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Some Remarks on the Iron Age Pottery from Sha‘ar-Ha ʾAmakim (Israel)

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is a typological and chronological analysis of the Iron Age pottery finds from Sha‘ar-Ha ʾAmakim, a site situated on the easternmost fringe of the Akko plain, and identified with Hellenistic Gaba. The material under discussion consists of two main categories of vessels: storage jars (‘Phoenician’ amphorai) and various types of bowls. The analysis of this pottery attests to a settlement which can be dated to period ranging *grosso modo* from the end of the eight century until the beginning of the sixth century BC. The questions concerning the identification of the site, its possible character/function and supposed relation with the nearby Tell ʾAmr are also discussed. It has been suggested that during the Iron Age II period the Sha‘ar-Ha ʾAmakim site, due to the strategic location on the hill, could have been an outpost – a kind of observation point serving the inhabitants of the main settlement on Tell ʾAmr, situated below, on the floor of the valley.

Keywords: Iron Age II Palestine, Phoenicia, Akko Plain, pottery, amphorai, storage jars, bowls

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The ancient site of Sha‘ar-Ha ʾAmakim (‘the gate to the valleys’ in Hebrew) is located on the top of a hill forested with oak trees, a few hundred meters to the north-west of the kibbutz of the same name. Although located in the geographical intermediate zone, this place still belongs to the Akko Plain, which comprises the territory between Rosh ha-Niqra (the ‘Tyrian Ladder’) in the north and the Carmel Ridge in the south. To the east, the plain passes gradually into the low hills and Lower Galilean Mountains. Excavations carried out in the 1980s and 1990s have brought to light remains of a settlement dated mainly to the Hellenistic and Early Roman periods.[1] The main excavated structure is a small but strong

[1] The site, accidentally discovered in 1966, was systematically excavated between 1984–1996 by the archaeological expedition headed by Prof. Arthur Segal of the Zinman Institute of Archaeology of the University of Haifa. In 1993 the Sh‘ar-Ha ʾAmakim Project was joined by Prof. Jolanta Młynarczyk of the Research Centre for Mediterranean Archaeology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (presently the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures of the Polish Academy of Sciences) and Dr. Mariusz Burdajewicz, then of the National Museum in Warsaw. For the results of the excavations, see: Segal, Młynarczyk, Burdajewicz 2009. A separate

1. Sha'ar-Ha 'Amakim. Aerial view from the west (Phot. A. Baltinester; Segal, Młynarczyk, Burdajewicz 2009: Fig. 9).

rectangular building of military character (**Fig. 1**), a kind of fortress overlooking the narrow pass between the Carmel Ridge and surroundings hills. This pass since ever connected the Mediterranean shore of the Akko Plain and the Valley of Yezreel to the east (**Fig. 2**). In all probability the excavated site should be identified with ancient Geva (Geba, Gaba), one of the places known by this name throughout the Palestine/Israel and mentioned in the geographical and historical sources. Recent analysis of these texts along with architectural, pottery and numismatic finds indicates that the place may be the Hellenistic Gaba conquered by Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BC)[2] and occupied until the Late Roman Period (third/fourth century AD).[3] However, there is also an amount of the 'early' pottery, which points to the activity on the site already in the Iron Age.[4]

The purpose of this short paper is twofold: to present a preliminary overview of the main types of this 'early' pottery and to precise – on this basis – the chronological range of the pre-Persian and Hellenistic occupation. It should be emphasized that neither architectural

monograph on the Hellenistic and Roman pottery from Sha'ar-Ha 'Amakim (including an appendix on the Iron Age pottery by M. Burdajewicz) is in preparation by J. Młynarczyk.

[2] Dvorjetski 2009: 14, n. 39 and 33.

[3] Młynarczyk 2009a: 48–54.

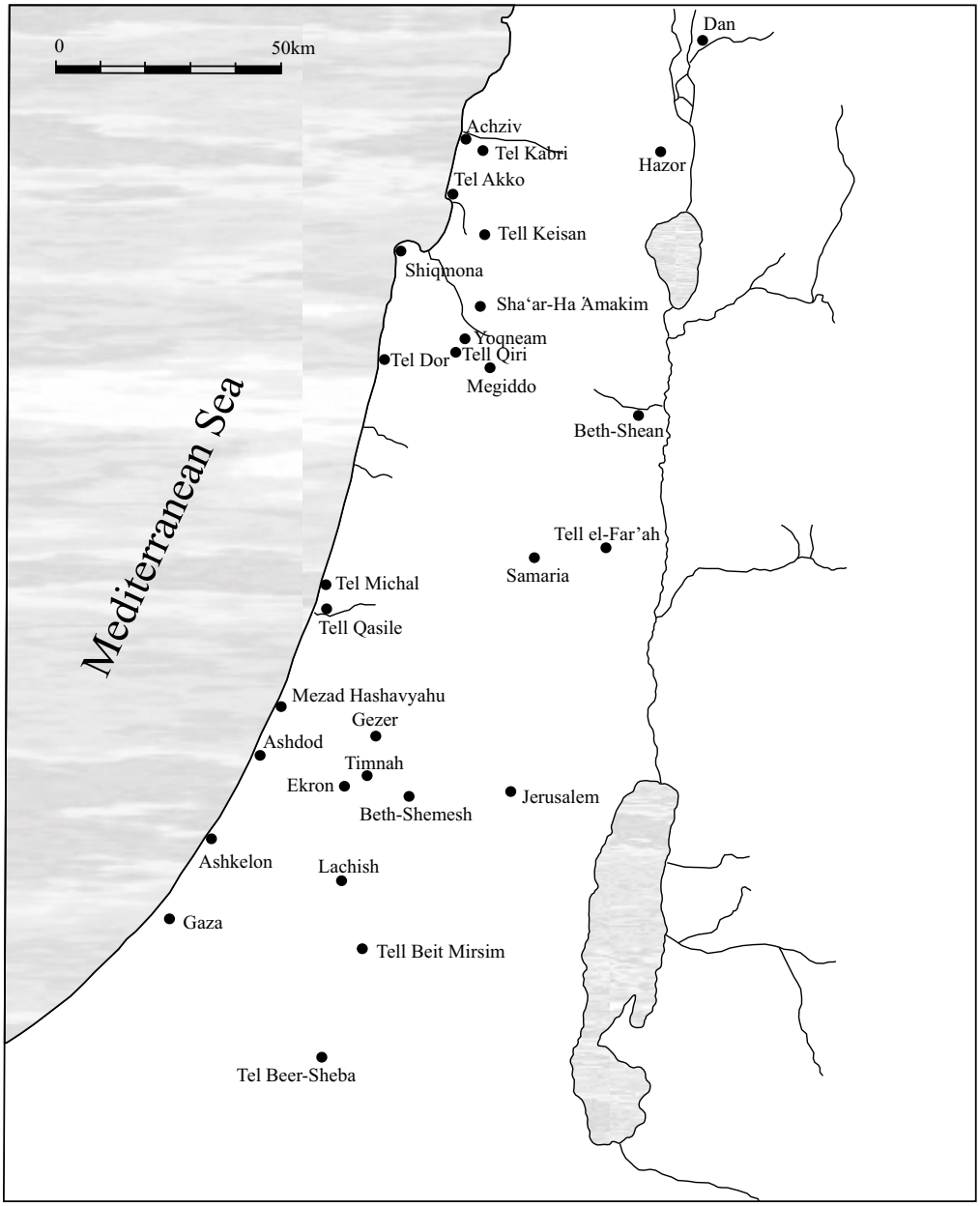
[4] We adapt here the Modified Conventional Chronology for Iron Age sites as proposed by A. Mazar (2008: 110–111, Tab. 2). A hot debate on the absolute chronology of the Iron Age sub-periods, launched almost twenty years ago by I. Finkelstein's (1995) proposal of 'Low Chronology', is still going on and seems to be a never ending dispute (see recently, Mazar 2011 and Finkelstein, Piasetzky 2011, with references to earlier literature on this subject). However, in view of the main objectives of our article, this is a secondary issue since the scholars' disagreement concerns primarily Iron Age I–IIA periods, and not Iron Age IIB-C better documented by archaeological and historical sources.

2. Akko Plain and Tell 'Amr (Phot. M. Burdajewicz).

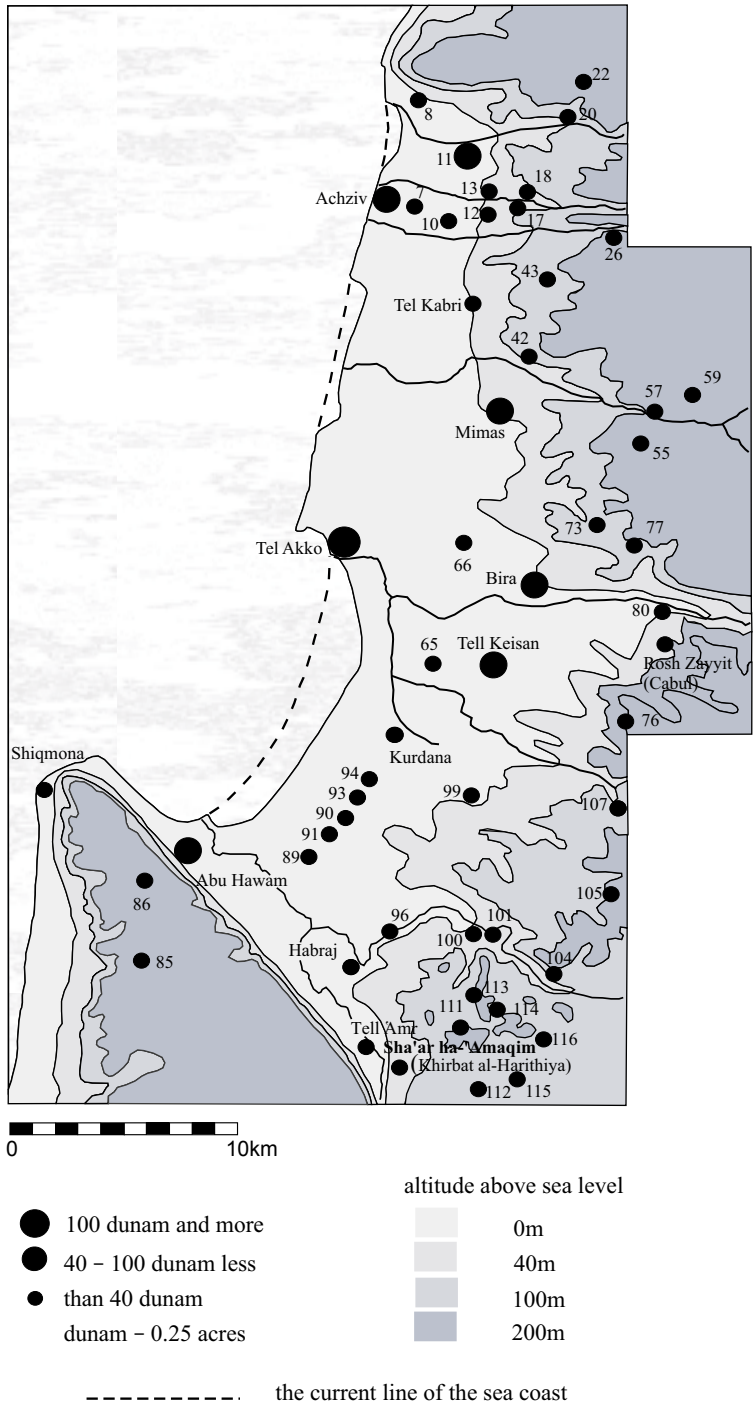
remains nor other stratified finds earlier than the late fifth–fourth centuries BC were found during the excavations. Thus, the pre-Persian period pottery has been identified exclusively on the basis of morphological features and ware characteristics. The collected assemblage is not abundant, comprising about 120 diagnostic sherds, of which 48 rim fragments have been selected for the present paper. These pottery fragments were unearthed in almost all excavated areas. However, the largest number of them come from the fill of 'Cistern' G/R, sealed by a wall around the middle of the second century BC.[5] Due to the very fragmentary state of preservation of the finds, the analysis has to be based on rim typology. Moreover, the lack of any 'early' stratigraphy at the site means that the dating of particular types must rely on comparison with well-dated and stratified pottery assemblages from other sites. To avoid an excess of information in the parallels, only those considered the most useful for our research will be presented in this paper.

For obvious reasons, the comparative material is drawn from the sites in the northern part of the country, including Phoenician coastal sites, like Tyre and Sarepta. However, the most important sites are those lying in geographical proximity to Sha'ar-Ha 'Amakim, in the Akko plain (**Fig. 4**). The first one is Tell Keisan situated *c*. 18km north of the site. There, Strata 5–4 yielded a rich repertoire of securely dated pottery types, which range in date from the late seventh to the early sixth centuries BC. Further to the north is located Tel Kabri, where strata E3 and 4 represent remains of an Iron Age II fortress. Tell Qiri (Strata VI–IV)

[5] Młynarczyk 2009a: 50.



3. Map of Palestine: the main sites during the Iron Age II (Drawing: M. Burdajewicz).



4. Akko Plain during the Iron Age II–III (based on: Lehmann 2001: Fig. 3.8).

and Tel Yoqneʿam (Strata XIII–X), located already in the Yezreel Valley, provide us with useful analogies from Iron Age II–III. Pottery assemblages from three sites located to the east from the Yezreel Valley, namely Megiddo (II–IVA), Beth-Shean (Stratum IV), and Hazor (Strata VI–IV), were also consulted for comparative analysis. Of great importance for typological and chronological purposes is Tel Dor situated on the coastal Plain of Sharon. Pottery from phases 10 and 9 in Area A, phase 7 in C2, and phases 9–6 in Area C2, range in date from the tenth century to *c*. 650/630 BC. Next to the south of Tel Dor is located Tell Qasile, where pottery from Strata XIII–VII covers the entire span of the Iron Age. Two other southern coastal sites, Ashdod and Ashkelon, can equally be helpful due to their pottery trade links with the Akko Plain and Phoenician coast. For the comparison also some inland sites from the south were chosen, i.e.: Jerusalem, Lachish (Strata II–III), Timnah/ /Tel Batash (Stratum II) and Gezer (Strata VIA, VA-B). Their very rich and well stratified pottery assemblages play a key role in any pottery research concerning southern and/or northern ceramic traditions, showing at the same time both similarities and differences between both regions. For the readers' convenience, comparative stratigraphy of the main Iron Age II sites is presented in **Table 1**.

Tab. 1. Synchronic Table of some Iron Age II sites in Israel, including Shaʿar-Ha ʾAmakim.

Period	**Iron Age IIB**					**Iron Age IIC**						**References**
Date BC / **Site**	**825 ↘ 800**	**800 ↘ 775**	**775 ↘ 750**	**750 ↘ 725**	**725 ↘ 700**	**700 ↘ 675**	**675 ↘ 650**	**650 ↘ 625**	**625 ↘ 600**	**600 ↘ 586**	**586 ↘ 332**	
Shaʿar-Ha ʾAmakim				?	SETTLEMENT						?	
Tyre	VIII	VII–IV		III–II	I							Bikai 1978: 68
Sarepta	C							-	-	-	B, A	Anderson 1988: 423
Hazor	VII	VI–V		IV–III						II–I		Yadin *et al*. 1958: 23, 64–65
Tel Kabri		E3										Scheftelowitz 2008: 1895
								E2				
Tell Keisan	7	6		5	4b			4a			3	Humbert 1981: 382; Salles 1985
				5				4b	4a			
Tel Yoqneʿam	XIII					XII				XI	X	Ben-Tor, Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar 2005: 9
Tell Qiri	VI					V					IV	Ben-Tor 1993: 1228
Megiddo	IVA			III		II			I			Lamon, Shipton 1939: xxvii; Finkelstein, Ussishkin, Halpern 2008: 1945
	Area F-4b		Areas F-4a, H-1, L-1					F3				
Tell el-Farʾah (N)	VIId					VIIe				$VIIe_1$		Chambon 1984: 12
Beth-Shean	P8		P7		P6							Mazar, Mullins 2006: 12
	V (lower)		V (upper) – IV									
Samaria	3		4	5–6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Avigad 1993: 1303

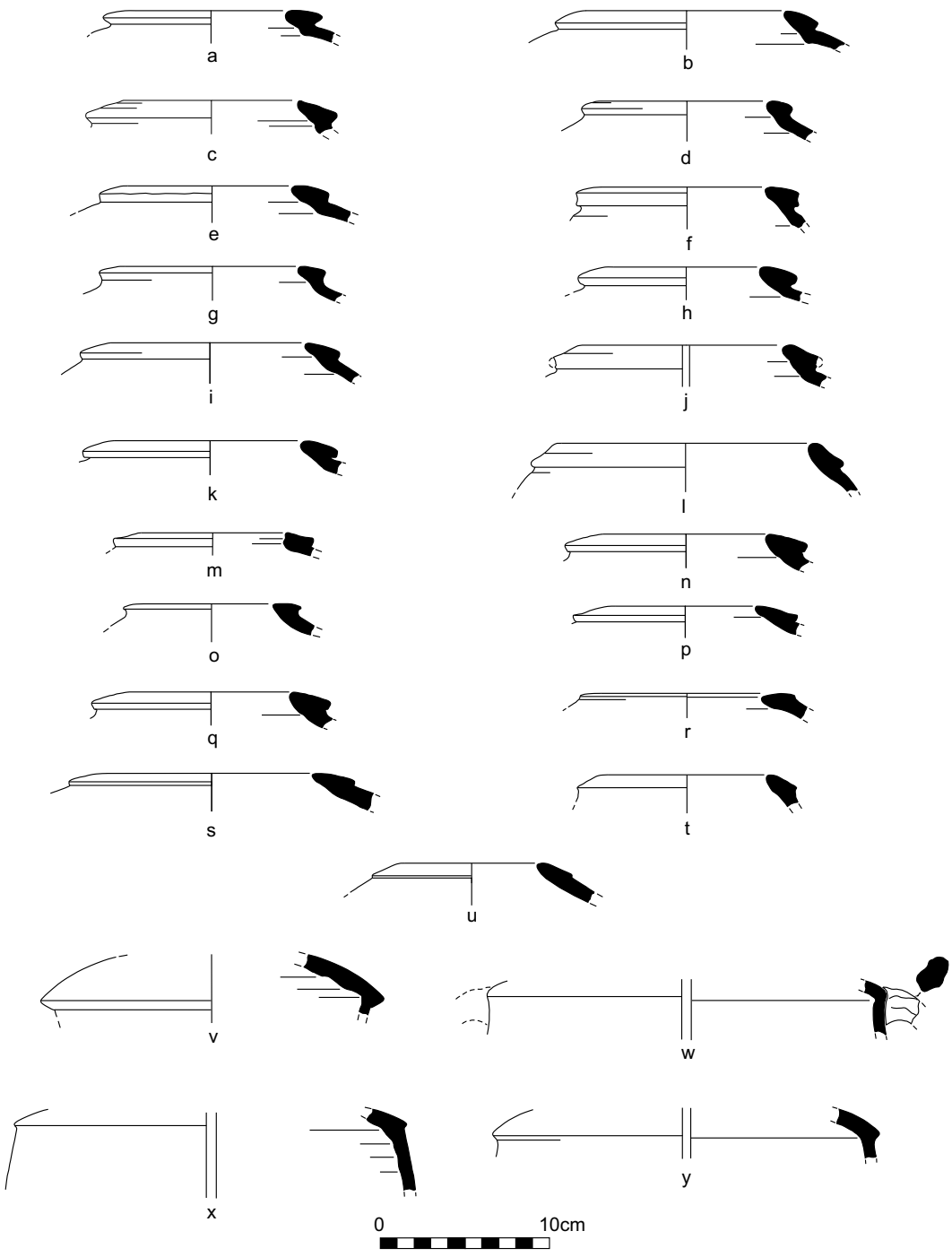
Shiqmona	10			9			8		Elgavish 1994: 34
Tel Dor Area A	10			9					Gilboa 1995: 15
Tell Qasile	VIII–VII			« VII »					Mazar 1993: 1212
Ashdod	VIII			VII			VI	V	Dothan, Ben-Shlomo 2005: 9
Ashkelon	XIII			XII					Stager, Schloen, Master (Eds) 2008: 216–217
Mezad Hashavyahu						620–604			Fantalkin 2001: 143
Lachish	V–IV		III	Gap II					Ussishkin (Ed.) 2004: 76
Tel Miqne		IIB	IIA	IC		IB	IA		Dothan, Gitin 2008: 1953
Timnah		III		II				I	Mazar, Panitz-Cohen 2001: x
Gezer	VIA			VB–VA					Gitin 1990: 38
S-E Hill	Jerusalem								Franken 1990
Phase	2								
		3–4							
			5–6						
				7					
				8					
						9			
City of David	13	12		11		10		9	De Groot, Ariel 2000: XII
Caves				I and II					Eshel 1995: 62

PRESENTATION OF THE MATERIAL

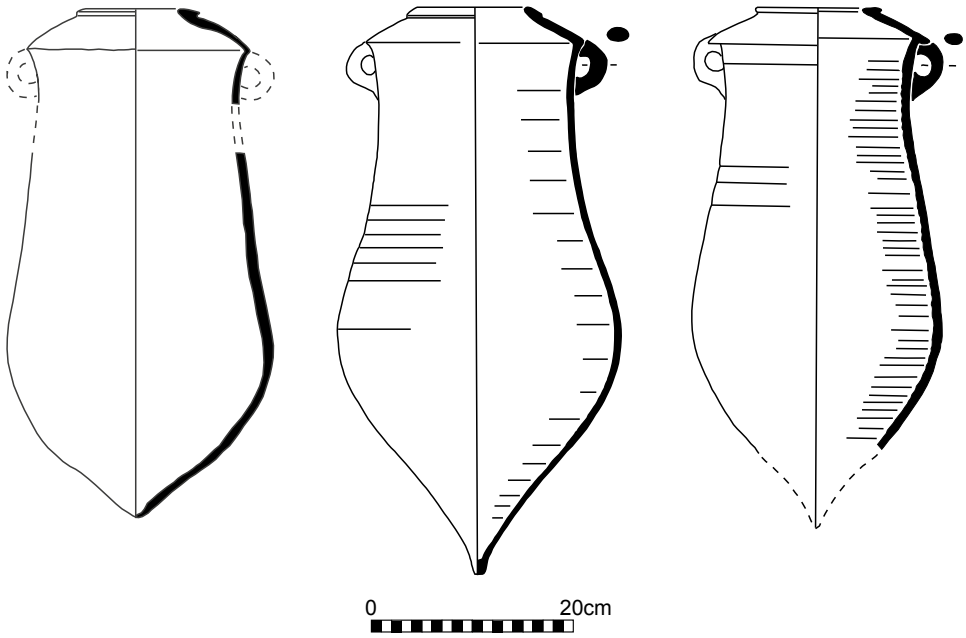
The repertoire of pottery types presented below is rather limited, comprising storage jars and bowls. Due to the very restricted number of the discussed material, any analysis of quantitative data would be misleading. However, for the sake of convenience, one may note that the most of the identifiable sherds belong to storage jars. The bowls are less numerous. Although a few fragments of cooking pots were also found, they are not considered here since their form cannot be identified with any certainty.

Storage jars/amphorai – neckless jars with low rim folded to the exterior

The jar rims illustrated below (**Fig. 5a-u**) constitute doubtlessly the most interesting and characteristic group of the Iron Age pottery from Sha'ar-Ha 'Amakim. They belong to a large family of commercial jars, sometimes called 'waisted' jars or 'Phoenician' amphorai, sometimes also mentioned as sausage/twisted jars. This type is characterized by low, squat rim (its height is always less than the width) folded to the exterior and separated from angular shoulders, concave sides at the upper part of the body, and pointed base. The four



5. Rims (a-u) and body fragments (v-y) of neckless jars from Sha'ar-Ha Amakim (Drawing: M. Burdajewicz).



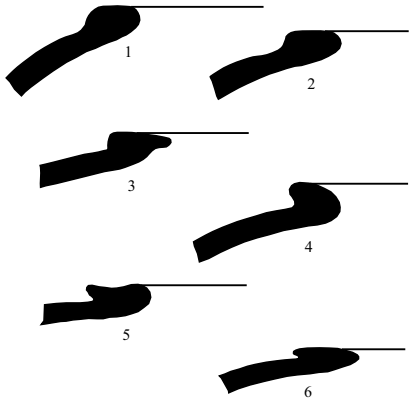
6. Sausage/twisted jars from Tell Keisan, Level 5 (Briend, Humbert 1980: Pls 47:1; 27:1–2).

body parts (**Fig. 5v-y**) belong to the junction between convex shoulder and piriform body, showing the characteristic, more or less accentuated flange of the shoulders. Complete or nearly complete examples of this type of jars found in Tell Keisan, with suggested morphological development of their rims in Level 4, are illustrated in **Figs 6** and **7** respectively.

The rims, shoulders and body profiles of these jars/amphorai correspond to Sagona's Type 9,[6] Lehmann's Type 384/1[7] and Bikai's no. 589.[8]

In the north, jars with similar rims occur in Tyre, where they are classified under two separate types: earlier Type SJ4 (Strata III–II) and later Type SJ1 (strata II–I), dated to the second half of the eight century BC.[9] According to Bikai, the SJ1 jar rim was result of morphological evolution of SJ4 jar rim. The latter became progressively lower and lower and finally the distinction between the rim and shoulders had almost completely disappeared.[10] In Sarepta, similar jar rims (Type SJ 18) appear in Stratum C (850/825–650 BC(?)), and their number is increasing significantly in Stratum B of the sixth–fifth centuries BC.[11]

[6] Sagona 1982: 85, Fig. 2.10.
[7] Lehmann 1996: 434, Pl. 72.
[8] Bikai 1987: 45, Pl. 23:589.
[9] Bikai 1978: Pls III:7–8; I:15–16 respectively.
[10] Bikai 1978: 49.
[11] Anderson 1988: 198–199, Pl. 38:24.



7. Sausage/twisted jars from Tell Keisan. Suggested morphological development of rims (Salles 1980: Fig. 2).

The type occurs in Hazor Area A, Strata VI–V (eight century to 732 BC destruction and post-destruction contexts dated to the seventh century BC).[12] However, in Mazar's opinion the eight century date for this type of jar 'appears to be too early'.[13]

At Tel Kabri, in a Phoenician fortress (Stratum E2), dated to the second half of the seventh century BC, parallel jars (Types 2 and 3) were found together with East Greek pottery.[14]

The closest parallels are found in Tell Keisan (**Fig. 6**), where this type occurs in Stratum 5 dated to 720–700/650 BC, and continues into Stratum 4 dated to 700/650–585 BC.[15] While in Stratum 5 these jars seem to be relatively few in number,[16] in Stratum 4 they are already very numerous.[17] The salvage excavations in 2005 conducted by the Israel Antiquity Authority yielded more fragments of this type of jars.[18]

Close parallels come also from the Iron Age III assemblage of nearby Tel Yoqne'am (Strata XII/XI, XI).[19] At Megiddo the 'waisted' jars with similar rims do not occur earlier than in Stratum III and continue throughout Strata II and I.[20] They were also found at Beth-Shean, Level IV.[21] At Tell el-Far'ah, this type of rim belongs to Stratum VIIe, which follows the 723 BC destruction.[22]

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[12] Yadin *et al*. 1958: Pl. LVII:14; 1961: Pl. CCXXX:29; Ben-Tor *et al*. 1997: Fig. III.50:17–18.

[13] Mazar 1985: 110, n. 15.

[14] Lehmann 2002: 198, Fig. 5.82.11–13.

[15] In the publication the transition between Strata 5 and 4 was fixed at 650 BC (Briend, Humbert 1980: 27; Salles 1980: 131). However, after two additional seasons of excavations (1978–1979), an alternative date was proposed, that is *c*. 700 BC (Humbert 1981: 382–385). See also: Humbert 1991: 590; Salles 1985.

[16] Chambon 1980: 175, Pl. 47:1a, 5.

[17] Salles 1980: 144–145, Pls 25:4–5, 7–8; 27:1–6a; Chambon 1980:163–164, Pls 1, 2a. It should be noted that pottery from Fosse 6078, which contained also fragments of discussed type of jars, and attributed erroneously by the excavators to Stratum 5, belongs in fact to Stratum 4 (Humbert 1981: 382–383 and n. 8).

[18] Feig 2012: Fig. 7:2.

[19] Ben-Tor, Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar 2005: 306, Type SJ IVC2, Fig. II.32:5.

[20] Lamon, Shipton 1939: 167, Pl. 16:79.

[21] James 1966: Figs 70:7; 72:10.

[22] Chambon 1984: 54, Pl. 45.23.

Returning to the coastal sites, the large number of this type of jars has been discovered at Tel Akko, both during the first series of excavations (1973–1989) by Moshe Dothan and the renewed excavations currently in progress, co-directed by Ann E. Killebrew (Pennsylvania State University) and Michal Artzy (University of Haifa).[23] Close parallels are found also at Shiqmona, a Phoenician port-town located at the foot of the Carmel cape. The jars there were found in the destruction layer of Stratum 9 dated to *c*. 750–600 BC.[24]

At Tel Dor, the jars find parallels in local types SJ 17a-b and 19b-c from Area A (Phases 10 and 9) and Area C2 (Phase 7).[25] Other parallels from the coast are found at Tell Qasile, Stratum VII of the seventh century BC,[26] Ashdod, Stratum VI, of the late seventh century BC.[27] Farther to the south, this type is known from Ashkelon, where it belongs to Phase 7, 604 BC destruction.[28] Inland, at Timnah (Tel Batash) it appears at the transition from the Iron Age to the Persian period[29] and in Lachish, Level III.[30]

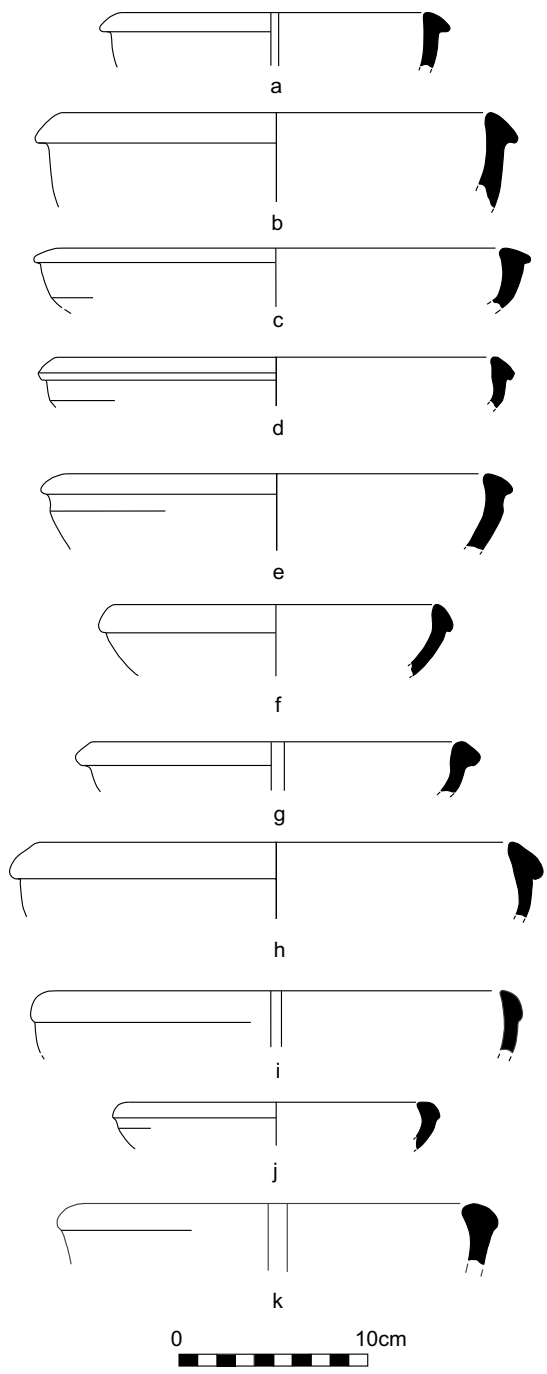
Outside Palestine such jars are known mainly in Cyprus, from Tomb 79 of the Royal Necropolis at Salamis, dated to the Cypro-Archaic period. The excavator classified them as 'Canaanite jars' under the Plain White V ware of Gjerstard's typology.[31] Other examples are known from Kition, Area II.[32] One of them bears a short Phoenician inscription, which *d'après la forme des lettres* may possibly be dated to the beginning of the sixth century BC[33] and belongs to Bikai's 'Amathus horizon' broadly dated to after 700 to after 600 BC.[34]

Bowls

Type BL 1 **(Fig. 8)**

Bowls of this type are characterized by thickened and out-folded rim. There are many variants as regards the profile of the rim, which can be either thick or slender and elongated. In most examples from Shaʿar-Ha ʾAmakim the rim base outside forms a sharp angle with the wall. In some cases the angle is either smoothed away or rounded off against the wall of a bowl; the oblique lip of the rim can be pointed or rounded.[35] The body is usually rounded, but carinated examples also occur. Base is flat, sometimes slightly concave. Such bowls are common throughout the country, both in north and south, and they range

[23] Personal communication by Ann E. Killebrew.
[24] Elgavish 1994: Fig. 50.
[25] Gilboa 1995: 12.
[26] Mazar 1985: 110, Fig. 57:5–6.
[27] Ben-Shlomo 2005: 232, Fig. 3.108:5 with references to other parallels from this site.
[28] Barako 2008: 444, Fig. 23.14; Stager, Master, Schloen 2011: 100, Fig. 6.10; Master 2003: 59, Fig. 9.2.
[29] Mazar, Panitz-Cohen 2001: 104, Type SJ15b, Pl. 104:20.
[30] Zimhoni 2004: Fig. 26.22:7.
[31] Karageorghis 1973–1974: 115–116, no. 593, Pls XLVII, CCXXV; no. 807, Pls XLVII, CCXXV; no. 806, Pl. CCXXV; Gjerstad *et al.* 1935: Pl. 133:3; Gjerstad 1948: 88, Fig. 56; 1960: 114, Fig. 6:8.
[32] Bikai 1987: Pl. XXIII:589, 624–626.
[33] Amadasi, Karageorghis 1977: 166, Pl. XXI:1, 3.
[34] Bikai 1987: 69, 81, Pl. XXIII:589.
[35] See also: Franken, Steiner 1990: 103, Figs 6–18.



8. Bowls Type BL 1 from Sha‘ar-Ha ʾAmakim (Drawing: M. Burdajewicz).

in time from the end of the tenth century until the beginning of the sixth century BC, and thus they cannot serve as precise chronological indicator, especially when only small rim fragments are found.

Parallels are known from Hazor[36] and Tell Keisan Strata 5–4.[37] In Megiddo bowls of out--folded rim tradition (Types 62–65) are very common throughout Strata I–IV, broadly dated from the ninth to the sixth century.[38] Some examples were found in Beth-Shean, Level IV (the University Museum Expedition) and Area P7 (the Hebrew University Excavations).[39] In Tell Qasile such bowls belong to Stratum VII, dated to the eight-seventh centuries BC.[40] In Mezad Hashavyahu fortress, parallel bowls (Types 10–11, 13) are dated to the period between 620–604 (–587/6?) BC.[41] In Gezer Stratum VA, they correspond to types BL 50A-C (rounded) and BL 71 (slightly carinated) dated to the seventh-sixth centuries BC.[42] These bowls correspond to Franken's Class 4 in Jerusalem (South-East Hill), where they occurred already in Phase 2 of the ninth/eighth century, but they were particularly frequent in Phases 7–8, dated to the seventh century BC.[43] Numerous examples were also found in Jerusalem's Cave II, dated to between 698 and *c*. 650 BC.[44]

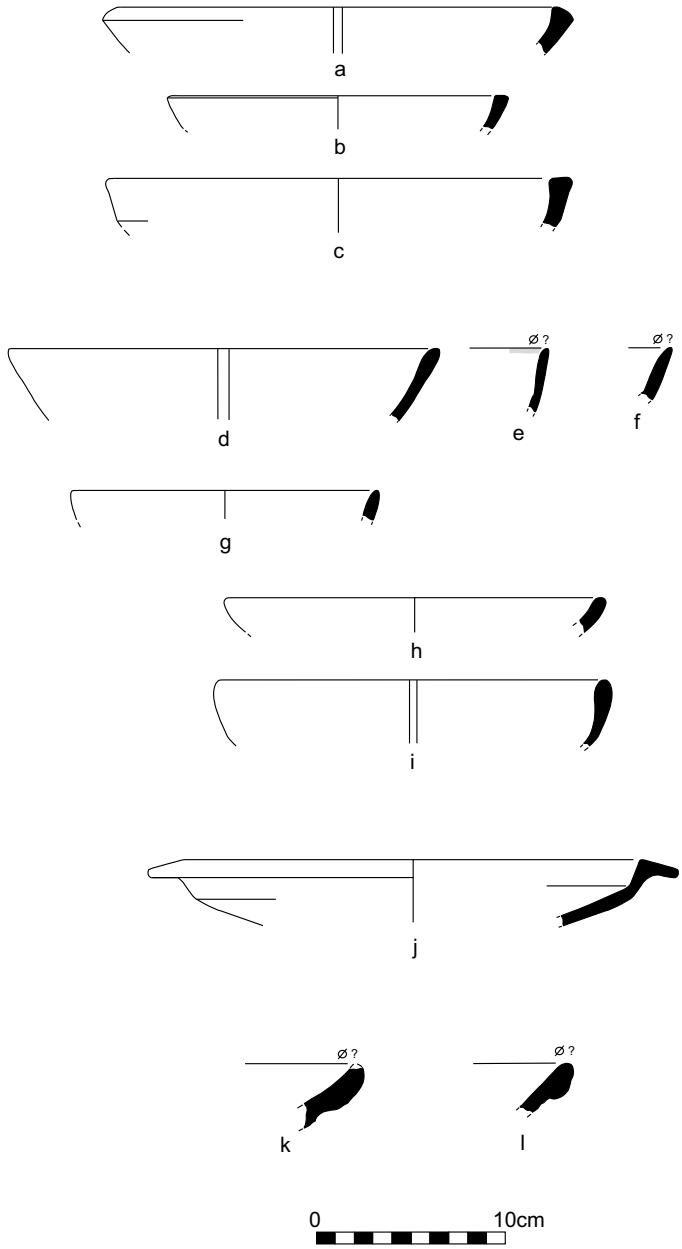
Type BL 2–3

The next two types, BL 2 and BL 3 represent a very simple body form. They can be slightly carinated, rounded or straight in profile, with thick or thin walls. The rim form may also take a variety of shapes, it can be rounded, square or pointed, horizontal or oblique on the exterior. Sometimes the rim is slightly thickened, that is, wider than the body wall on the interior and/or exterior. It seems that these differences are not very significant from the chronological point of view. Such simple bowls occur throughout the Iron Age II period at almost every site.

Among bowls of type BL 2 two subtypes can be distinguished:

– BL 2a (**Fig. 9a**) – a rounded bowl with oblique rim, slightly thickened inward; it corresponds to the type B 1/c from Tell Qiri,[45] and type BL 13b from Tel Dor, Phase 9;[46] similar rims occur among Period IV bowls from Samaria;[47]
– BL 2b (**Fig. 9b-c**) – two rounded bowls with horizontal square rim; as the parallels bowls from Tell Qiri, types B Ib and B IIb, could be cited.[48]

[36] Yadin *et al*. 1958, Pls LXI:16, 17; LXIII:7.
[37] Briend, Humbert (Eds) 1980: Pls 30:1; 41:3.
[38] Lamon, Shipton 1939: 169, Pl. 25:62–65.
[39] James 1966: Fig. 68:9–11; Mazar 2006: 328, Type BL 52, Pl. 27:5–14.
[40] Mazar 1985: Fig. 55:11–24.
[41] Fantalkin 2001: 57–58, Fig. 23.
[42] Gitin 1990: 167–168, 195, Pl. 27:24, 28.
[43] Franken, Steiner 1990: 103–104, Figs 6–16, 18; for chronology of Class 4, see there: 74, Figs 4–7.
[44] Eshel 1995: 41, Fig. 14:1–22.
[45] Hunt 1987: 145, 191, Fig. 37.
[46] Gilboa 1995: 3, Fig. 1.4:3.
[47] Kenyon 1957: Fig. 7:2.
[48] Hunt 1987: 145, 191, Fig. 37.



9. Bowls from Sha'ar-Ha'Amakim: Type BL 2 (a-c), BL 3 (d-i), BL 4 (j), BL 5 (k-l) (Drawing: M. Burdajewicz).

Also in the group of bowls type BL 3 two subtypes could be distinguished:
– BL 3a (**Fig. 9d-g**) – the rather thin walls of these bowls are oblique or almost straight, and simple rims are rounded or slightly pointed; bowl **Fig. 9f**, with the walls slightly oblique above the carination point, has parallels, among others, in Beth-Shean, Strata P-10 – P-7,[49] Tell el-Far'ah (N), Strata VIIb, d,[50] Samaria, Period IV,[51] and Tel Dor, phase 9;[52]
– BL 3b (**Fig. 9h-i**) – rounded bowls with simple, slightly thickened rounded rim; parallel examples are Types 11a and 12a from Tel Dor (phase 9) and some bowls from Stratum 5 at Tell Keisan.[53]

Type BL 4
Of special interest is the fragment of a shallow bowl which belongs to a type attested in Sha'ar-Ha 'Amakim by only one example (**Fig. 9j**). The bowl is characterized by a well-marked carination in the higher part of the vessel, and a sharply everted and downturned elongated rim. The surface is pale-yellow to orange, interior brownish-red with concentric burnishing. Such bowls occur in the late eighth and seventh centuries BC ceramic tradition, and it is assumed that this type is of Phoenician origin.[54] The closest parallels are from Strata C2 and C1 at Sarepta, type X–2,[55] Strata VII–V at Hazor,[56] Stratum 5 at Tell Keisan,[57] Stratum XI at Yoqne'am, type PNe,[58] and Tel Dor, Type BL 5a-b.[59] In Cyprus, such bowls are known mainly from Kition, but also from Amathus, Dhali, and Aya Irini-*Paleokastro*. P. Bikai classified them under the general term 'common ware plates', which were probably of Phoenician manufacture. They belong to Bikai's 'Kition horizon' dated to 750(?) to after 700 BC.[60]

Type BL 5
Two fragments (**Fig. 9k-l**) belong to large shallow bowls with out-folded, thickened rims. They represent a well-known family of vessels commonly known as mortaria, associated with grinding of foodstuffs. Mortaria once were considered as typical for the Persian and Hellenistic periods.[61] However, it seems now that ceramic mortaria, as a cheaper version of the basalt grinding vessels, had appeared already in the eighth century BC somewhere

[49] Mazar 2006: 326–327, type BL 55, Fig. 12.1.
[50] Chambon 1984: Pl. 57:8–11.
[51] Kenyon 1957: Fig. 6:6.
[52] Gilboa 1995: 4, type BL 22a, b, Fig. 1.3:24–25.
[53] Gilboa 1995: 3, Fig. 1.4:7–8; Chambon 1980: Pl. 41:10.
[54] Hunt 1987: 203; Gilboa 1995: 3.
[55] Anderson 1988: 144–145, Pls 35:7–9; 36:20.
[56] Yadin *et al*. 1961: Pls 182:19; 214:13; Yadin *et al*. 1958: Pl. LXXI:10.
[57] Chambon 1980: Pl. 39:6, 6a-e.
[58] Hunt 1987: 148, 203, Fig. 44:3; Ben-Tor, Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar 2005: Fig. II.10:6.
[59] Gilboa 1995: 3, Fig. 1.3:7–8.
[60] Bikai 1987: 41–43, 69, Pl. XX:552, 555.
[61] Stern 1982: 97–98.

in the northeastern Mediterranean. By the seventh century they became common along the entire Levantine coast, distributed probably by Phoenician traders.

Parallels for rims from Shaʿar-Ha ʾAmakim can be found, among others, in Tell Keisan, Level 4,[62] Tel Kabri, Stratum E2,[63] Tel Yoqneʿam,[64] Tell Qasile,[65] Mezad Hashavyahu,[66] and Ashkelon.[67]

CONCLUSIONS

The first and most important conclusion is that Shaʿar-Ha ʾAmakim should be placed on the map of Iron Age II sites in the Akko plain. The Iron Age pottery finds presented above, especially rims of the neckless jars, attest a settlement period ranging from at least the end of the eight century until the beginning of the sixth century BC. The distribution pattern of these jars indicates their south Phoenician origin. A long time ago it was claimed that these vessels might have been manufactured within the boundaries of the Akko Plain, possibly at Tell Keisan itself.[68]

It seems interesting to consider the potential historical significance of the finds described above, especially with respect to a possible identification of Shaʿar-Ha ʾAmakim with ancient Gaba. However, in order to check it, we have to start with a short presentation of the data relating to the Late Bronze Age period.

According to E. Dvorjetski,[69] the topographical list of Canaanite cities conquered by Thutmose III in 1468 BC mentions Gaba-Saman, that is Geva Shemen in Hebrew, which means 'the hill of oil'. The city's name appears also in the description of the second campaign of Thutmose's son, Amenhotep II, who returned to Canaan in 1429 BC in order to suppress the rebellion of cities in the Yezreel Valley. From the description it is clear that this Gaba was a stronghold guarding the entrance from the Valley of Yezreel to the Akko Plain. It is generally agreed upon that Gaba from Egyptian sources should be identified with Tell ʾAmr (Tel Ma'amer), a mound situated in a narrow pass connecting the Akko Plain and the Valley of Yezreel, *c*. 1.5km to the north-east of Shaʿar-Ha ʾAmakim (**Fig. 2**).[70] It is probably also the 'Haroshet of the Gentiles', near which the Judge Barak defeated Sisera, the Commander of the Canaanite King Jabin (*Judges* 4: 5). Indeed, excavations at Tell ʾAmr have yielded pottery finds confirming the existence of settlement there from the Late Bronze throughout the Iron Age II–Persian period.[71]

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[62] Salles 1980: Pl. 31:5, 5a, 6, 6a.
[63] Lehmann 2002: Fig. 5.78:13–14.
[64] Ben-Tor, Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar 2005: 247, Fig. II.5.
[65] Mazar 1985: Fig. 58:3, 4.
[66] Fantalkin 2001: Fig. 29.
[67] Stager, Master, Schloen 2011: Fig. 7.52–53.
[68] Salles 1980: 145.
[69] Dvorjetski 2009: 7–9.
[70] Dvorjetski 2009: 9, n. 20.
[71] Prausnitz 1993: 31; Lehmann 2001: 104; Olami, Sender, Oren 2004: 37.

At the beginning of the Iron Age, Geva Shemen/Tell ʾAmr and Shaʿar-Ha ʾAmakim constituted part of the territory of the tribe of Asher (*Jos*. 19: 25–29), which corresponded roughly with the Akko Plain. However, in the middle of the tenth century BC, if not earlier, the Akko Plain was already within the boundaries of the city-state of Tyre.[72] In the biblical narrative it is mentioned that King Salomon gave twenty cites of the 'Land of Cabul' to Hiram, King of Tyre (1 *Kings* 9: 11–13), while in another place the narrative records that it was Hiram who offered these cities to Salomon (2 *Chron*. 8: 2). No matter what the truth was, we can take for granted the existence of close political, cultural and economic ties between both rulers, apparently with supremacy of Tyre.[73]

According to B. Mazar, Tell ʾAmr was abandoned in the Hellenistic period and its inhabitants moved to nearby Khirbet el-Kharithiya, identified in turn with the ruins of the Arabic village located in the immediate vicinity of the kibbutz Shaʿar-Ha ʾAmakim.[74] However, the pottery evidence presented here clearly indicates that the site of Shaʿar-Ha ʾAmakim was occupied already in the Iron Age II. The amount of the Iron Age II pottery at the site is relatively small, but sufficient to confirm the occupation of the site long before the Hellenistic Gaba was founded. It would be difficult to accept the view that this pottery, especially from the fill of the 'Cistern' G/R, was brought by the inhabitants from a distance, for example from Tell ʾAmr. Thus, one has to admit the co-existence of both settlements during the Iron Age II. In this context some questions arise. Where have the inhabitants of Shaʿar-Ha ʾAmakim come from? What were mutual relationships between both sites? Were they independent from each other?

In the present author's opinion, the site of Shaʿar Ha ʾAmakim could have been closely tied to the nearby Tell ʾAmr. Due to the location on the hill, the site provided a panoramic view extending from the Mediterranean littoral in the west to the Yezreel Valley in the east. From the strategic point of view, it was an extremely important place, which in this respect definitely towered over Tell ʾAmr situated below, on the floor of the valley. It is then plausible that Shaʿar-Ha ʾAmakim served as an outpost of the Tell ʾAmr, a kind of observation point. Although architectural remains from the Iron Age have not been found at the site, one cannot exclude the existence of a watchtower or even a small fortress (as was the case in the Hellenistic/Roman period) with permanent crew. The fact that such structures existed on the Akko Plain during the Iron Age II period is confirmed by discovery of a fort-store at Horbat Rosh Zayit (tenth – early ninth century BC), identified with biblical Cabul, and located in the border zone between Akko Plain and the Lower Galileean Mountains.[75] Via such military posts, warning aural and/or visual (fire) signals could be quickly sent from one site to another, in this case from Shaʿar-Ha ʾAmakim to the inhabitants of Tell ʾAmr. Such a practice is well documented in ancient texts, e.g. in the ostracon 4 from Lachish written on the eve of the Babylonian conquest in 586 BC.[76]

[72] Lehmann 2001: 193.
[73] Lehmann 2001: 92.
[74] As cited by Dvorjetski 2009: 7, 9–10.
[75] Gal, Alexandre 2000: 198–199.
[76] Ahituv 2008: 70.

The last issue is the end of the Iron Age settlement and transition to the Persian and Hellenistic periods. On one hand, the pottery finds indicate that the settlement continued at least to the very end of the seventh century or even to the beginning of the sixth century BC. On the other hand, the next clearly identified phase of occupation can be dated by pottery to the fifth/fourth century at the earliest. It is then impossible to state what happened on the site in between. We cannot exclude neither the occupational gap nor continuation of the settlement, even on a smaller scale. In any case, a sudden renascence of the settlement is clearly observable in pottery finds dated already to the later Persian period.[77]

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[77] Phase A: Młynarczyk 2009b: 98.

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