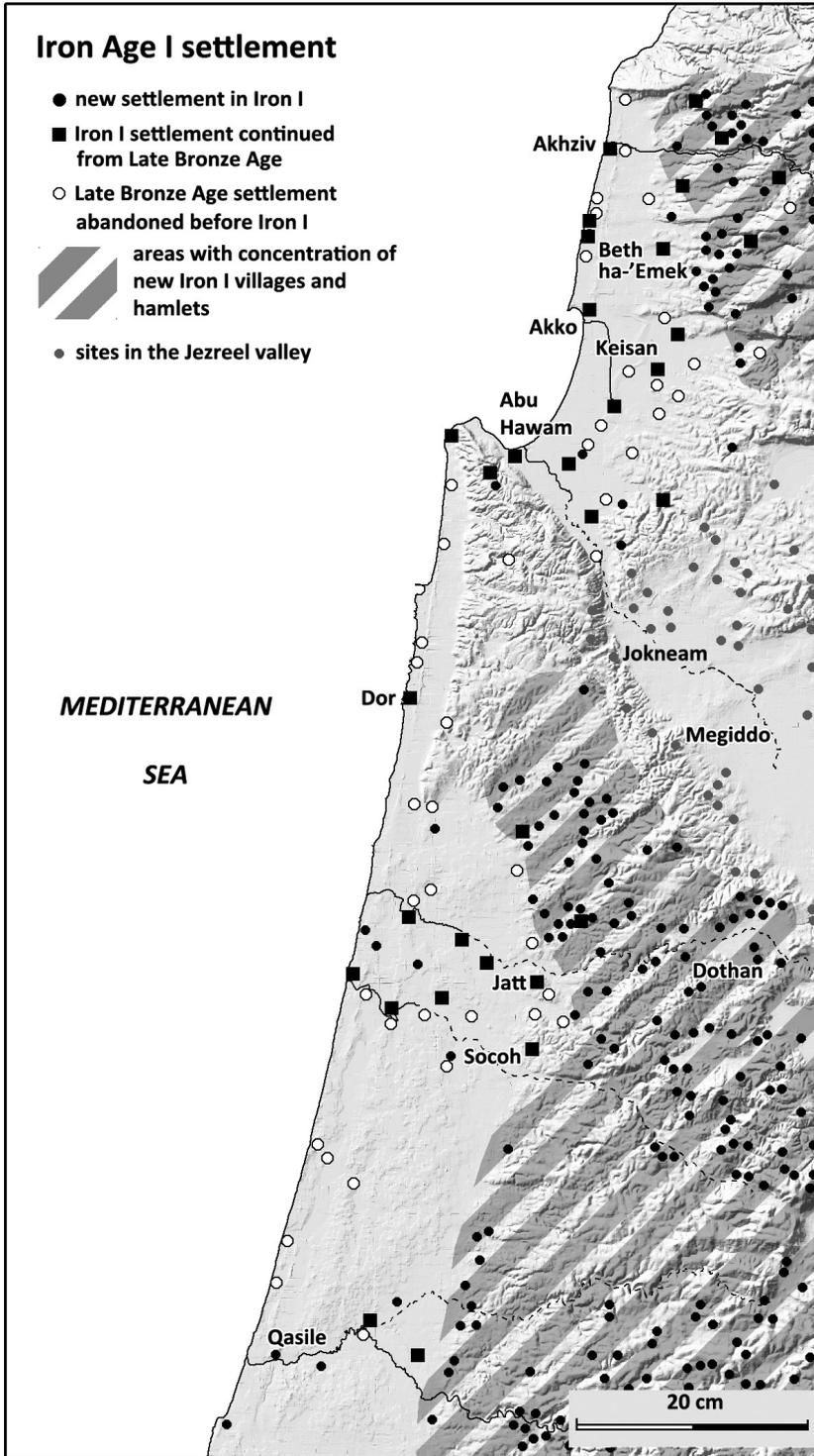


Fig. 3. Map of Iron Age I settlement pattern (without sites in the Jezreel Valley).

discussed below and comprehensive archaeological surveys. These include the Archaeological Survey of Israel⁵ and regional studies (Fig. 1).⁶ The survey data alone most probably does not represent a complete record of the ancient settlement. However, the data is complemented by numerous excavations in the region, which provide a dense archaeological record hardly matched by any other region in the Near East.

The data demonstrates that the settlement system around the Late Bronze Age city-states⁷ (Fig. 2) was relinquished at the end of the period, and abandoned Late Bronze Age villages dotted the coastal plain. The old settlement pattern was replaced by new small hamlets in new locations on the foothills of the mountains (Fig. 3). Larger rural sites located in the coastal plain that survived the end of the Late Bronze Age and continued in the Iron Age I were mostly larger villages or small towns with a size of 1–5 hectares. These were once the middle-tier sites in the now vanished hierarchy of the Late Bronze Age city-state settlement pattern. Now, in the Iron Age I, these sites were the largest settlements in the coastal plain, while essentially remaining villages in size.

These small settlements, which were now at the top of the settlement hierarchy, became the focus of “urban” communities in the northern coastal plain during the Iron Age I. Among these sites was Tell Qasile at the mouth of the Yarkon River (Mazar 1985). During Strata XII through X, Qasile was a tiny fortified town of 1.4 hectares with a population of probably 400–500 inhabitants.⁸ Despite its small size, the excavations exposed fortifications and a temple surrounded by domestic quarters. Fortifications and temples were traditionally connected with urban communities during the preceding Late Bronze Age. There is no evidence for a ruler’s residence at Qasile, but the excavations may have missed such a building. Small rulers’ residences representing the “palaces” of Iron Age city-state rulers have been identified at other small Iron Age I towns, e.g., Megiddo Strata VIB and VIA. Notable is the new local Four-Room House tradition at Qasile, while the temple is an exotic unparalleled structure in the region, possibly influenced by eastern Mediterranean traditions (Mazar 2000).

Avraham Faust (2019: 123–125) conceptualized the ethnic identities of Tell

5. The data is conveniently accessible at http://survey.antiquities.org.il/index_Eng.html#/.

6. Porath et al. 1985; Gal 1992; Frankel et al. 2001; see also Lehmann 2008: 47–48 for more references.

7. For the Late Bronze Age city-states see Elayi 2018: 67–68.

8. Applying an average estimate of 150 to 300 persons per hectare (Broshi and Finkelstein 1992; Zorn 1994 with references; Schloen 2001: 165–183 with references; Chamberlain 2006: 126–128).

Qasile as a dichotomy between Philistine and Canaanite ethnicities. Faust correctly distinguished the variability of the material culture in the cult Area C from that of the neighboring domestic neighborhood of Area A. I essentially agree with Faust that “whether any Philistines lived at Tel Qasile or not, the finds at Tel Qasile suggest the interaction of at least two different groups at the same site” (Faust 2019: 125). Yet, beyond reducing this variability exclusively to a duality of ethnicity and group identity in the community, it can also be explained in terms of situational and contextual patterns of behavior of one and the same community at Qasile. Whether there were one or more group identities at the site, I conceptualize this complex population as joining one another in mutually attaching meaning to objects from different cultural origins, some “foreign,” some part of their own heritage. What characterizes the community at Qasile is the integration of the “other” in a multivocal collective, a “drawing on the symbolisms, objects, social practices and artistic and technical styles of a broad cultural and ethnic range of social actors” (Hitchcock and Maeir 2013: 51). The archaeological data reflects a small community with indications of autonomy and modest wealth at the edge of the Philistine polities. Qasile was closely interrelated with the Philistine orbit, but its manifestations clearly connect this settlement with the political economies of its northern neighbors.

One of these northern neighbors was Jatt, ancient Ginti-Kirmil, an important regional center during the Late Bronze Age. The settlement at Jatt may have continued at a similar size in the Iron Age I, but the rescue excavations at the site exposed only limited areas that are scattered within the modern settlement at the site (Porath et al. 1999; Artzy 2006). Another “urban” community was Tell Keisan, which may have had a settlement size of about 4 hectares during the Iron Age I with a possible population of about 800 people (Lehmann and Peilstöcker 2012: Fig. 22). The settlement size of Akko during the Iron Age I is so far unclear, since the excavations are still unpublished. The preliminary reports, however, suggest a small settlement (Dothan 1993: 21). The renewed excavations at Akhziv have not exposed significant Iron Age I levels.

Of special importance is ancient Dor, which emerged in the Iron Age I as the most important harbor in the northern coastal plain and possibly in the entire Southern Levant. Dor may have been a harbor for Ginti-Kirmil during the Late Bronze Age (Finkelstein 1996: 241) and is probably mentioned in an Egyptian inscription of Ramses II (Kitchen 1979: II:216, no. 76); the Late Bronze Age layers at the site, however, have yet to be explored (Gilboa 2005: 50). In contrast, Iron Age I levels at Dor have been excavated (Gilboa et al. 2018) and demonstrate that

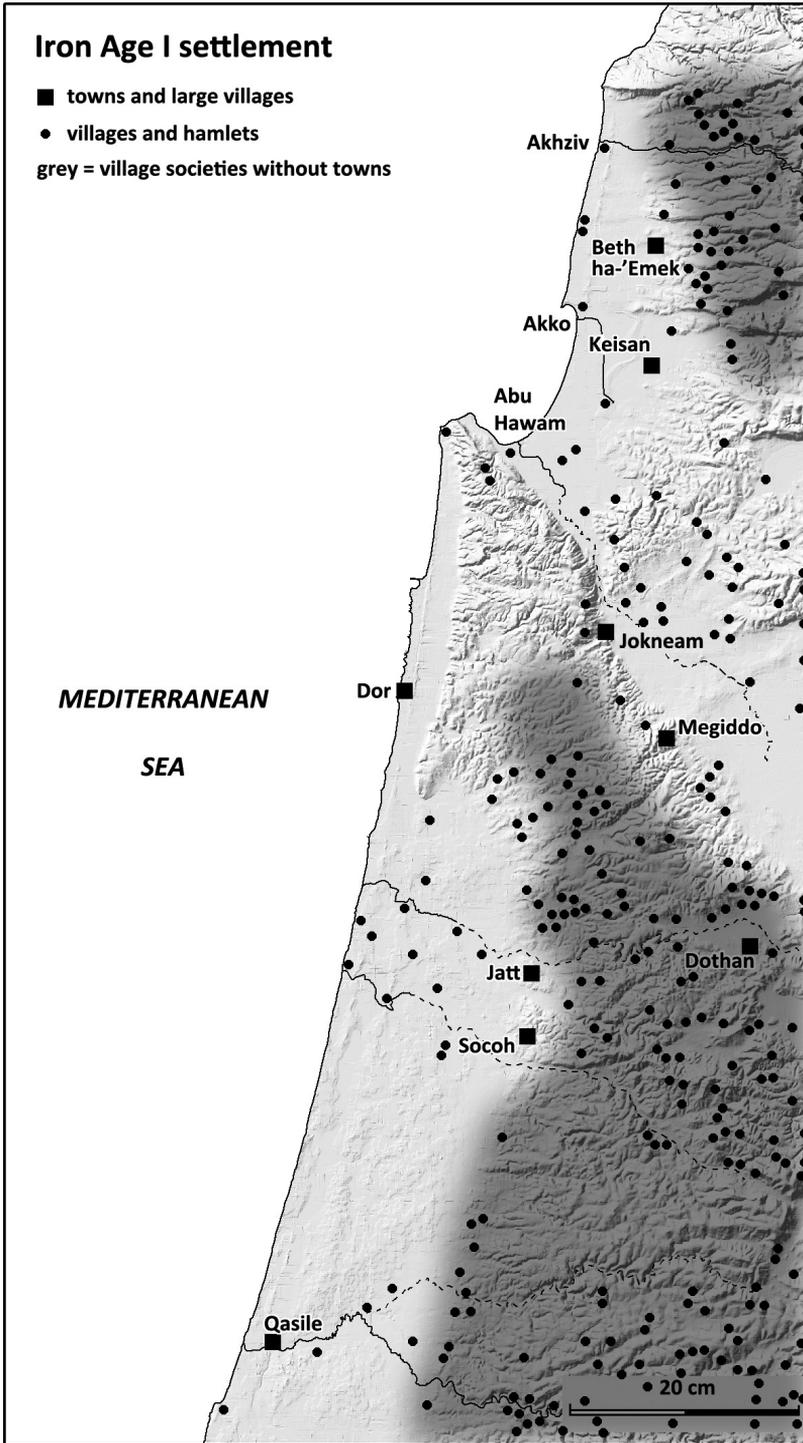


Fig. 4. Map of Iron Age I settlement pattern, with “town-” and “village-states” in the coastal plain and tribal kinship groups in the highlands.

the city had an important harbor with wide-ranging maritime exchange with Egypt, Cyprus, and other regions of the Levant (Gilboa and Sharon 2003; Gilboa and Sharon 2017 and numerous other studies by the authors). Unfortunately, the exposure of Iron Age I Dor is limited and one can only estimate the size of the community during this period. Early Iron Age remains have been uncovered so far in all excavation areas, indicating a settlement size of about 5–6 hectares (Gilboa 2015a: 250).

In Lebanon very little is known of the Phoenician sites during the Iron Age I. The Egyptian Wen-Amun text assigns a prominent role to Byblos as an import harbor in northern Lebanon (Schipper 2005).⁹ Little, however, is known about the archaeology of Byblos during the early Iron Age (Sader 2019: 35–36). Tyre was inhabited during this period, but the extent of the site remains uncertain (Bikai 1978; Sader 2019: 40–41). The ongoing excavations at Sidon demonstrate the importance of the site in Iron Age I (Sader 2019: 39–40). The still unpublished evidence includes a temple with several layers of continuous use. Sidon is also mentioned as a prominent trading center in the Wen-Amun text (Sader 2019: 36). At Sarepta the excavations found evidence for industrial pottery manufacture and agricultural activities such as wine and olive oil production (Sader 2019: 39). At Beirut there is, according to Badre, evidence that a fortified Late Bronze Age settlement continued in the early Iron Age and expanded with fortifications at an uncertain date between the 13th and the 10th century BCE (Badre 1997: 50–66). This interpretation is controversial, and Sader pointed out that Iron Age I pottery is so far neither described nor illustrated in any of the excavations reports of Beirut (Sader 2019: 38)

The currently available evidence demonstrates that the largest Iron Age I sites in the coastal plain were small with an average size of 5 hectares, allowing for a population of 400–1000 people per site (Fig. 4). Such fragmented rural communities can, to some extent, be compared with the earliest forms of the *Polis* in Greece during the Proto-Geometric and Geometric periods. The bounded territory and farmland of these corporate communities reached 2–6 km in radius. For rural communities, they were in fact quite large and complex, “essentially a metamorphosis or politicization of the village, which Ernst Kirsten therefore

9. The Wen-Amun text is a literary document and possibly a fictional story. The chronological setting of the story appears to be the 11th century BCE, but it is unclear when the text was written (Schipper 2005: 32–40). It was dated by Sass (2002: 247–255) to the time of the 22nd Dynasty, the late 10th century BCE. According to the archaeological evidence, the character of the city Dor described in the text corresponds to levels of the 11th through early 9th century BCE.

termed the ‘Dorfstaat’ or village-state model” (Kirsten 1956; Bintliff 1999: 534).¹⁰ A “village-state” is a corporate community focused on a single agricultural settlement with a maximal population of about 1000 inhabitants (Bintliff 2017). Qasile was such a “village-state,” displaying in a tiny space some of the typical architectural features of city-states such as fortifications and a temple embedded in densely

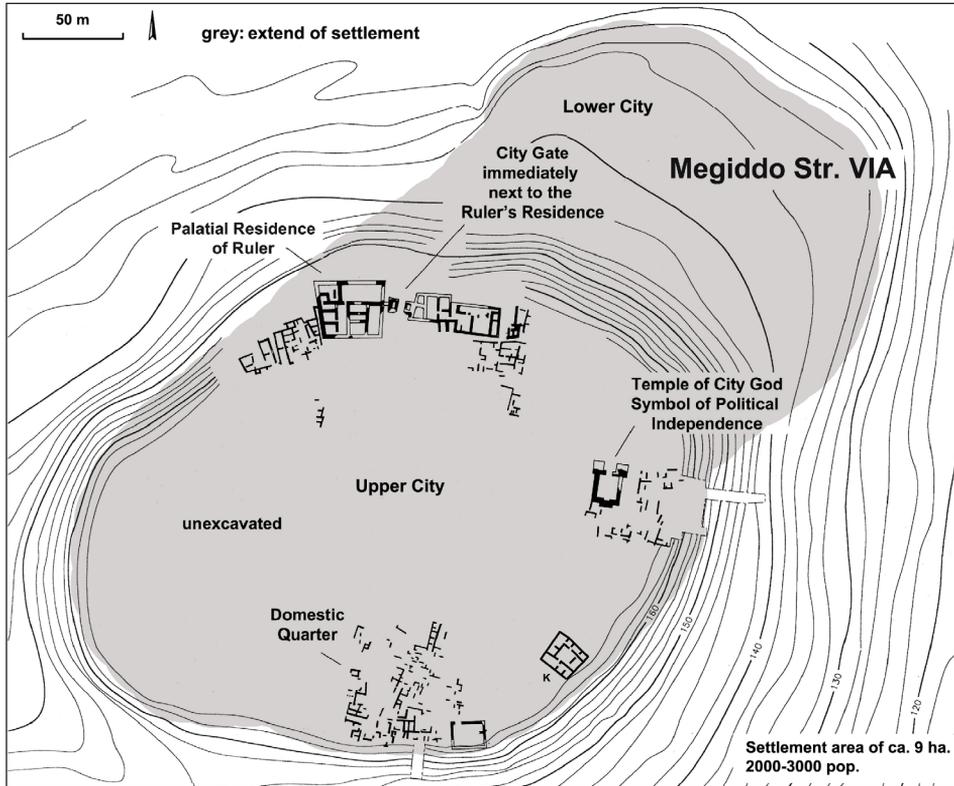


Fig. 5. Plan of Megiddo Stratum VIA during the Iron Age I (redrawn after Herzog 1997: Fig. 5.8). The city displays typical urban features of a Bronze Age city.

packed domestic quarters. In such communities, a large percentage of the city’s population depended on agriculture. They lived in the city and worked in the fields of the urban hinterland (Schloen 2001: 335; Trigger 2003: 125; Hansen 2008: 72–74). The inhabitants of such “agrotowns” are called “Ackerbürger” by Max Weber or “city-farmers” by Hansen, and their agricultural activities constituted a

10. This model of “Dorfstaat” is to be distinguished from Maisel’s different “village-state” model (Maisels 1987).

crucial feature of the community's economy (Weber 1958: 70–72; Hansen 2008: 73).

With an average population of 500–1000 inhabitants, these communities were large enough to be entirely endogamous. Since these “agrotowns” were mainly active in agriculture, avoiding exogamy meant that they could keep their landholdings essentially within the community (Lehmann 2004). Marrying outside of the community would potentially have allowed outsiders to claim rights to the farmlands. These settlements, which were once part of a larger economy of city-state territories during the Late Bronze Age, were now during the Iron Age I independent and self-sufficient small agricultural polities (Bintliff 1999: 528).

So far, palaces have not been identified in settlements of the coastal plains. Yet, residences of monarchs are mentioned in the Wen-Amun story at Dor and at Byblos (Schipper 2005: 47, 49, 60–61). The government of these small “village-states” may have been comparable to rural patrimonial monarchies with leaders similar to the Greek *Basileus* during the Geometric period. In Greece, the residences of such rural rulers were not expansive palatial structures as in the Bronze Age, but large domestic houses often with a communal cultic function (Mazarakis Ainian 1997).

For comparison, Megiddo of Strata VIIA, VIB, and VIA represents all the features of a Bronze Age city-state, albeit on a much smaller scale than during the Bronze Age (Fig. 5) (Herzog 1997: 201). The ruler's residence was customarily located immediately next to the gate and took the appearance of a domestic structure, which was only somewhat larger than other wealthy households in the community. With a possible settlement size of 9 hectares, Megiddo was a very large site in this period¹¹ and is better characterized as a “town-state” (if not a full “city-state”) since its territory and population seems to have exceeded that of the “village-states” in the coastal plain. Notably, the “town-” and village-state communities considered here are identical with sites and territories mentioned in Judg 1:27–35 as the land that “remained Canaanite.”

I want to argue that early Southern Phoenicia emerged from the rural, independent coastal communities discussed here.¹² These communities were ruled

11. The total settlement size of 9 ha at Megiddo depends inter alia on the settlement in the lower city. The lower terrace of the site (Area F of the Tel Aviv University excavation) was occupied during LB III and the late Iron Age I. During the early Iron Age I the lower terrace was a burial ground, a fact that would have significantly diminished the total settlement size and thus the population of Megiddo (Ilan et al. 2000).

12. Unfortunately, we lack sufficient data for respective key sites in northern Phoenicia located

by monarchs and were organized as patrimonial polities (Schloen 2001; Maier and Shai 2016b). The “city-states” (or rather “village-states”) described here were customarily governed by a male representative of a powerful family. Many early Greek *Poleis* of the 11th through 8th centuries BCE abandoned the monarchies of their *Basileis*, thus distinguishing their rural communities from the emerging early “Phoenician” political economy, where monarchies continued. These monarchies were maintained in Phoenician communities throughout the pre-Hellenistic periods with a short exception during the Neo-Babylonian period, when *Shoftim* (“judges”) ruled the city of Tyre in periods of extreme crisis (Lipiński 2006: 198–199).

There are, however, indications that civic institutions flanked these patrimonial monarchies. Phoenician communities were probably not unfamiliar with internal civic conflicts. The legend of the foundation of Carthage is based on competition and conflicts among wealthy and powerful households in the community and even within the house of the ruler of Tyre (Lipiński 2006: 183–184). The traditions of the Levantine city-states provided civic institutions attempting to regulate and steer internal conflicts (Elayi 2018: 98). Among these were high-ranking officials (Phoenician *Shofet*) or the assembly of elders (Phoenician *Mo’ed*), which is mentioned for Byblos in the Wen-Amun text (2,71) (Schipper 2005: 20, 215).¹³ Notwithstanding such restricting consensual institutions, the king of Byblos in the Wen-Amun text resided in a palace, he had an official archive at his disposal and he controlled the harbor and the natural resources of the land. This ruler of the 11th century BCE still very much resembled the patrimonial monarchs of Late Bronze Age Ugarit (Schloen 2001).

And yet, the traditional institutions of the community possibly curbed some of the monarch’s power. Crumley’s suggestion regarding hierarchy–heterarchy relations offers an interesting approach to the study of agency, conflict, and cooperation in Phoenician communities (Crumley 1995). Heterarchy in this context means that patterns of relations within the community were complex, but not entirely and constantly hierarchical. Heterarchy in this context may be defined as the relation within the community that possesses “the potential for being ranked in a number of different ways. For example, power can be counterpoised rather than ranked” (Crumley 1995: 4). Over time and in particular situations, governmental

in Lebanon.

13. These institutions were analyzed in detail by Vainstub (2006); for the elders of Emar see Schloen 2001: 309.

hierarchies in small corporate communities can move to hierarchies and then revert to heterarchies.

I find it heuristically helpful to compare the political economy of Phoenician city-states with the wealthy and powerful merchant community at Old Assyrian Assur. There, the ruler “constituted the link between the community and its divine king, the city god Assur, as the head of the royal lineage he was placed at the apex of the kinship structure of the community and as the leader and executive officer of the city-assembly he was the chief magistrate of the city” (Larsen 1976: 149). Hertel underlines the practice of negotiations of interests within the community of the Old Assyrian city-state and describes the collective decision-making and the balancing of powers in terms of an oligarchy (Hertel 2013: 45).

With regard to the monarchy and its authority, temples played an essential role. There is archaeological evidence for sanctuaries at Qasile, Megiddo, and Sidon (Fig. 5). On an ideological level, the household of the ruler claims to represent the supreme household of the city’s patron deity (Trigger 1993: 88). This patrimonial rhetoric perceives and represents the deity as the ultimate sovereign of the settlement and imagines him as living in his own home, the main temple of the community. Such temples are a reliable indication of the settlement’s autonomy. Iconographic data such as a small stela from Ugarit illustrate the ruler as the first servant of the god (Caubet 2013: Fig. 3). The human ruler of the capital receives the legitimation of his sovereignty directly from the supreme ruler, the town’s main god (Elayi 2018: 97). To his subjects the king acts like a “father,” and the idea and metaphors of fatherhood and political leadership are inseparably connected with one another. Most political and economic relationships are understood in a personalized way in terms of household relationships, rather than in an impersonal way in terms of bureaucratic functions or offices (McGeough 2007: 71–85).

Apart from the coastal “town-” and “village-states” discussed so far, there were also very small villages and hamlets during the Iron Age I, located mainly in the hill-country and the mountains at some distance from the coast. It is possible that these Iron Age I hamlets, newly founded as a rule, avoided proximity to the sea. I argue that most of these villages formed independent polities that were not subjected to the “town-” and “village-states” in the coastal plain. These dispersed settlements can be explained as residences of independent kinship groups that were not integrated in any state or state-like polity.¹⁴ Located on the foothills

14. For the archaeological evidence see the references to archaeological surveys above. The most important excavations in our study area are Har Addir, Sasa, Horbat ‘Avot, Tel Harashim

and mountains, they displayed a distinct lack of a centralized and hierarchical settlement pattern. The coexistence of mountain clans and coastal cities goes back to the Bronze Age. Their interaction and conflicts are already mentioned in the Amarna texts of the 14th century BCE, especially in the correspondence of Rib-Hadda of Byblos (Elayi 2018: 70–71).

The tiny Iron Age I sites in the highlands probably each accommodated only one extended family, usually comprising less than 200 inhabitants who were integrated in networks of kinship alliances and lineages. There was little differentiation in the architecture, with no large structures such as elaborated fortifications, palaces, large-scale storage facilities, or administrative buildings.

Moreover, there is so far no evidence for cultic architecture in the hamlets. Essential cult and ritual activities were possibly practiced in domestic households and at sacred locations in the landscape outside the settlement (Mazar 1982; Albertz and Schmitt 2012: 220–241, esp. 235–236; Schmitt 2020). The structures of kinship elders may have provided locations for cultic activities within the settlements (Mazarakis Ainian 1997). Rural sanctuaries outside of the settlement are mentioned, for example, in the Hebrew Bible as practices of rural cultic activities in open-air sacred spaces that did not always require buildings (Holladay 1961). However, such sanctuaries were not necessarily biblical *Bamot* (Fried 2002), but may have marked the ancestral inheritance of kinship groups. They are also well known in the village communities of Geometric Greece (Polignac 1995).

In contrast to the larger coastal communities, the smaller Iron Age I settlements in the highlands had to form marriage alliances with other hamlets (Lehmann 2004). None of these communities was able to establish a self-sufficient endogamous community all by itself. Exogamous marriages required association with other extended families of neighboring villages, which carried the danger that one's own ancestral inheritance would become accessible to these neighbors. In order to enable marriage with neighboring kinship groups while protecting their ancestral inheritance, the extended families had to establish complex marriage alliances, which seem largely to correspond to the *Mishpahot* (lineages) of the Hebrew Bible.

In most of the hamlets there was also a lack of sophisticated technology, especially iron metallurgy (1 Sam 13:19),¹⁵ although an iron workshop is reported from

(for references see Frankel et al. 2001; Katz 2020), 'En Hagit (Wolff 1998), el-Ahwat (Zertal 2012), Aphek (Gadot and Yadin 2009), and 'Izbet Sartah (Finkelstein 1986).

15. McNutt 1990; Zwingerberger 2001: 434–436; Eliyahu-Behar et al. 2013.

el-Ahwat (Winter 2012). Despite the lack of iron workshops, iron tools were found in the hamlets (Davis et al. 1985), which were probably produced and purchased outside the territories of these rural communities.

There are almost no historical records for the settlement history of the coastal plain during the Iron Age I. The fact that the settlement pattern of “village-state” communities existed for generations implies that no political power in or near the coastal plain was able to dissolve this system or to dominate it in a way that would have changed its political economy and settlement pattern significantly. During most of the Iron Age I there was coexistence of “village-state” communities with each other and with tribal societies as their immediate neighbors in the highlands. This is not say that there were no conflicts. Coastal communities and tribal highlanders kept one another in check and contained each other. Raids almost certainly occurred (1 Sam 23:1–5). Yet, in general, the various local polities of the region were apparently in a state of equilibrium and were unable to dominate one another. Destruction levels dating from the Iron Age I in Dor’s “Late Iron Ia” level (Stern 1990) and Tell Keisan’s Stratum 11 (Briend and Humbert 1980: 27 table 1) point to conflicts and warfare during this period (Gilboa 2005: 51–52). The settlements, however, survived such raids and continued throughout the period. After destructions, the sites were rebuilt following the plans of the destroyed levels, indicating continuity. The situation changed profoundly only toward the end of the Iron Age I and in particular during the early Iron Age IIA. The importance of this process of abandonment, resettlement, and settlement expansion was first pointed out by Faust (2003).

Thus, the northern coastal regions of the Southern Levant during Iron Age I represent a deeply fragmented political, economic, and cultural landscape. The small “urban” centers of the northern coastal plain appear to be in striking contrast to the more extensive contemporary urbanism of the southern coastal plain, with its large urban sites such as Ekron and possibly Ashkelon and Gaza (Sharon and Gilboa 2013: 460). Hundreds of years later, the biblical narrative remembers this period as a time of tribal segmentation with charismatic local leaders and as the time of the “judges” (שופטים). The biblical traditions associate the tribal societies in our research area with Asher, Zebulun, and Manasseh. However, there is not enough evidence to identify any of these groups with certainty in the archaeological record of the early Iron Age.¹⁶

16. See the detailed discussions in Gal 1985; Lemaire 1991; Lipiński 1991; Lehmann 2008; Beyl 2013.

3. Iron Age I Populations and Migrations

Distinct population groups and ethnicities are difficult to identify in this mosaic of early Iron Age political economies. Some scholars have identified the material cultures of the early Iron Age in the coastal plains and the inner valleys such as the Jezreel Valley or the Jordan Valley as a continuation of the Late Bronze Age and essentially as a resilient Canaanite culture (Weippert 1988: 358–360; Finkelstein 2013: 28–30, where this phenomenon is called “New Canaan”). I am uneasy with the notion of “Canaanites” as an inextricable clutter of modern and ancient concepts. In the biblical narrative, the “Canaanites” represent the “other,” a vague and imprecise representation of societies and polities that had long vanished by the time the biblical texts were created (Weippert 1976–80; Lemche 1991; Rainey 1996). Unfortunately, the notion of the “Canaanites” is often obscure in modern research (Maier and Hitchcock 2016a). Many historical and archaeological studies use the term as an imprecise summary of the local populations of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. The use of this notion implies the intention to make a clear distinction between Israelites and Canaanites, following biblical traditions. It is, however, doubtful that such an ideological reduction of a complex historical and social reality can adequately represent the early Iron Age. In contrast, the archaeological evidence suggests a variety of local identities and cultural expressions that characterized the various populations at the end of the Late Bronze Age and during the early Iron Age. Attempts to assign an ethnic dichotomy of early “Israelites” versus “Canaanites” to this diversity during this period probably aim at confirming a link between the distant mythological past with modern needs for national identity and legitimation, yet misrepresent the Early Iron Age societies.

Another elusive element constitutes the assumed settlement of “Sea Peoples.” Among the few historical sources for the early Iron Age are references to the presence of populations in the northern coastal plain that are usually identified with Sea Peoples – the Sikila and the Sherdani (for the sources see Singer 1994; Adams and Cohen 2013). These sources do not state any specific locations for the Sikila and the Sherdani, nor do they explicitly identify them as non-local populations. More importantly, the vague textual testimony is not supported by sufficient and convincing archaeological evidence. Even at Dor, settled by Sikila according to the Wen-Amun text, the archaeological evidence does not confirm an assumed foreign migration and settlement. As Sharon and Gilboa conclude, if it were not

for the Wen-Amun reference, no one would have even suspected that a group of Sea Peoples inhabited Dor in the early Iron Age (Sharon and Gilboa 2013: 467).

Attempts to identify Sea Peoples in the archaeological record of the northern coastal plain are essentially based on pottery. The objects in Stern's list of items associated with the Philistines, or Sea Peoples for that matter, were in common use in the Levant and not necessarily connected with migrations of Sea Peoples (Stern 2000; Stern 2013). Gilboa has thoroughly investigated the ceramic evidence and concludes that there is a clear distinction between the "Philistine" south and the region north of the Yarkon (Gilboa 2005). "Philistine Bichrome pottery" is rare at all sites in the northern coastal plains (Sharon and Gilboa 2013: 439). Gilboa points out, however, the evidence of the so-called "Northern Skyphoi," clumsy and poorly decorated bell-shaped bowls that represent neither Late Helladic IIIC nor "Philistine" styles. Such bowls were found in Iron Age I levels at Dor and Tell Keisan (contra Burdajewicz 1994: 101–111, who considered these bowls to be Philistine; Gilboa 2005: 56–57). The bowls at Dor were produced locally but do represent a stylistic influence of Aegean and/or Cypriot traditions (Sharon and Gilboa 2013: 440; Martin 2017).

This evidence, albeit limited and comprising only pottery, convinced Gilboa that there was some influence from the "West," i.e., the Mediterranean, and possibly a limited migration into the northern coastal plain (Gilboa 2005: 64; 2015a: 250). Sea Peoples migrations, thus, may have played a limited role in the transformation of the northern coastal plain in the Iron Age I, but the impact of such a migration was apparently minor. If this reconstruction is correct, the region was inhabited by a variety of groups originating in the Late Bronze Age, among them a limited number of migrants from the Mediterranean possibly settling in the coastal plain together with local groups living in larger villages and small towns. In addition to these groups, local tribal societies would have settled in very small villages immediately east of the coastal plain in the hill-country.

4. Iron Age I Trade and Maritime Exchange

In the first half of the Iron Age I (during the late 12th and the early 11th century BCE), there is very little evidence for trade between the Southern Levant and the eastern Mediterranean, and the available material is essentially limited to pottery. In the chronology of Southern Phoenicia this period is labeled Ir1a (Gilboa and Sharon 2003). During this period, approximately Late Cypriot IIIB,

Cyprus went through a severe crisis that may explain some of the reduced trade with the Southern Levant.¹⁷

Yet, while maritime trade was limited, it did not cease entirely. Even though the volume of exchanged pottery was minimal (Gilboa 2005: 53–57; Gilboa and Goren 2015), significant, though small, quantities of transport jars and flasks reached (mainly) Cyprus (Gilboa 1998), and a few examples have been noted as far north as at Kinet Höyük in Cilicia (Lehmann 2017: Fig 4:6), a site with an early Iron Age iron-working industry (Güder et al. 2017). Vessels with continental Levantine designs were also produced on Cyprus. So-called “Wavy-Band Pithoi,” originally from Cyprus, were exported to Southern Phoenicia, where they were also copied and locally produced (Gilboa 2001a; Sharon and Gilboa 2013: 446).

While at most sites of the Southern Levant maritime mercantile exchange was at a minimum, the contact between Dor and Egypt was not interrupted. Transport jars from Egypt were shipped to Dor, apparently on a regular basis of exchange, satisfying Egypt’s ever-continuing need of Mediterranean products (Ben-Dor Evian 2014; Waiman-Barak et al. 2014). Among the goods exchanged were Egyptian fish such as Nile perch (Routledge 2015; Gilboa et al. 2015a: 89–90, 92). Yet there is so far only limited evidence in Egypt for artifacts originating from the Southern Levant before approximately 1050 BCE (Aston 2009; Gilboa 2015a: 257).

Notably, “Philistine” Bichrome pottery does not appear in Cyprus or the northern Levant (Gilboa et al. 2015a: 97). As mentioned above, bell-shaped bowls with similar decoration, dubbed “Northern Skyphoi,” were produced on the northern coast of the Southern Levant (Gilboa 2005: 53–57; Gilboa et al. 2006; Martin 2017). These, too, never appeared north of the Akko Plain. Early 11th century wavy-line styles or “Granary Style” pottery from the Aegean, from Late Cypriot IIIB Cyprus, or from the northern Levant almost never occur in Phoenicia or the Southern Levant (Gilboa 1999b; Gilboa 2015b), and only a single sherd of a late Sub-Mycenaean or early Proto-Geometric wavy-band bowl, apparently originally from the Argolid in Greece, was found at Tell es-Safi (Gath) (Maier et al. 2009).

Metal finds such as fibulae from Cyprus or Syria are also extremely rare in the early Iron Age I (Pedde 2000). The lack of such finds suggests that maritime connectivity was at a low, a view also supported by the literary Egyptian Wen-Amun text (Schipper 2005), which mentions only regional maritime activities in

17. Iacovou 1999; 2008; Knapp 2008: 286; Steel 2012: 813.

the Levant (Gilboa 2015a). The Wen-Amun text, however, is difficult to date, and it is not clear whether it represents a historical authentic scenario for the early 11th century BCE (Sass 2002). And yet, the text correctly identifies Dor as the most important harbor for connections with Egypt during this time.

Trade and economic exchange of the Southern Levant with Cyprus and Egypt intensified significantly only in the second half of the 11th century BCE, approximately after 1050 BCE, during the late Iron Age I. In the chronology of Southern Phoenicia this period is known as Ir1a|1b and Ir1b (Gilboa and Sharon 2003). At the same time, the local socio-economic conditions continued without any significant break from the preceding phase. The political landscape resembled very much that of the early Iron Age I with small polities and tiny city-states/"village-states." The economy and trade, however, developed a greater volume.

This is again most evident in the ceramics. While Egyptian transport jars still reach Dor, now Cypriot imports too increasingly occur in Phoenicia. These begin with limited quantities of early Cypro-Geometric I vessels. These imports have been found so far mostly at Tyre and Dor, but they also occur in the western Negev of all places, in tombs at Tell el-Far'ah South.¹⁸ In Egypt, especially in burials, finds from the Levant are now more common (Aston 2009).

In this period, the late Iron Age I, the first "Phoenician" pottery appeared. It is represented by monochrome and bichrome painted vessels, some of which served as containers for commodities such as spiced sauces (Gilboa 1999a; Namdar et al. 2013). Early "Phoenician" pottery proved to be a quite popular product, with a wide distribution in Cilicia, Cyprus, all along the Levantine coast, and even in Egypt (Gilboa and Goren 2015). Again, even in the arid regions of the Negev imports are found, with early "Phoenician" pottery occurring at Tel Masos (Fritz and Kempinski 1983: Pls. 142:8, 145:1, 146:1). The analysis of early "Phoenician" pottery has demonstrated that it was produced – as expected – in southern Lebanon, but also at Dor (Gilboa and Goren 2015). On that account, the workshops of Dor were an integral part of "Phoenician" pottery production.

The Negev finds emphasize the increasing importance of the caravan routes to Arabia and Phoenicia's participation in this emerging trade. According to the available evidence, the Arabian trade intensified in the late 11th century and especially during the 10th century BCE.

Stratified evidence for international trade was also recorded at Tyre and Sarepta,

18. Imports and local imitations of Cypriot pottery were found in Tell el-Far'ah (South) tombs 102/10, 105/3, 506/6 and 7, 525/4, 600/18, 640/6, 642/4, and 647/6 (Laemmel 2003).

indicating that comparable developments occurred in southern Lebanon as well (Gilboa 2001b: Chapter II). The eastern Mediterranean increasingly interacted through international nodes of contact and barter. Entrepreneurial communities emerged along the coast from Dor to Byblos. In their political economy these cities seem to have resembled one another, and their maritime and continental exchange shared similar structures of interconnections in multi-directional, non-centralized networks.

5. The Notion of “Southern Phoenicia”

During the Iron Age I, the inhabitants of Dor or Tell Keisan shared certain aspects of material culture, such as different classes of painted pottery (mainly containers), some identified as painted “Phoenician” pottery in past research, with their neighbors in southern Lebanon and Cyprus, while the respective local coarse wares were still different in the various regions. Research by Gilboa and Goren has demonstrated that this earliest painted “Phoenician” pottery dating to the late Iron Age I and early Iron Age IIA was produced not only in Lebanon but also on the Carmel coast, presumably at Dor (Gilboa 2005; Gilboa and Goren 2015; Waiman-Barak 2015). In this way their research questioned traditional geographical distinctions according to which “Phoenician” material culture was produced exclusively north of the tip of the Carmel range.

Should we then, as a result of this insight, abandon the notion “Phoenician,” especially in this period? From which period on “is it justified to identify a ‘Phoenician’ material culture? Needless to say [in the Iron Age I], ethnic, linguistic, or religious definitions for ‘Phoenicianism’ will not appear, as we have few clues as to the language and cultic (or any other type of) behavior, much less self-ascription of either the inhabitants of Dor or of parts further north for the beginning of the Iron Age” (Sharon and Gilboa 2013: 465).

Working their way backward from a period “where we may all agree that the material culture of the northern littoral is ‘Phoenician,’” Sharon and Gilboa settle on the early Iron Age I as the point “from which on it is possible to call the material culture henceforward ‘Phoenician’” (Sharon and Gilboa 2013: 465). Incorporating as it does the northern littoral of the modern state of Israel and coastal Lebanon, this definition includes areas traditionally not considered “Phoenicia” (Gilboa 2005). Sharon and Gilboa identified the Carmel coast at Dor and the Akko Plain as “Southern Phoenicia.” This new notion is divorced from ethnic connotations and is based not on a questionable Phoenician cultural homogeneity but rather

on defining an early Phoenician “process.” Gilboa’s “process” corresponds to the emergence of an Early Iron Age political economy in the coastal communities as discussed in this paper.

According to Gilboa, the notion of “Southern Phoenicia” is meant to be used not as an ethnic tag of some kind but rather as a heuristic construct or “declaration.” It mainly presents the economic and various cultural processes in “Southern Phoenicia” as being almost diametrically opposed to those in Philistia yet very similar to coastal areas farther north, namely the Akko Plain and coastal southern Lebanon (Gilboa personal communication).

Describing the international interactions in the early Iron Age eastern Mediterranean, Sharon and Gilboa speak of a “dialogue” between communities, which was “mild, but multifaceted, durative, and bidirectional” (Sharon and Gilboa 2013). While Sharon and Gilboa focus on the connections between Cyprus and Dor, I think that this “dialogue” in fact included many more “conversations” and was multi-directional, also including entrepreneurial communities in Lebanon and the eastern Mediterranean. In adopting the notion of “Southern Phoenicia,” I am identifying “early Phoenicia” as small communities residing in towns during the Iron Age I along the northern littoral of the Southern Levant and Lebanon. These communities mirrored one another in key aspects of their political economies and in the practices of production and reproduction of their material culture. Their painted pottery styles, seals, and symbols were mutually recognizable. They seem to have resembled one another in shared structures of economic exchange and governance, including similar structures of interconnections in multi-directional, non-centralized networks.

In calling this phenomenon “early Phoenicia,” I am aware of the arbitrary nature of this notion, and it is possible to imagine another designation. Whatever we call “Phoenician” today was an identity that was (and still is) entirely constructed by someone else and not by the “Phoenicians” themselves.

6. The Early Iron Age II (Southern Phoenicia Iron I|II)

In the transition from Iron Age I to the Early Iron Age IIA the settlement system of the coastal plain and the inland valleys described above was destroyed. Among the settlements devastated were the capitals and cities of former local polities such as Megiddo, Tell Keisan, Tel Kinneret, Tel Hadar, and Beth Abel Maacha. There are, however, two notable exceptions: neither the city of Dor nor Rehov

was destroyed at this time (Mazar 2016: 94). In Lebanon, at cities such as Tyre there is currently no evidence for destruction at this time.

With these destructive events, the world of city-states (or “town-” and “village-states” for that matter) and small independent tribal kinship groups came to an end at the beginning of Early Iron Age IIA. The biblical narrative suggests that competitions among tribal chiefs in the highlands of the Southern Levant led to the forceful formation of tribal alliances under powerful supreme chiefs. As Finkelstein and Na’aman have pointed out, this scenario closely resembles earlier recorded events reported already in the Amarna texts regarding Labayu, the ruler of Shechem during the Late Bronze Age (Finkelstein 2006; 2013: 17–21). In this context, the so-called “United Monarchy” emerged in the central highlands, with all the associated historical and archaeological problems of its historical authenticity and its true political and social scale (Handy 1997; Finkelstein 2010; Mazar 2010).

Finkelstein (2013: 33) has argued that the demise of almost all “town-” and “village-state” communities in the northern coastal plain (“the destruction of New Canaan,” according to Finkelstein) was not a single event but the result of a number of conflicts that possibly lasted for more than one generation. There is reason to believe that one of the main causes for the destructions was conflicts between tribal groups and polities in the coastal plain and the inland valleys. This interpretation is based in particular on the observation that only the polities of Israel and Tyre emerged from these conflicts as dominant powers in the region.¹⁹

The Song of Deborah, considered to be one of the earliest texts of the Hebrew Bible, describes exactly such conflicts between tribal societies and city-states, a scenario that fits well into the archaeological record of the late Iron Age I and Early Iron Age IIA. Warfare eventually ended the long-lasting equilibrium of power during the Iron Age I described above and led to the destruction of communities like Kinneret Stratum V, Megiddo Stratum VIA or Tell Keisan Niveau 9a (Faust 2003; 2015).

Biblical tribal leaders such as Saul, Ishbaal (Ishboshet), David, and possibly Solomon probably played – despite their literary, legendary character – a decisive role in this transition, which probably lasted throughout their lifetimes. As a result, during the early Iron Age IIA regions like the Jezreel Valley came under the control

19. For the extent of the destructions see Faust (2007); his map hints at Israelite highland polities as one of the main agents responsible for the destructions.

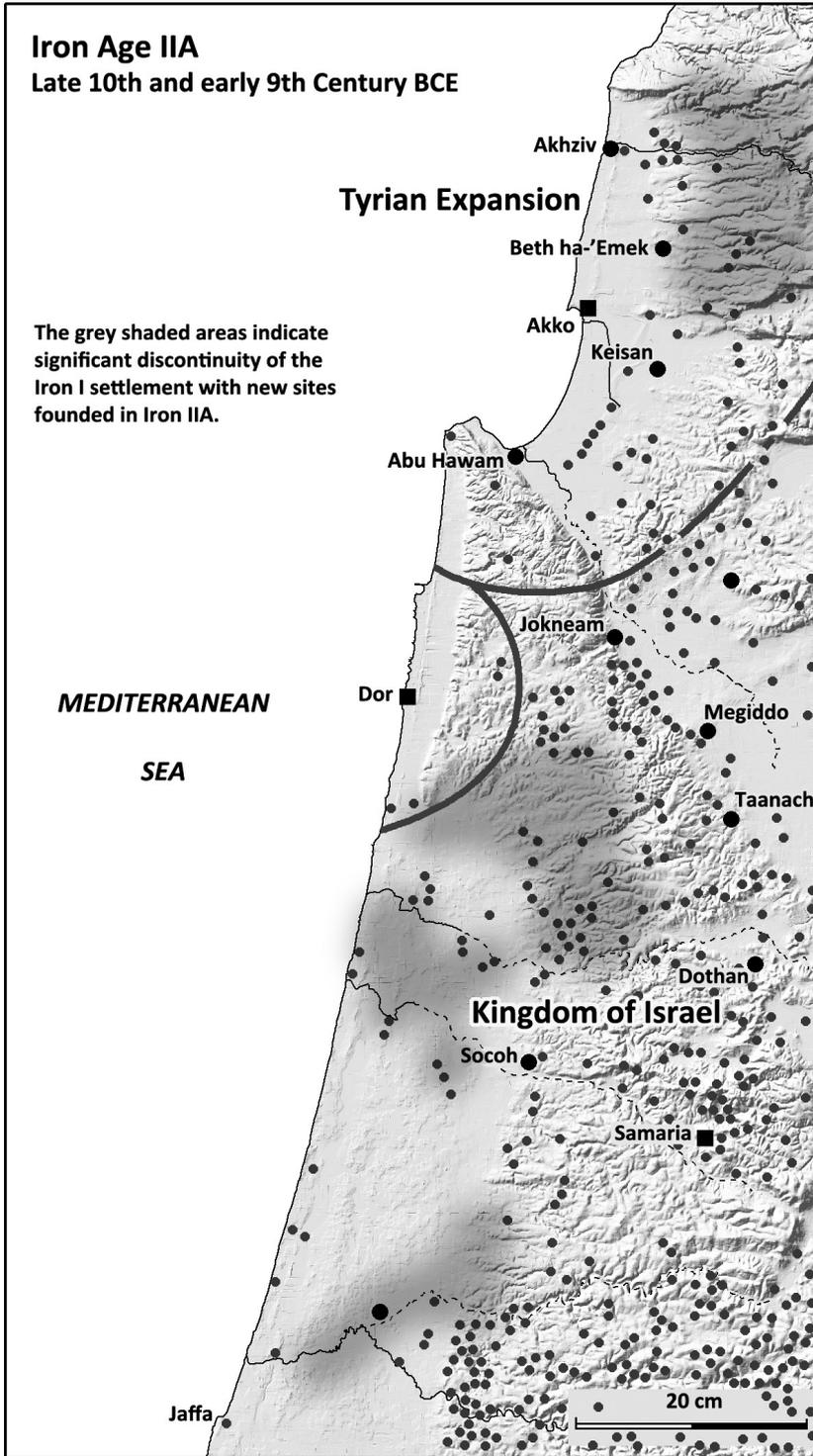


Fig. 6. Map of Iron Age IIA polities.

of powerful tribal rulers, who established a territorial domination over regions far beyond their tribal homelands.

The immediate outcome of the warfare was devastation. At Megiddo, the destruction level of Megiddo VIA is followed by a level of poor and flimsy reoccupation (Lehmann et al. 2000). The Early Iron Age IIA at Megiddo did not resemble the former powerful and wealthy Iron Age I city; rather, it was a period of slow recovery. While it is uncertain whether Megiddo is representative of the entire Jezreel Valley during the Early Iron Age IIA, the excavations at Tell Keisan confirm a similar phenomenon in the Akko Plain. Here, the first level after the destruction of Tell Keisan 9a was a poor and elusive settlement, too.

The settlement pattern of the Sharon plain also changed significantly. The gray-shaded areas on Fig. 6 indicate regions in which a substantial number of Iron Age I settlements were abandoned and replaced by new sites in the Iron Age II. Most of the abandoned sites are located around Jatt, the former capital of the city-state of Ginti-Kirmil (Faust 2007).

It is uncertain when the Sharon plain was first dominated by rulers of the central highlands. In the 9th century BCE at the latest, parts of the region may have been under the control of the Omrids. This is indicated by the destructions and changing settlement pattern after the Iron Age I. While sites like Tell Qasile were destroyed (Stratum X) and eventually vanished (after Stratum VIII), Dor is an exception in remaining apparently independent throughout the early Iron Age IIA and until the late Iron Age IIA.

Dor emerged as a wealthy community from the Late Bronze Age. The archaeological finds display a prosperous settlement with an independent political economy that successfully traded with other areas of the Levant (Gilboa and Goren 2015 for pottery exported from Dor found on Cyprus). The wealth of the city survived until the Late Iron Age IIA, when Dor came under the rule of the Kingdom of Israel. There is no clear evidence for exactly when during the 9th century BCE this happened. The excavators of Dor favor dating the beginning of Israel's control of Dor to the time of the Omrids (Gilboa et al. 2015b), but they cannot prove their claim. There is also no substantial evidence for Na'aman's suggestion that Dor was already under the control of Tyre when the Phoenicians handed it over peacefully to the Omrids (Na'aman 2016). It is also possible that Hazael reorganized the region and handed the city over to the kingdom of Israel, but this too is merely speculative. There are, however, a few archaeological finds at nearby Tel Zeror that seem to confirm Aramaean activities in the Sharon (Ogawa 1971; Goto 1973). The archaeological finds only allow dating the end of Dor's

independence to the mid-9th century BCE. When the city lost its independence and became an Israelite provincial town, the once busy harbor quickly forfeited its importance as a maritime hub.

In the Akko Plain, there is evidence for a destruction of the Iron Age I settlement pattern and a restructuring of the area in the Iron Age IIA. In fact, the intensive surveys carried out in the plain revealed a profound reorganization of the settlement pattern immediately south of Tyre (Lehmann 2001). The gray-shaded areas on Fig. 6 illustrate that many Iron Age I sites in the hill-country overlooking the Akko Plain were abandoned and replaced by new settlements in the Iron Age II. That this was a deliberate restructuring of the areas is suggested by the fact that many new sites are located immediately next to the older abandoned ones (Lehmann 2001: 90). The new settlement pattern may have been initiated by the colonizing Tyrians, reflecting a redistribution of the farmland.

One of the main settlements of the Akko Plain, Tell Keisan Stratum 9a, was destroyed at the end of the Iron Age I (Briend and Humbert 1980). There is evidence for a settlement at Akko during Iron Age I, but nothing is known about the transition from the Iron Age I to the early Iron Age IIA. At Rosh Zayit, ancient Kabul, an estate with a tower fortification was founded in Stratum III, dating from the early Iron Age IIA (Gal and Alexandre 2000).

At Tell Abu Hawam a new plan of square houses appeared in the Iron Age IIA Stratum IV-5 (Buildings 41, 44, and 45, and possibly other square structures that are less well preserved) (Hamilton 1935: Pl. 4; Herzog 1992: 242). A similar structure was found in Tell Keisan Stratum 8a (Briend and Humbert 1980: Fig. 49). In Spain similar structures were noted at Phoenician sites of the 8th and 7th centuries BCE, for example at Morro de Mezquitilla (Niemeyer 1995: Fig. 3d). Although much later, some structures at Beirut (Elayi 2010: Fig. 2) and Al Mina Strata 2, 3, and 4, dating from the Persian and Hellenistic periods, resemble the square Iron Age houses (Woolley 1938: settlement plans).

7. An Expansion of Tyre Into the Akko Plain During Iron Age IIA?

When the Assyrian King Sennacherib reached the Akko Plain in 701 BCE, he found the plain under the control of Luli, king of Sidon (Alt 1953: Vol. 1: 377; Grayson and Novotny 2012: 14). The cities of Sidon and Tyre were apparently politically

united around 700 BCE, with Tyre being the dominant partner of the alliance.²⁰ This raises the question of since when had Tyre controlled the Akko Plain. One possible testimony may date from as early as the 9th century BCE. In his 18th year (possibly 841 BCE), Shalmaneser III reached the mountain named Ba'ali-ra'si that was "facing the land of Tyre." One location proposed for Ba'ali-ra'si is Mount Carmel overlooking the Akko Plain (Yamada 2000: 192).

The biblical narrative, however, may supply a much earlier date for an expansion of Tyre with its account of the "Land of Kabul" supposedly ceded by King Solomon to King Hiram I of Tyre, who possibly ruled during the mid-10th century BCE²¹ (1 Kgs 9:10–14).

Does the biblical text record any historical event (Lehmann 2008; Frevel 2016: 174–175)? Some scholars assume that the key sentence "King Solomon gave twenty towns in Galilee to Hiram king of Tyre" (1 Kgs 9:11) may have been part of a historical tradition, possibly a surviving record from ancient annals to which a narrative was added later (Würthwein 1985: 106). Schipper suggested that the original record also included the statement (1 Kgs 9:14) "Hiram had sent to the king 120 talents of gold" (Schipper 1999: 62–63 n. 302).²² This statement essentially presents King Solomon in a somewhat negative light, as he gave away Israelite tribal territories in violation of principles of the Deuteronomistic history. This contradiction led Gertz (2004: 25) to assign some historicity to the original text. Gertz considered the possibility that the essential lines were originally part of a "Book of the History of Solomon," an enigmatic book that may have existed since the 8th century BCE (Na'aman 1997; Schipper 1999: 101–103).

The cessation of Solomon's rule over the Land of Kabul was already unacceptable to the writers of the Book of Chronicles. 2 Chr 8:2 "corrects" Solomon's abandonment of the Land of Kabul and inverts the story, with Hiram transferring land to Solomon. While Chronicles is an early confirmation of the antiquity of the original tradition, it also underlines the fact that Solomon's transaction was scandalous. It was probably so unacceptable in the time of Chronicles because the Land of Kabul may have been considered the inheritance of the Israelite tribe Asher (Lipiński 1991).

20. Katzenstein 1997: 224; Tammuz 2011: 180–183; Bunnens 2019: 59–60.

21. The dates given for the kings of Tyre are according to Lipiński 2006: 175.

22. Schipper, however, identified "Hiram" in the text as Hiram II, a king of Tyre who ruled in the 8th century BCE. Schipper points out that the name "Solomon" is actually missing in the Septuagint, Codex Vaticanus I Reg 11, and that his name may have been added only later to this tradition.

Understanding the Land of Kabul as the Land of Asher connects our discussion with the Book of Joshua (Josh 19:24–31), another book with a difficult and complex textual tradition. The text is composed of three parts, a list of settlements, a border description, and an amendment, which has parallels in Judg 1:31 (Alt 1927: 68–71; Alt 1953: Vol. 1: 193–204). Each of these parts appears to have been composed at a different time. There is no consensus as to the original date of Josh 19:24–31; earlier research assumed an older origin for the border description and a later one for the list of settlements, while more recent research tends to date both parts closer to each other (Noort 1998: 191–197). Many scholars would place the lists in the Book of Joshua as early as the 7th century BCE, with the possibility that elements of the text might be older (Vos 2003).

The single, yet essential, connection between 1 Kgs 9:10–14 and Josh 19:24–31 is that both texts mention the site of Kabul, today a village of the same name that still exists in the Akko Plain. The excavators of Rosh Zayit, close to modern Kabul, have convincingly identified biblical Kabul with Rosh Zayit (Gal and Alexandre 2000). Notably, the Land of Kabul is called after this village and not after one of the urban settlements in the Akko Plain; 1 Kgs 9:10–14 apparently had a specific rural, non-urban region in the Akko Plain in mind. The “twenty towns in Galilee” (עֲשָׂרִים עִיר בְּאֶרֶץ הַגָּלִיל) have been compared to the “twenty-two towns” of Asher (Kallai 1986: 77–78; Briquel-Chatonnet 1992: 49). The territory that Asher was unable to conquer in Judg 1:31 exactly represents the urbanized part of the Akko Plain, which leaves the tribe with the rural settlement surrounding Kabul. Thus, with Judg 1:31 in mind one may assume that the Land of Kabul in 1 Kgs 9:10–14 was a rural area and that it may indeed have been at least part of the Land of Asher in Josh 19:24–31. At any rate, this may have been the understanding of the tradition when 2 Chr 8:2 was composed, a text that tries to obliterate any Phoenician domination in the area.

The historicity of the biblical traditions discussed here ultimately remains uncertain, yet the Akko Plain and the Land of Kabul are notably missing among Solomon’s “districts” (1 Kgs 4:7–20). Josephus Flavius, however, preserved an important extra-biblical tradition by quoting Menander of Ephesos (*Jewish Antiquities* VIII, 5, 3, §146 = *Against Apion* I, 18, §119; Lipiński 2006: 174; Lehmann 2008). According to Lipiński, Menander mentioned a campaign by Hiram against the Iykeois (Ἰυκείους) (*Jewish Antiquities* VIII, §146), which Lipiński considers to derive from the city name Akko (Lipiński 2004: 42 n.23). This independent tradition again connects Hiram I with a Tyrian expansion into the Akko Plain. When Tyre’s control in the Akko Plain exactly began is lost in the nebulous, almost

legendary traditions. In my view, it may go back to Hiram I, but the plain was certainly a Tyrian dominion, if not its first colony, under King Ittobaal I (biblical Ethbaal, ca. 879–848 BCE).

Thus, the archaeological evidence for a destruction of Iron Age I towns and the abandonment of rural settlements discussed above may be connected with this Tyrian expansion southwards (Fig. 6). The profound transformation of the plain is possibly also implicitly preserved in the historical record. Albrecht Alt noted significant changes in the historical toponymy of settlements when comparing Egyptian texts of the Late Bronze Age and early Iron Age with biblical references reflecting the settlement of the later Iron Age, especially Judg 1:27–36 and 1 Kgs 4:7–19 (Alt 1953: Vol. 1: 260–261, Vol. 2: 2 n. 1). Alt notes that detailed descriptions of the biblical narrative regarding the political situation in the Akko Plain mention several independent places that were not mentioned in the earlier Egyptian inscriptions of the Late Bronze Age. Further, the Bible is silent about places that figure prominently in the Egyptian texts.

The assumed colonization of the Akko Plain would have provided Tyre with additional agricultural resources, which in combination with trade and manufacture constituted the essential foundations of the Phoenician economy. The new farmland supplied Tyre not only with grain but also with new options to cultivate value-added agricultural products like wine and oil that were traded with markets such as Egypt (Lehmann 2001; Ballard et al. 2002).

8. An Egyptian Interlude

The Egyptian domination of the Southern Levant during the Late Bronze Age declined with Ramses IV (1156–1150 BCE) and possibly came to an end around 1130 BCE. The following period “experienced fluctuating intensities in Egyptian military, diplomatic and commercial contact” with the Southern Levant (Mumford 2007: 228). The available evidence nevertheless suggests continuous Egyptian interest and involvement in the Levant during the Iron Age I (Waiman-Barak et al. 2014; Gilboa 2015a). In the light of the archaeological evidence, it seems that under Pharaohs Mn-Hpr-R', Psuennes I (ca. 1051–1006 BCE), and Siamun (ca. 986–968 BCE) of the 21st Dynasty, Egyptian contacts with the Levant intensified.²³ One prominent artifact appearing in the Levant during the time of the 21st Dynasty is the “Early Iron Age Mass-Produced Series” of Egyptian-style glyptics (Münger

23. Mumford 1998: 376–377, 381–384; Redford 1992: 313; Ben-Dor Evian 2011; Ash 1999: 37–50.

2011: 123–130). There is, however, not enough evidence to postulate an Egyptian campaign in the Southern Levant by Siamun (Schipper 1999: 18–35).

Egyptian imperial expansion is, after all, clearly recorded for the 22nd Egyptian Dynasty, when Pharaohs Shoshenq I (943–923 BCE) (the biblical Shishak) and Osorkon I (922–ca. 888) extended their rule over parts of the Levant. Their political impact on the Southern Levant was apparently significant (Ben-Dor Evian 2011), but the role of the 22nd Dynasty in Phoenicia is less well studied (Lipiński 2006: 100). Epigraphic evidence left at Byblos by both pharaohs suggests that Phoenicia and Byblos in particular figured prominently in their politics. Egyptian domination may have ended already under or after Osorkon I. His successor, Takeloth I, appears to have been an ephemeral pharaoh who left little evidence of his reign behind (Kitchen 1973: 96; for discussion of Takeloth's I rule see Ben-Dor Evian 2011: 98).

The interlude of the 22nd Egyptian Dynasty occurred in a period between two presumably powerful but legendary Tyrian kings, Hiram I and Ittobaal I, at the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 9th centuries BCE. Although this reconstruction is based mainly on the alleged but lost history of Menander (Josephus, *Against Apion*, Book I:17–18 and *Jewish Antiquities* VIII: 5:3; 13:2), the 22nd Egyptian Dynasty apparently curbed Tyrian political aspirations after the rule of Hiram I and before the accession of Ittobaal I. Accordingly, Menander records only a few less important rulers in Tyre during the Egyptian interlude.

In Israel this is the time of Jeroboam I and his four successors, who were followed by the powerful King Omri. The biblical tradition remembers the connection between Jeroboam I and Pharaoh Shoshenq I (1 Kgs 11:40) (Finkelstein 2013: 81), although some scholars doubt the historicity of Jeroboam's connections with Egypt (Frevel 2016: 187). Assuming that Hiram I and Solomon are historical, the 22nd Dynasty would have dominated the Southern Levant in the time after these legendary kings in a period of relatively weak local rulers. Notably, the end of the Egyptian domination after Osorkon I (922–888 BCE) coincides with the rise of two powerful kings, Ittobaal I of Tyre and Omri of Israel. This is hardly accidental and would date the Egyptian dominance between approximately 930 and 885 BCE.

There also seems to be a correlation between the list of Shoshenq I and the archaeological record of the Southern Levant. In his records the pharaoh made reference to sites in the Negev that were founded in the early Iron Age IIA. This means that the early Iron Age IIA had already begun by the time Shoshenq I arrived in the Southern Levant. Moreover, the pharaoh mentioned a flourishing

settlement in the Negev, which must have already existed for some time. Thus, the beginning of the early Iron Age IIA must have been before ca. 940–920 BCE and the Egyptian domination ended with the beginning of the late Iron Age IIA. Accordingly, the Tyrian colonization of the Akko Plain may have started before Shoshenq I and was reconsolidated under Ittobaal I, who maintained close relations with the Omrid dynasty.

9. An Outlook Into the Early 9th Century BCE

With the decline of Egyptian influence in the Southern Levant after Osorkon I at approximately 888 BCE, the political landscape of the region changed profoundly. Most of the small city-states south of Tyre vanished and were replaced by territorial states, among them the kingdoms of Tyre, Israel, and the Arameans of Damascus. According to the biblical traditions, the relations between Tyre and Israel were friendly and Prince Ahab married the Tyrian princess Jezebel (Briquel-Chatonnet 1992: 67–70).

With the emergence of these new polities, the city-state of Dor lost its independence at some point during the Late Iron Age IIA (Southern Phoenicia Ir2a), i.e., the 9th century BCE (Gilboa et al. 2015b). When Dor forfeited its former role as an international harbor, “Phoenicia” shrank, contracting to the coastal stretch between Arwad and Tyre. The “classical” Phoenicia, confined to the coast of Lebanon and northern Syria, emerged. Under Ittobaal I, Tyre rose to be the most powerful city of southern “Phoenicia,” ruling over the Akko Plain and conducting intensive economic exchange with the Kingdom of Israel under the Omrid dynasty.

Ittobaal I ruled, according to Lipiński, between ca. 879 and 848 BCE. His allegedly long reign of 32 years suggests a relative stable period during his time. The end of his reign is suspiciously close to Hazael’s expansion into the Southern Levant in 842 BCE. Was the end of Ittobaal I’s reign a result of Hazael’s campaigns?

The archaeological period of the Late Iron Age IIA commenced approximately with the rule of Kings Ittobaal I and Omri. In the Akko Plain, but also in the Kingdom of Israel, this period is characterized by intensive building activities and an expansion of the settlement. Late Iron Age IIA levels appear prominently at many sites such as Tell Abu Hawam, Tell Keisan, and Rosh Zayit, and less well known sites such as Akko or Akhziv display substantial remains as well. In contrast, the Early Iron Age IIA was an elusive period on the northern coast of the Southern Levant. During this period, many sites recovered only gradually

from destruction at the end of the Iron Age I. As outlined above, the Early Iron Age IIA is also the period of Egyptian domination under the 22nd Dynasty, which may have contributed to the slow recovery.

The early Phoenician communities differ distinctively from contemporary larger Israelite settlements during the Late Iron Age IIA. I hesitate to call Israelite settlements like Megiddo or Hazor “urban,” as they were at best functional “cities” (Niemann 1993: chapter II). As part of the Israelite territorial state, the former capital of the city-state of Megiddo became a mere garrison, storage facility, and administrative center. Sites like Megiddo or Hazor did not thrive or grow as a result of their citizens’ economic initiative. All major aspects of these sites were determined by the Israelite government, the sole investor in their development. Even the urban character of the capital Samaria is disputed, the site being more a royal residence than a urban community with thriving civic activities (Niemann 2007; Finkelstein 2013: 87–94). In this sense, there was no urbanism in Israel proper. Curiously, the only true urban center in the kingdom of Israel during Iron Age IIA was Rehov, a city outside the traditional settlement of the Israelite tribes.

In contrast, the early Phoenician communities developed and expanded on their origins as Bronze Age city-states. They developed a new economic model with strong mercantile orientations that Broodbank (2013: 470) characterized as “royal houses and merchant entrepreneurs in the realms of sea trade, production, and exploitation of the arable base.” One of the major pillars of the economy of Phoenician cities was agriculture, and even Carthage’s economy, in a much later period, remained agricultural to a large extent (Gómez Bellard 2019). The specific “Phoenician” aspect of these cities is rooted in the patrimonial “palace economy” of their ruler and the elite family households with their landholdings, their manufacture, and their mercantile activities. Wealthy Phoenician households most probably balanced the high risks of maritime trading with agricultural estates, the continuation of the Ugaritic *Gat*. The fortified farmstead at Rosh Zayit might have been such an estate. High profits from risky trading could have been invested in estates providing a solid foundation for the families’ riskier mercantile activities.

Such families are known from Ugaritic texts, in the form of the houses of Yabinu, Urtenu, Rashap-’abu, or Rap’anu (McGeough 2007 chapter six). As in Ugarit, the economic activities of Phoenician households were probably not entirely “private,” a notion with little relevance in a patrimonial polity. The heads of these households were rather officials of the king’s patrimonial state, but still

operated in the best interests of their own houses. Notably, there is archaeological evidence for such households at Dor and at Megiddo (Gadot and Yasur-Landau 2006; Gilboa et al. 2014). The period associated with Ittobaal I of Tyre saw the early development of a more entrepreneurial economy, replacing the administered type of economy typical of the Bronze Age in the Levant (Sherratt and Sherratt 1993).

One of the areas of Phoenician entrepreneurial interests was the Negev and the coast around Gaza, which may have been the outlet for the Arabian trade of the early Iron Age. Phoenician transport jars of the Late Iron Age IIA have been found in Tel Sera' Stratum VII (Golding-Meir 2015: Pl. 22:6). That the Negev was part of an emerging and far-reaching Phoenician economic network during the 9th century BCE is further indicated by the fact that the exact same types of jars were also discovered in Egyptian tombs at Lahun (Petrie et al. 1923: Pl. 55A) and even in a royal tomb at Salamis, Cyprus (Dikaios 1963: Fig. 35:37, no. 135). Another possible link between Phoenicia and the Gaza region is represented by the Late Iron Age IIA cremation burials that were excavated at Tell Ruqeish and Cemetery 200 at Tell el-Far'ah (South) (Culican 1973; Lehmann et al. 2019).

Caravans crossing the Negev made use of the recently domesticated dromedary (Sapir-Hen and Ben-Yosef 2013), transporting spices and incense from Arabia and the Indian Ocean, but also copper from the Arabah (Ben-Yosef et al. 2012). Evidence for the spice trade are small decorated flasks that contained cinnamon and nutmeg imported from Southeast Asia (Namdar et al. 2013). There is evidence that copper from the Arabah (Fainan and Timnah) and not from Cyprus was most commonly used in our early "Phoenician" study region, as well as in Egypt and even Greece.²⁴

There are two suggested "routes" for copper from the Arabah in the Iron Age IIA, one through Gath and the other through Rehov in the Jordan Valley. The latter would most likely continue to Phoenicia. This would explain the Greek imports at Rehov at the time, and perhaps also the relative large amount of inscriptions, both at Rehov and at Gath. Both cities would have been tied into a trade web in which the "Phoenicians" played a central role.

The expansion of Tyre and its extensive economic activities are mirrored in ancient literature. Menander of Ephesos relates that "Ittobaal built the city Botrys" in northern Lebanon (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* VIII:13:2). Phoenician writing

24. Stos-Gale 2006; Kiderlen et al. 2016; Vaelske and Bode 2018–19; Vaelske et al. 2019a; Vaelske et al. 2019b.

and material culture also reached Cilicia and northern Syria (Lehmann 2008: 221–224). During the 9th century BCE, Phoenicians were routinely sailing the eastern Mediterranean. The expansion of Tyrian economic activities is notable in Greece, for example at Kommos (Gilboa et al. 2015c), at Tekke near Knossos (Niemeyer 1984: 20; Sass 2005: 34–36), and Lefkandi. North Syrian metalwork has been discovered at Lefkandi and may have been shipped there by Phoenicians (or Arameans?). In North Africa, Menander of Ephesos attributes to Ittobaal I the foundation of the otherwise unknown city Auza in Libya (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* VIII:13:2). On Cyprus, the Phoenician script circulated, if sparsely, from the early 9th century BCE on the island (Iacovou 2008: 644).

At this stage, Phoenician trade and influence in the western Mediterranean was still limited and is restricted to single archaeological finds. Contacts between the Levant and the West probably connected with local exchange cycles of the coastal western Mediterranean, and Phoenician trade in the West may have resembled expeditions rather than regular shipments (Niemeyer 1990; Sherratt and Sherratt 1993). Yet curiously, some Phoenician influence commenced rather early in the western Mediterranean such as the Phoenician inscription found at Nora in Sardinia that has been dated to the early 9th century BCE (Niemeyer 1984: 13). The now developing early “globalization” had a profound impact on the political economy in Phoenician communities of the homeland, but here is not the place to discuss these processes in the necessary detail. Suffice it to note with Malkin (2011: 38) that “in periods when horizons suddenly open, when vast spaces shrink because of better communication, and when connectivity moves to a more efficient and richer level, identities seem to acquire new perspectives and undergo quick realignments.”

10. Conclusions

Since almost no historical records are available, archaeology contributes significantly to an investigation into the emergence of early Phoenicia. The evidence suggests that after the withdrawal of the 20th Egyptian dynasty around 1130 BCE, for about two centuries there was no imperial intervention from either Egypt or Mesopotamia. This historical situation opened a window of opportunity for small polities in the Southern and Central Levant to establish their political independence without any imperial exploitation of their economies. During the 11th century BCE, early Phoenicia emerged from a landscape of fragmented polities and by the 10th century BCE the city-state of Tyre had become one of the

most thriving cities. This happened, however, only after Tyre had expanded into a sizeable territorial state, resembling the size of ancient coastal Bronze Age polities such as Ugarit. The exceptional success of Tyre was built on the exploitation of rural resources and populations in coastal Galilee. This was one of the foundations of the entrepreneurial expansion of Tyre, which connected its economy with continental powers such as the Kingdom of Israel under the Omrids and facilitated access to raw materials in the Mediterranean and the vast markets of Egypt.

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