

The Late Roman Army in the Near East from Diocletian to the Arab Conquest

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The Roman Legionary Camp at Legio, Israel: Results of an Archaeological Survey and Observations on the Roman Military Presence at the Site

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Abstract

The survey of the Legio area, conducted on behalf of Tel Aviv University in 1998-2000, recovered numerous finds related to settlement sites in the region, and enabled us to suggest the locations of a Jewish village, a Roman military camp and a Roman-Byzantine city in a well-defined geographical area, characterized by an abundant water source throughout the year and an important road junction in the northern Land of Israel. The paper presents the finds of the survey, focusing on the Roman military camp at Legio. The location of the camp was determined with the assistance of the survey finds and analysis of the routes of Roman roads and aqueducts, and the distribution of cremation burials. The size of the camp was ascertained on the basis of old maps, aerial photographs and the ceramic finds of the survey. The paper takes into account the results of other surveys and excavations conducted in the area and the discovery of roof tiles with stamps of the legions stationed at the camp site. The summary presents preliminary conclusions, within the limitations of the study, relating to the Roman military presence at Legio.

Introduction

In the Early Roman period, the village of Kefar 'Othnai was located on a ridge south of Nahal Qeni, which runs into the Jezreel Valley south of Tel Megiddo. The site is situated between Samaria and Galilee, and between the coastal plain and the northern valleys of Israel. Its location at a geographical meeting point where there are abundant water sources and next to a junction of ancient roads made this an important site in the Roman period. In the first half of the second century CE, a small Roman fort was erected in a commanding strategic position near the village, and the permanent camp of the *Legio VI Ferrata* was established on a hill northwest of Nahal Qeni. A network of Roman imperial roads runs to and from the site, and the place is mentioned in historical sources. The site was originally referred to by its Hebrew name, *Caparcotani*, and later by the name of Legio. During the Roman period, the Jewish village increased in size and incorporated a Samaritan population as well, becoming a large civilian settlement alongside the legionary camp. Apparently in the late third or early fourth century, after the abandonment of the legionary headquarters, the city of Maximianopolis was founded south and west of Tel Megiddo. After the Muslim conquest a village named Lejjun was built on the ruins of the city, spreading all over the southern slopes of Nahal

Qeni (Fig. 1). Its name preserved the memory of the legionary camp of the Roman period up to modern times.¹ This paper focuses on the results of an archaeological survey carried out in the vicinity of Legio, supported by the results of archaeological excavations.² The paper will present the results of the survey and our conclusions with respect to the location of the legionary camp in this well-defined geographical area that included a Jewish village, a Roman military camp and a Roman-Byzantine city.³

History of research

Although historical-geographic research in the early twentieth century was aware of the existence of Kefar 'Othnai, a legionary camp and a Roman-Byzantine city in the area of Legio, their precise location was not

¹ For the geographical background of the site, a historical overview of the sites in the vicinity of Legio and preliminary results of the survey, see Tepper 2002: 231-242; 2003; 2003a: 29*-31*. For the historical sources on the sites of the region, see also Tsafir, Di Segni and Green 1994: 170.

² The archaeological survey at Legio was conducted on behalf of the Department of Classical Studies of Tel Aviv University, with the support of the Institute of Archaeology and the Megiddo excavation expedition of Tel Aviv University. I wish to thank the dedicated survey team, Y. Tepper, A. Caspi, A. Blumenkrantz and M. Shomroni, as well as Profs. B. Isaac, I. Roll, I. Finkelstein, D. Ussishkin, I. Shatzman and M. Gichon, Dr. Y. Shahar, D. Avshalom-Gorni and G. Stiebel for their assistance throughout the project and their constructive comments. I am grateful to Prof. A. Segal, Dr. T. Tsuk and H. Abu Uqsa for permission to use data from their excavations at Legio, and to the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) for permission to use archival data and publish them here, as well as preliminary data from excavations and surveys conducted by the IAA in the vicinity of Legio and within Megiddo Prison. My thanks to the committed staff of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University and my colleagues at the IAA. Finally, I am most grateful to Prof. A. Lewine, who encouraged me to complete the writing of this study and assisted in publishing it.

³ This study was written after the completion of a comprehensive archaeological survey of the site and the preliminary publication of its results (Tepper 2003) and during the extensive excavations carried out under my direction on behalf of the IAA within Megiddo Prison (2003-2005). The abundant finds of the survey include architectural finds, inscriptions, roof tiles and small finds including coins and items of military equipment; not all of them can be discussed within the scope of the present article. The above-mentioned excavations will be published in full in the framework of the publications of the IAA. It should be emphasized here that the excavations within the prison exposed the remains of a large Jewish village. On the village's western margin we uncovered a large residential building that also served as Roman officers' quarters; in one of its wings was an Early Christian prayer hall (Tepper and Di Segni, in press).

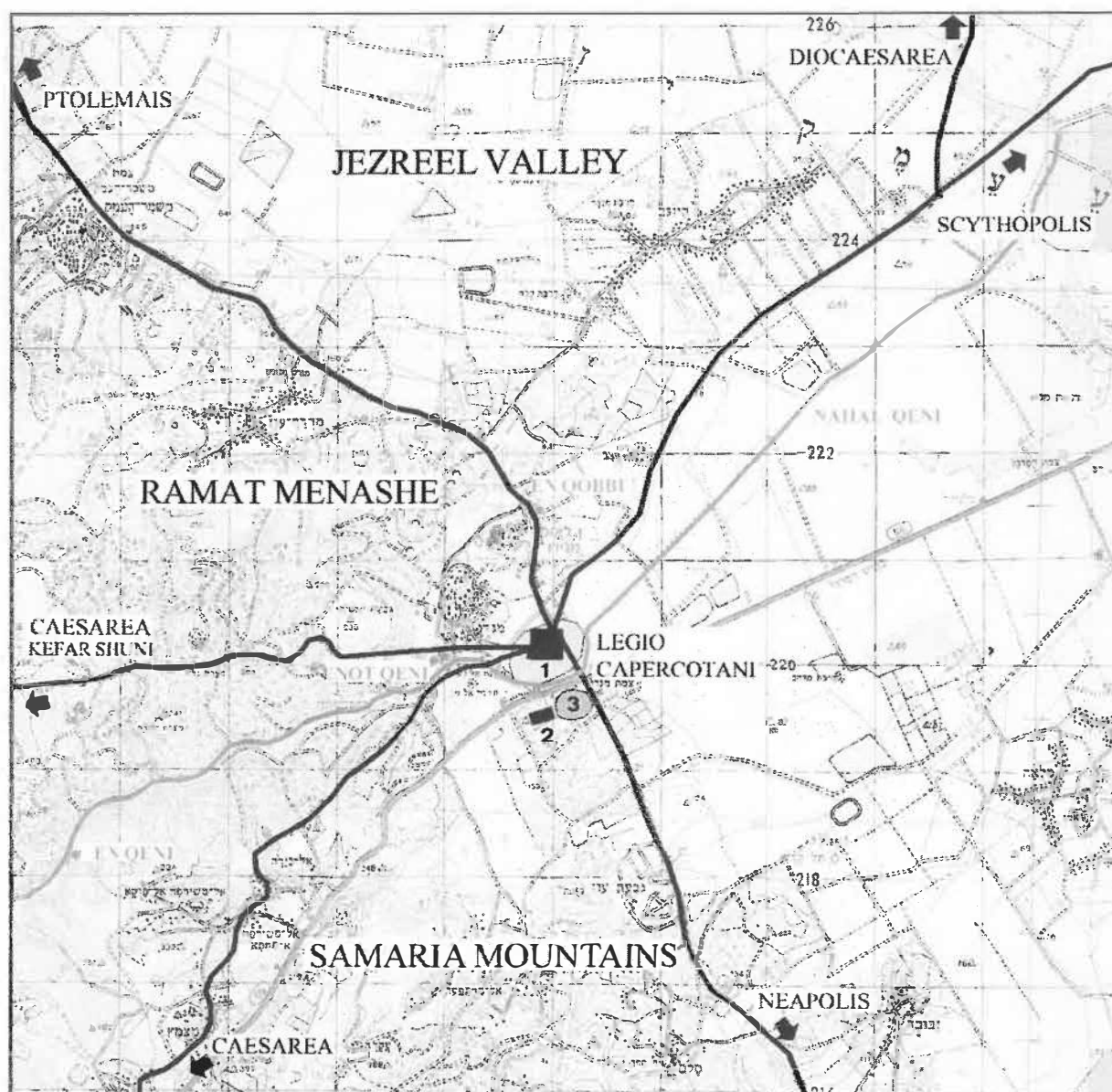


Fig. 1: General location map showing the sites (no. 1: the Roman army camp and the civilian village; no. 2: the Roman fort; no. 3: the Jewish village) and the Roman roads from Legio.

established by the numerous scholars who visited and studied the region.⁴

Nevertheless, as early as 1908 Schumacher, the first excavator and researcher of Tel Megiddo, identified a Roman military fort on the summit of the ridge south of Nahal Qeni and proposed that this was the legionary base.⁵ Schumacher exposed the rectangular fort (35 x 55

m), with walls built of large field stones and roofed entrance gates on the east and west. Remains of earthen ramparts were preserved on the north and southwest of the fort (Fig. 2). Although the topographical and spatial limitations of the area dictate that the fort could not have housed a Roman military unit larger than a small *auxilia*,⁶ many scholars accepted Schumacher's assessment that

⁴ Thomsen 1907: 83-85; McElderry 1908: 10-13; Hartman 1910: 169-188; Nelson 1913: Dalman 1914: 34-37; Ramsay 1916: 129-131; Ritterling 1925: 1587-1596; Reeg 1989: 361-363.

⁵ Schumacher (1908: 176, Tafel 1) noted the presence here of a legionary camp, but did not identify it explicitly. Neeman (personal communication) recorded remains of walls and terraces in the same place, as did Illan (1988: 71), who described thick walls at least 37 m long.

⁶ The ridge south of Nahal Qeni on which Schumacher identified the fort is currently covered by a forest of pine and cypress, hindering the work of archaeological survey. Few potsherds were collected at the site, only about 40 of which could be identified and dated. Among these, 70% (including lamps) are of the Roman period and the remainder of the Byzantine and Early Muslim periods. This appears to support the dating of the fort described by Schumacher (1908: 188-190) to the Roman period; see Tepper 2003: 160, Fig. 91).

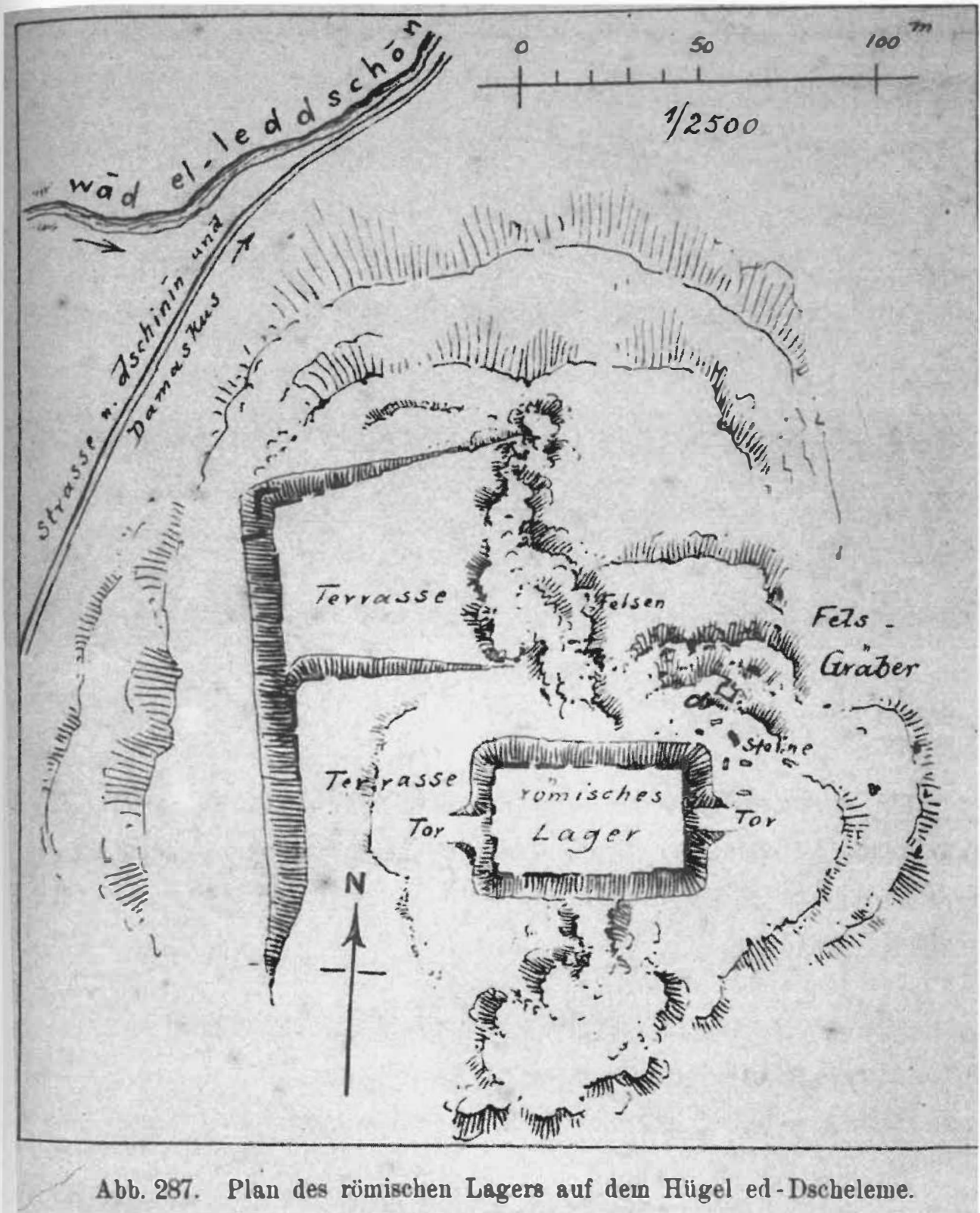


Abb. 287. Plan des römischen Lagers auf dem Hügel ed-Dscheleme.

Fig. 2: Schumacher's map (1908) of the fort on the summit of the ridge south of Nahal Qeni.

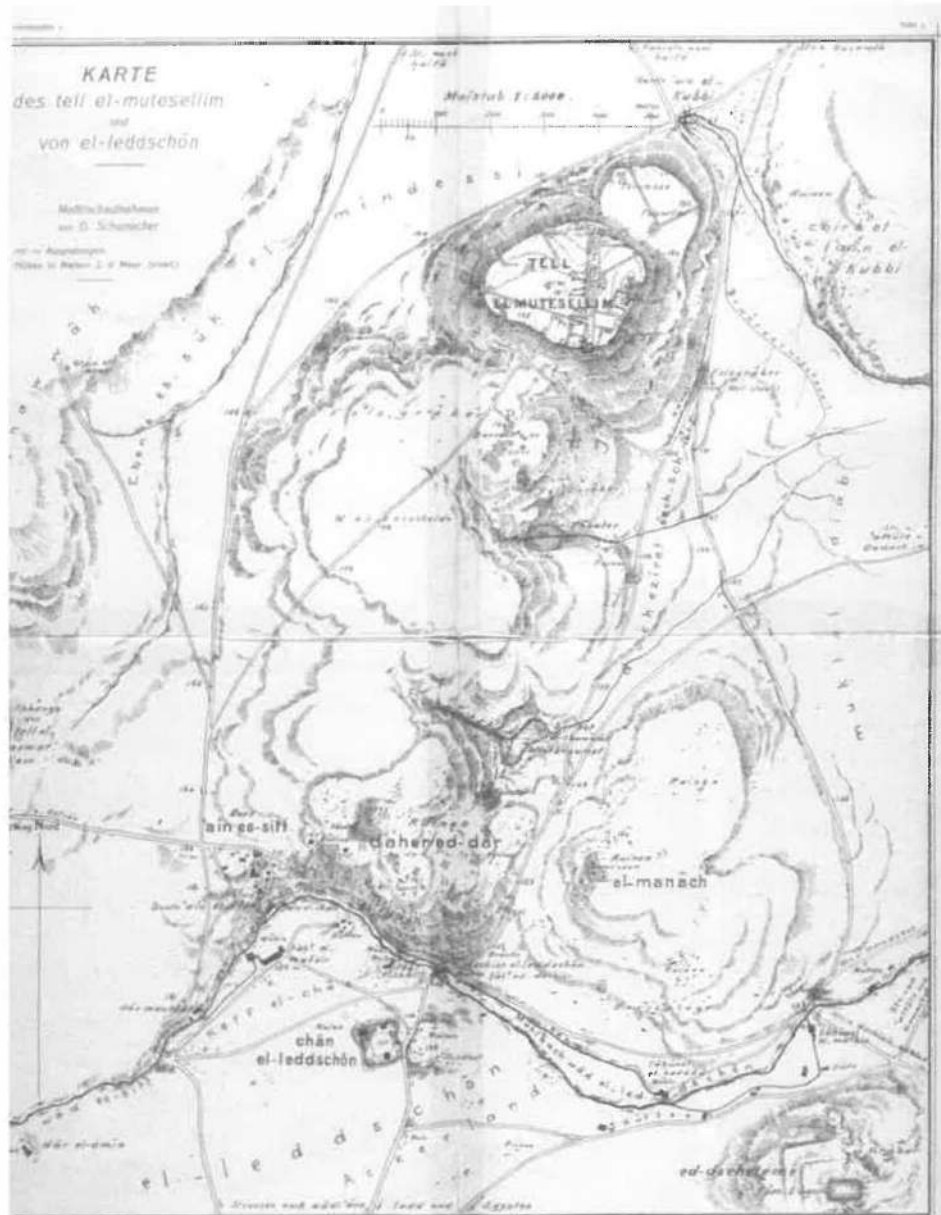


Fig 3: Schumacher's map (1908), see the aqueduct of 'Ein el-Qobbi, the upper aqueduct, west to el-Menach Hill and the lower aqueduct east to the hill.

this structure on the ridge was the legionary headquarters.⁷

On the other hand, from the second half of the twentieth century various scholars have pointed to a hill north of Nahal Qeni as the headquarters of the *Legio VI Ferrata*.⁸

⁷ Thus, for instance, Safrai (1992: 104-105), who entirely overlooks these limitations and states that the central structure described by Schumacher as a fort was the *principia* of a large military camp whose boundaries were the terrace walls. As a result of earthworks carried out in the area, mostly during the First and Second World Wars, and subsequent forestation, most of the remains on the ridge have been destroyed, and today it is difficult to trace them in the field.

⁸ Preliminary testing of the area was carried out by Prof. M. Gichon of Tel Aviv University with the intention of conducting archaeological excavations on the hill. The finds included roof tiles with legionary stamps.

Isaac and Roll⁹ surveyed the Roman road from Legio to Scythopolis (Beth-Shean), demonstrating by measurement of the milestone stations along the road that it originated on this hill. The "Hill of the Campground," or el-Manach, as it is called in transcription from Arabic in Mandatory period maps,¹⁰ is located northwest of the modern Megiddo Junction and at a junction of dirt roads and footpaths on Schumacher's map¹¹ (Fig. 3). The traditional Arabic name (the "place of encampment" or "campground") used for the hill by the inhabitants of the

⁹ Isaac and Roll 1982: 34-35, 86; see also Tsuk 1988-9: 92-97; Raban 1999: 104-105, Site 167.

¹⁰ Palestina, 1: 20000. Megiddo, S.S: 16-22. 1942.

¹¹ Schumacher 1908: Tafel. Karte des tell el-Mutesellim und el-Ledd Schön.

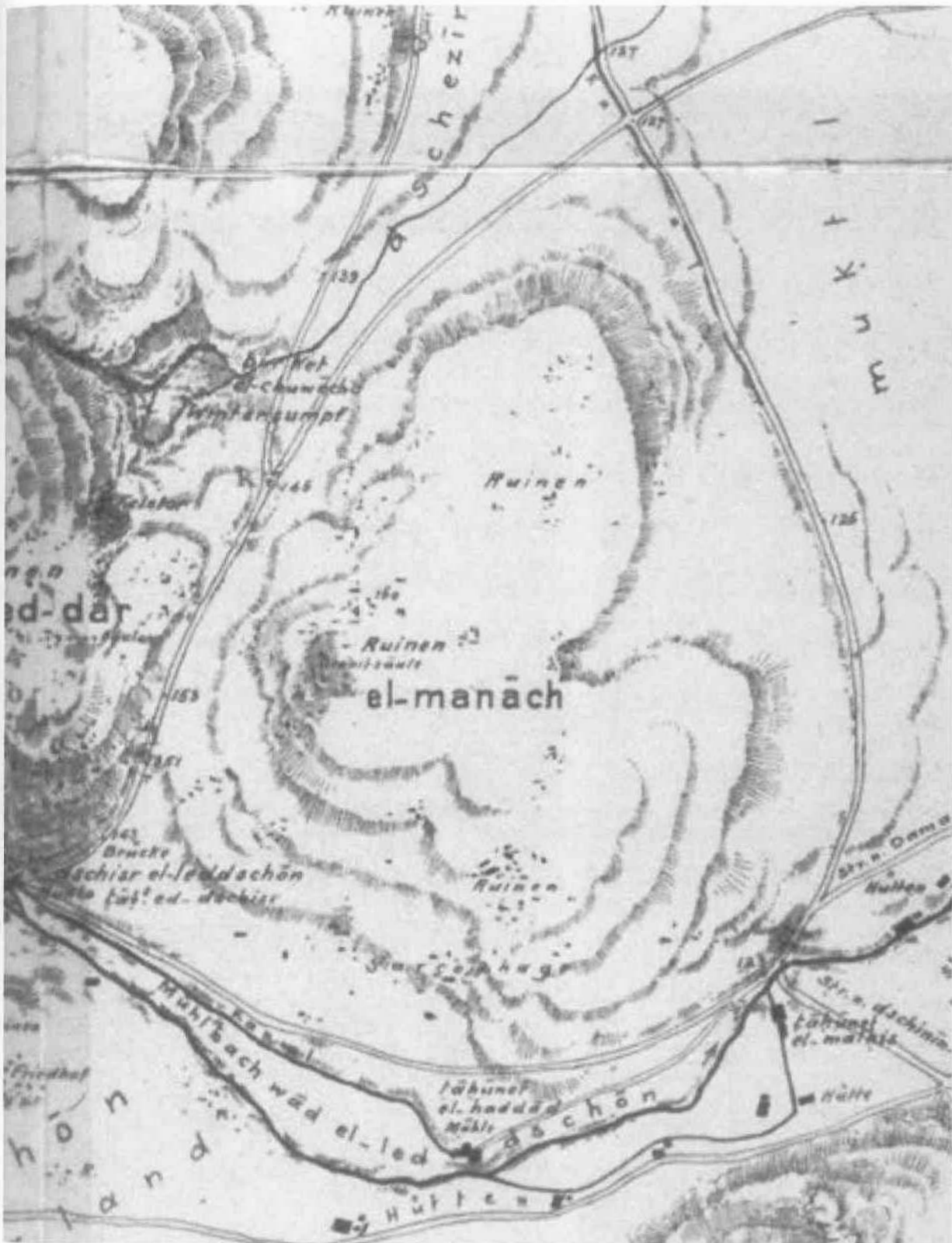


Fig. 4: The hill of el-Manach in Schumacher's survey map (1908). In the northern part of the hill is a square enclosure with earthen ramparts on the north and east.

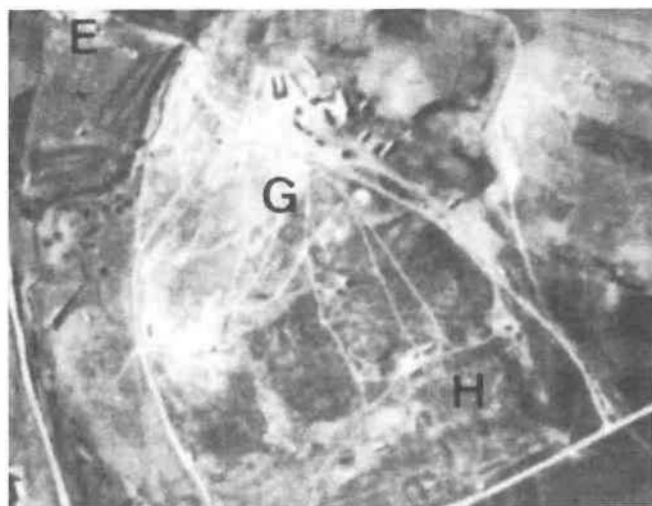


Fig. 5: Aerial photograph (P.S. 680, No. 50680) of the hill of el-Manach, in which the Camp enclosure is visible (H) (courtesy Gichon Collection).

area in the early twentieth century,¹² as well as its location at a junction of roads and footpaths, support the assumption of researchers of Roman roads that the legionary headquarters was sited on this hill.

On the basis of historical sources, various scholars have claimed that a second Legion was sent to Judaea in the early part of the reign of Hadrian (117-138 CE),¹³ or a little earlier, at the end of the reign of Trajan (98-117 CE),¹⁴ to reinforce the *Legion X Fretensis* stationed in Jerusalem. In any case, the stationing of the second Legion in the Land of Israel reflects to Provincia Judaea's change in status to a consular province.¹⁵ Cotton and Eck demonstrated through Latin inscriptions found at Caesarea that the change in status to a consular province did in fact take place during Trajan's reign, and thus that the second Legion arrived in the province at this time.¹⁶ Some scholars have claimed that it was the *Legion VI Ferrata* that was transferred from Arabia and made its permanent camp at Kefar 'Othnai.¹⁷ On the basis of a milestone inscription, Isaac and Roll proposed that the first Legion that arrived at the site was the *Legion II Traiana*, perhaps as early as 117 CE, and that the *Legion VI Ferrata* was posted there shortly afterwards.¹⁸ On the other hand, Cotton believes that the *Sixth Legion* arrived at the site from Gerasa between 119 and 127 CE, and that

the *Second Legion* was transferred from Egypt after 127 CE.¹⁹

From the historical sources it is difficult to establish when the site was abandoned, and the issue is still under debate.²⁰ It has been claimed that the *Legion VI Ferrata* left Legio for Alexandria during the reign of Alexander Severus²¹ or during the third century,²² while a fourth-century date has also been proposed.²³

Diocletian (284-305 CE), who instituted changes in the central military command structure and administration, visited the Land of Israel in 286 CE and transferred the *Legion X Fretensis* from Jerusalem to Aila (Aqaba). Military units consisting of cavalry, archers and camel riders were posted on his command to the lands of the new province and along the eastern limes. He transferred the *Fourth Legion* to el-Lejjun and the *Third Legion* to Bostra in Transjordan, and there is no apparent evidence for the presence of the *Legion VI Ferrata* in the province after the late third century.²⁴ Indeed, the *Sixth Legion* is absent from the *Notitia Dignitatum*, and it does not figure in the deployment of Roman military forces in the Land of Israel or in the changes that took place in the province from the fourth century onwards.²⁵

The Legionary Camp in maps and aerial photographs

In Schumacher's map²⁶ the hill of el-Manach is marked as a large triangle, with its apex in the north and its base in the south, bordering Nahal Qeni (Fig. 4). The area of the hill is some 420 dunams (42 hectares) and it is surrounded by dirt roads.²⁷ In the northeast corner of the hill Schumacher marked an extensive area of antiquities bordered on the east, north and northwest by an earthen rampart. A local watercourse has apparently cut into the slope of the hill and eroded the east rampart and part of the west one. The dimensions of the enclosure on the summit of the hill that appears on Schumacher's map is 250 x 250 m. A square enclosure, including the rampart, of similar dimensions and position is clearly visible on an aerial photograph (Fig. 5).²⁸ During 1945-1946 a large

¹² Sharoni 1987: 1266.

¹³ Avi-Yonah 1973: 209-213; Keppie 1973: 859-864.

¹⁴ Eck 1984: 55-67; Pflaum 1969: 232-233.

¹⁵ In this context, some scholars (e.g. Lifshitz 1960: 109-111) have claimed that the arrival of the *Sixth Legion* at Legio was a Roman response to the Bar Kochba Revolt, although this proposal has been rejected; see Tsafir 1984: 350; Oppenheimer 1991: 32.

¹⁶ Cotton and Eck 2001: 219-223.

¹⁷ Lifshitz 1960: 109-111; Pflaum 1969: 232-233; Avi-Yonah 1973: 209-213; Keppie 1973: 859-864; Dąbrowa 1996: 285.

¹⁸ Isaac and Roll 1982: 9; Ibid. 1979: 54-66; 1979a: 149-156; 1998: 198-207; 1998a: 208-210; Rea 1980: 220-221.

¹⁹ Cotton 2000: 351-357.

²⁰ Cotton 2000 *contra* Ritterling 1925: 1593.

²¹ Hirschfeld 1991: 182.

²² Isaac 1990: 433.

²³ Safrir 1992: 104.

²⁴ Tsafir 1984: 359-365.

²⁵ *Notitia Dignitatum*, Ed. Seeck: 72-73; Tsafir 1984: 362-371.

²⁶ Schumacher 1908: Tafel 1.

²⁷ Schumacher (1908: Tafel 1. Abb. 234-235) describes on the south of the hill a wall 1 m wide (an outer wall?), with a row of sarcophagi along its outer face. This burial ground was located in the survey (Tepper 2003: 109, Fig. 41). The possibility that this was the southern outer wall of a legionary camp covering a large area on the border of the hill of el-Manach was examined, but in the absence of adequate archaeological data and in view of the evidence of maps and aerial photographs, this possibility was rejected.

²⁸ The photograph (P.S. 680, No. 5068) was taken on December 16th, 1946 (Gichon Collection). Aerial photographs are a standard and valuable tool in research of this kind; see, for example, Fabian 1995: 235-240; Kennedy 2002: 99-110.

part of the hill was occupied by a British military camp. Since the 1950s the hill was intensively cultivated, and no architectural remains, apart from the upper west rampart, were found.

The legionary camp at Legio has never been excavated. However, its area may be estimated on the basis of the results of the survey, and especially the aerial photographs and other measurements, as about 60 dunams (6 hectares). It was thus similar in area to other Roman military camps in this part of the Empire.

The camp of the *Tenth Legion* in Jerusalem, according to a schematic plan of its first stage after the Great Revolt (67 CE), had estimated dimensions of 150 x 250 m, an area of only 37.5 dunams (3.75 hectares). In its second stage up to 285 CE the estimated area of the camp adjacent to the Temple Mount was 31-35 dunams.²⁹ The legionary camp at Tel Shalem, where an inscription of a *vexillatio* of the *Legion VI Ferata* was found, is estimated as measuring 180-210 m, or 38 dunams (3.8 hectares).³⁰ In the days of Diocletian the camp at el-Lejjun in Transjordan measured 190 x 240 m or 46.5 dunams (4.65 hectares), judging by the line of its excavated walls.³¹ Consequently, it seems that Roman military camps in Provincia Judaea³² were smaller than those of Western Europe, where the average area of camps was about 18-24 hectares (180-240 dunams).³³

It is likely, therefore, that in Judaea the Roman army deployed groups smaller than a full legion.³⁴ Given an average area ratio of 1:4 or 1:3, the legionary camp at Legio could have held only a quarter or a third of a full legion. Thus, although legionaries' quarters were not excavated or identified, we may estimate that the camp accommodated 2000-2500 legionaries at most.³⁵

The Roman Roads to Legio

The building of imperial roads played an important role in the Roman administration. The network of these roads enabled movement of troops in all seasons and efficient communication between institutions of administration and government in times of war and peace, as well as civilian and commercial transport. The roads had an official legal status (*via publica*) and served both the imperial post and the holders of administrative and military appointments (*cursus publicus*). The roads were

built, using Roman technology and engineering skill, between urban or military points of origin (*capia viarum*).³⁶ Abundant data on the builders and date of the roads are supplied by the inscriptions on the milestones that were erected along them.³⁷

The foundation of the legionary camp at Legio determined a new point of origin for the network of Roman roads in the northern Land of Israel, and traditional transport routes were diverted to the site of the camp as a measuring point of distances along the roads. This was the case, for instance, for the road from Caesarea to Pella in Transjordan. The road was built by troops of the *Legion X Fretensis* in 69 CE, and before the foundation of the camp at Legio its route ran along Nahal Tanninim (Crocodilon Flumen) past Gabae (Gaba Philippi; Tell Abu Shusha) to Scythopolis (Beth-Shean).³⁸ Schumacher discovered a milestone (?) on the eastern margin of Tel Megiddo, which he suggested was the stone from which the Roman roads in the northern Land of Israel were measured.³⁹ Although the point of origin for Roman roads has not been located at Legio, epigraphic evidence has been preserved on milestones on roads leading to and from the camp. Two milestones mentioning the camp at Legio were found along the road from Legio to Scythopolis. On the milestone from the reign of Hadrian (129 CE) the camp is termed "Castron," while on another stone from the reign of Caracalla, at mile station No. 22 from Scythopolis and mile station No. 2 from Legio, the camp is mentioned as the origin of the road.⁴⁰ Along the road from Legio to Diocaesarea (Sepphoris), a milestone from the reign of Hadrian was found; it gives the distance from Legio and cites the *Legion II Traiana* as the road-builders.⁴¹ Latin inscriptions giving the distance from Legio are found on Hadrianic milestones at mile vi⁴² and mile v⁴³ from Legio. Although measurement of distance from the legionary camp at Legio is attested only for the reign of Hadrian, military camps apparently continued to serve as points of origin to measure distance along the roads until the reign of Alexander Severus, after which this role was taken over by the six major cities of the province.⁴⁴

³⁶ Roll 1994: 21-22; Chevallier 1997: 274-280.

³⁷ Tsafirir 1984: 51.

³⁸ For its route east of Legio, see Isaac and Roll 1982; Hecker 1961: 175-186; for its route on the Manasseh Heights, see Schumacher 1903: 4-10.

³⁹ Schumacher 1908: 8, 169, Tafel 1. The stone is marked on the map but has never been rediscovered.

⁴⁰ Isaac and Roll 1982: 79-80, 86.

⁴¹ Isaac and Roll 1982: 149-156; Hecker 1961; see also note 18 above with references cited there.

⁴² Avi-Yonah 1946: 97, No. 1.

⁴³ Hecker 1961: 175-186; Lifshitz 1960: 109-111.

⁴⁴ Isaac proposed that miles were measured from the legionary camp at Legio only during the reign of Hadrian, and not later. However, in other places measurement of distance from military camps is known until the reign of Alexander Severus, for instance on a milestone near Tel Shalem, where another unit of the *Sixth Legion* was stationed; the inscription gives the number of miles from the legionary camp rather than from Scythopolis (Isaac 1998: 63-66).

²⁹ Stiebel 1999: 68-103 and bibliography cited there.

³⁰ Tzori 1950: 53-54; Foerster 1985: 139-140. It seems likely that the camp accommodated only about one thousand legionaries.

³¹ Parker 1987.

³² For more examples see, among others, Hashman 1996: 19-79 (Suweida); Fabian 1995: 235-240 (Beer-Sheba). See also Stiebel 1999: 89-90.

³³ See examples in Webster 1969: 187-182: Inchtuthil, 781 x 813 m, ca. 635 dunams; Novaesium, 450 x 600 m, ca. 270 dunams; Caerleon, 425 x 500 m, ca. 212 dunams; Haltern, 388 x 500 m, ca. 194 dunams. For additional examples, see Bohec 1996: 100-111.

³⁴ Tsafirir 1984: 41-47; see also Hirschfeld 1991: 170-183.

³⁵ Shatzman 1983: 266; Coello 1996: 1-2.

In view of the above, we can identify four stages of Roman road-building in the region of Legio. In the first stage, the road from Caesarea to Scythopolis and on to Pella and Gerasa was built in 69 CE by troops of the *Legio X Fretensis*; it passed through Gabae rather than Legio. In the second stage, road-building was carried out in the region in 120 CE after the stationing of the *Legio II Traiana* at Legio. In the third stage, intensive road-building was associated with Hadrian, particularly in advance of his visit to the East in 139-140 CE. At that time the legionary camp at Legio became the center of Roman road-building in the northern Land of Israel, apparently in connection with the stationing of the *Legio VI Ferrata* at Legio. In the fourth stage, additional roads were built and the importance of the site in the network of Roman roads in the region increased, reaching a peak in the third and fourth centuries; six imperial roads were built to and from the legionary camp, connecting it with major destinations in the northern Land of Israel.⁴⁵

The Aqueducts leading to Legio

It is well known that a Roman military camp required an abundant supply of fresh water for drinking, cooking, hygiene, watering animals, and other purposes.⁴⁶ Such supplies of water were available in large quantities from Nahal Qeni and its springs near the legionary camp. This fact alone, can explain the situation of the camp at Legio.⁴⁷ The camp site is located on a low hill in the heart of the hilly area south of Nahal Qeni, where its course from the mountains west of the Jezreel Valley makes a wide bend southwards. This particular situation required water to be conducted to the camp site by aqueducts, whose direction and course contribute to our efforts to locate of the site.

Schumacher⁴⁸ described an aqueduct at Legio⁴⁹ that conducted water southward from 'Ein Qobbi, at the foot of Tel Megiddo, towards el-Manach hill. It was exposed about 350 m from the spring for a length of about 100 m,

running south until it forks into two aqueducts (Figs. 3 and 6).

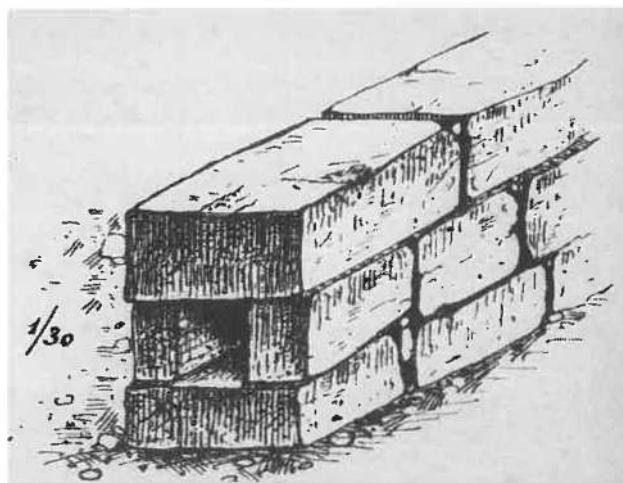


Fig 6: Detail of the aqueduct of 'Ein Qobbi running south from the spring (Schumacher 1908: Abb. 233).

The upper and more westerly of the two (hereafter the "upper aqueduct") passed along the west side of the hill of el-Manach in a southwesterly direction; 160 m of its length were exposed. The other aqueduct (henceforth the "lower aqueduct"), which passed along the east side of the hill in a southeasterly direction, was preserved for a length of ca. 700 m.⁵⁰

The Chicago expedition that excavated at Tel Megiddo exposed 165 m of the "upper aqueduct."⁵⁰ Tsuk excavated three sections of this aqueduct, with a total length of ca. 20 m, at the foot of the tel and north of the hill of el-Manach. The aqueduct is both built and rock-hewn; with a width of 26-34 cm and a depth of 50 cm. Deposits of travertine are 4 cm thick on the walls and 1 cm thick on the base. The roofing slabs have not survived. Below the travertine was a layer of pink plaster, and below that a layer of gray plaster of a type that does not predate the late second century CE. The foundation of the channel, 15 cm thick, consists of crushed chalk, stone fragments, potsherds and shells.⁵¹

To the northwest of el-Manach hill, Schumacher described the pool of "el-Chuwcha," its western part rock-hewn and its eastern part built of large ashlars. It was rectangular and measured 30 x 90 m.⁵² It seems likely that this pool received the water from the "upper aqueduct." In aqueducts of the Roman period, a settling pool for the separation of refuse (*piscina*) and a distribution pool (*castellum*) were generally built at the

⁴⁵ In this context the testimony of Eusebius (*Onomasticon*, Ed. Klostermann 1904, *passim*) is significant. He identifies the names of settlements of his period with biblical sites and locates settlements in Galilee by their distance in miles from Legio. Even if we postulate an early date (ca. 300 CE) for this source, and although a Roman military unit is not mentioned at the site named Legio, we have here evidence that the site was an important junction in the road system of the northern Land of Israel (Isaac and Roll 1982: 11; Isaac 1996: 153-167).

⁴⁶ Von Petrikovits 1975: 105. See Fig 1, above.

⁴⁷ The output of the springs of Nahal Qeni, as measured in 1970, is 1.53 million cubic meters of water per annum (Tepper 2003: 12-13, 104-105). This alone, without counting the output of other springs near the site, exceeds the quantity carried by the urban water supply systems of Diocaesarea (Sepphoris) to the city (Tsuk 1985: 45).

⁴⁸ Schumacher's map (Schumacher 1908: Tafel 1) shows several aqueducts (see below). He describes the cascade, including the aqueducts, of the flour mills that functioned at the time of his visit to the site (Schumacher 1908: 166-167). They will not be discussed in detail here (Tepper 2003: 100-104, Figs. 34-39).

⁴⁹ For the built aqueduct, see Schumacher 1908: 161-162, Abb. 233; its continuation, rock-hewn with roofing slabs, passes the foot of the tel in the burial ground (Schumacher 1908: 168-169, Abb. 250).

⁵⁰ The aqueduct was rock-hewn with roofing slabs; see Lamon 1935: 1, Fig. 1; Guy 1938: Pl. 1.

⁵¹ Tsuk 1988-9: 92-97. Today only about 30 m of the aqueduct are exposed at the foot of the tel. For the dating of the plaster of aqueducts, see Porath 1984: 1-16.

⁵² Schumacher 1908: 170, Tafel 1.

point of entry to centers of population; it is probable that the pool at Legio fulfilled one of these functions.⁵³

The members of the British survey team located a large structure containing two columns above Nahal Qeni. They described an arched entrance on its south side leading to a hewn tunnel about 20 m long, partly built and with water flowing in its base.⁵⁴ Schumacher noted its sanctity and importance to the inhabitants of the village and described the structure from the outside as having a gate from which water flowed; the place was known as 'Ein el-Sit ('Enot Qeni).⁵⁵ Although the structure over the aqueduct and spring was apparently sanctified in the Muslim period,⁵⁶ the form and dimensions of the stones of the aqueduct attest to an earlier date, apparently the Roman period.⁵⁷

Near the course of Nahal Qeni, south of el-Manach hill, several aqueducts were located, some stone-built and some constructed from sections of ceramic pipes; they attest to additional exploitation of the water of Nahal Qeni.⁵⁸ The course and direction of the aqueducts indicate that they terminated at el-Manach hill, the site of the legionary camp.

The Necropolis of Legio

It is well established that methods of burial and the accompanying gifts attest to the social, cultural and sometimes ethnic affiliations of the deceased.⁵⁹ Consequently, the distribution of burial types in a region sometimes enables analysis of social processes and changes, as well as the study of ethnic and/or historical

boundaries.⁶⁰ Schumacher identified extensive burial grounds on the hills south of Tel Megiddo, as well as on the margins of el-Manach hill.⁶¹ In view of the results of the survey, it is possible to classify the burials in the necropolis of Legio into two main types: cremation⁶² and inhumation (primary and secondary). Since cremation was common in the Roman legions in the first and second centuries CE, the identification of cremation burials is significant for the location of the legionary camp, on the principle that the presence of legionary burials in a particular place rules it out as the location of the camp.⁶³ Near the Roman fort Schumacher described a rock-hewn tomb. A narrow entrance leads to a square burial chamber containing two ceramic coffins. In one of the walls of the chamber are hewn niches containing urns with a narrow foot; they held remains of human bones.⁶⁴ West of el-Manach hill, on the eastern slopes of the hill on which Kibbutz Megiddo is situated, Tsuk excavated a heap of burnt material; in it were two cooking pots that held bones of a young man (Fig. 7).⁶⁵ Further up the hill, four more cooking pots containing human bones have been found over the years.⁶⁶ The presence of cremation burials north to the Roman fort and on the slopes of Kibbutz Megiddo hill, west and south of el-Manach hill, supports the assumption that the camp was located on this hill.⁶⁷

⁵³ Reservoirs for the regulation and storage of water are known at the end of the aqueduct at Sepphoris (Tsuk 1989: 104-107), Tiberias (Winogradov 1989: 129-139), Kefar Hanania (Illan 1989: 99-100) and other sites (Amit, Hirschfeld and Patrich 1989). At the place of the ancient pool at Legio only a few large stones survive today, and Kibbutz Megiddo has installed a sewage pool there.

⁵⁴ Conder and Kitchen 1882: 64-65.

⁵⁵ Schumacher 1908: 185, Abb 282. Illan examined the structure in 1984. It contained three rooms with openings between them. The walls were plastered, some of them with remains of red decoration. A breach in the western wall led to a hewn tunnel 25 m long, in the base of which was a built aqueduct 20-50 cm wide. Illan assumed that this is the *maqam* of Ibrahim el-Halil mentioned in Muslim sources, and that the tunnel is earlier in date (Illan 1988: 63-65).

⁵⁶ Strange 1965: 492-493.

⁵⁷ The tunnel is 50-70 m wide and ca. 2-2.5 m high. Its upper part is hewn and roofed by diagonally laid rock slabs. The lower part is built of identical stones 60 cm long, laid on their narrow ends to form uniform insets and offsets. On them is gray plaster with diagonal combing. Between the stones the aqueduct is 35 cm deep and 16 cm deep; its total length, in a west-east direction, is 16 m up to the point of flowing (Tepper 2003: 95; 2003a: 29*). A tunnel spring hewn and built in an identical technique and dated to the Herodian period was exposed at 'En Tsur (Hirschfeld 2000: 301-306); other examples found in the Judean hills include that at Beth Ther, where a Roman inscription was discovered (Ron 1977: 230-250).

⁵⁸ For the ceramic pipes and other data on the aqueducts, see Tepper 2002: 234, Fig. 10; 2003: 95-99, Fig. 29-30.

⁵⁹ Toynbee 1971; Tsafir 1984: 141.

⁶⁰ For examples from Jerusalem, see Kloner 2002: 93-100; Avni 2002: 101-110. In the border of Gallile and Phoenicia see the different between the burials at Stern and Getzov 2006: 91-123.

⁶¹ On Schumacher's map extensive burial grounds are marked on the slopes of the tel and on the hills to its south and west (Schumacher 1908: Tafel 1). Numerous caves and tombs were described by Guy (1938: 131-138), Lamon and Shipton (1939: 92-97) and Raban (1991: Site 161). Many more burials were identified during the survey of the region of Legio (Tepper 2003: 105-115, Figs. 40-50).

⁶² Cremation, i.e. the burning of the deceased and burial of the ashes in an urn, was common in the Greek, Roman and Etruscan cultures (Webster 1969: 27; Toynbee 1971: 101).

⁶³ In the Land of Israel cremation burial is found in sites with a Roman military presence, always outside the area of the camp, for instance at Masada (Tsafir 1984: 143. Note 124), Jerusalem (Kloner 2002: 95-98) and Mamshit (Negev 1971: 124-125). The burials are dated to the first and second centuries. It is well known that during the second century inhumation burial became more popular among legionaries (Webster 1969: 280-281), although at Caesarea cremation burial continues into the third century (Porath 2000: 34).

⁶⁴ Schumacher 1908: 189-190, Abb: 256a, 287, 289, 291-292. For an additional find of a burial jar containing human bones and Roman artifacts near el-Manach hill, see Tepper 2003: 107.

⁶⁵ Tsuk 1988-9: 92-97.

⁶⁶ Archive of Kibbutz Megiddo, IAA Nos. 98-5286; 98-5288. I am most grateful to S. Gillis, reported these finds. See also Tepper 2003: 107-108, Fig. 40.

⁶⁷ In excavations conducted by the IAA on the southwest slope of the Megiddo jail, an additional burial was discovered; my thanks to the IAA anthropologist, Y. Nagar.



Fig. 7: Cremation burials from the slopes of Kibbutz Megiddo (courtesy T. Tsuk).



Fig. 8: A roof tile of the *Legion II Traiana* (courtesy H. Abu Uqsa; photography by H. Smithline).



Fig. 9: A roof tile of the *Legion VI Ferrata* (Tepper 2003).

Archaeological Excavations and Survey in the Site of the Camp and its Vicinity

Salvage excavations conducted on the eastern slopes of el-Manach hill exposed remains of structures with floors of earth and mud, and of paved surfaces. The finds included pottery of the second to fourth centuries CE, roof tiles, ceramic pipes, and Roman coins dating from the first to late third centuries CE.⁶⁸ An additional excavation on the southern slopes unearthed building remains of a large complex. The excavation exposed a doorpost of an impressive entrance and three building strata of the Roman period, including water supply installations, dated to the second to fourth centuries CE.⁶⁹ Among the finds of the excavation were roof tiles with stamps of the *Legion VI Ferrata* and the *Legion II Traiana* (Fig. 8). Petrographic analysis demonstrated that the tiles were made from local clay, convincing evidence for a legionary workshop at the site.⁷⁰ These tiles join a larger collection of stamped legionary roof tiles of the *Legion VI Ferrata*, all collected in the survey of the Legio area or in private collections (Fig. 9).⁷¹

Of the hundreds of potsherds collected during the survey on the hill of el-Manach, 346 comprised a datable assemblage. Most of the sherds (more than 70%) date from the Roman period (Fig. 10). The remaining sherds are divided as follows: 4.6% from the Persian-Hellenistic periods, ca. 12.5% from the Byzantine period, ca. 10.5% from the Early Muslim period, and the rest from the Mamluk period.

Of the finds from the Roman period, the minority dates from the Early Roman period, while the majority dates from the second to third centuries CE. It is interesting that more than 65% of the ceramic finds of the Roman period derived from the southeastern slope of the hill of el-Manach, a fact that demonstrates the intensive nature of settlement in the Roman period on the hill that we identify as the site of the legionary camp of Legio.

The finds of the archaeological survey and the salvage excavations on the slope of the hill, and the distribution of Roman pottery over an area of hundreds of dunams on the southern and particularly the eastern part of the hill, apparently testify to a scattered Roman settlement that existed side by side with the legionary camp. This was probably one of the civilian settlements that developed

⁶⁸ Segal 1999: 48-49. In the excavator's assessment, this was the entrance to the camp or the paved square of the *principia* in its center. He dated the assemblage to a late stage in the history of the camp.

⁶⁹ The excavations, which are not yet published, were directed by H. Abu Uqsa.

⁷⁰ I am grateful to H. Abu Uqsa for permission to publish this preliminary information on the excavation. The petrographic analysis was carried out by A. Shapiro of the IAA.

⁷¹ The tiles are in the collections of Prof. M. Gichon, A. Drori and D. Rubens. All were subjected to petrographic analysis by Prof. Y. Goren of Tel Aviv University and proved to be manufactured from local clay, evidence for a legionary workshop at the site. See also Schumacher 1908: 175; Tepper 2002: Fig. 9; 2003: 64-68, Figs. 11-1 2.

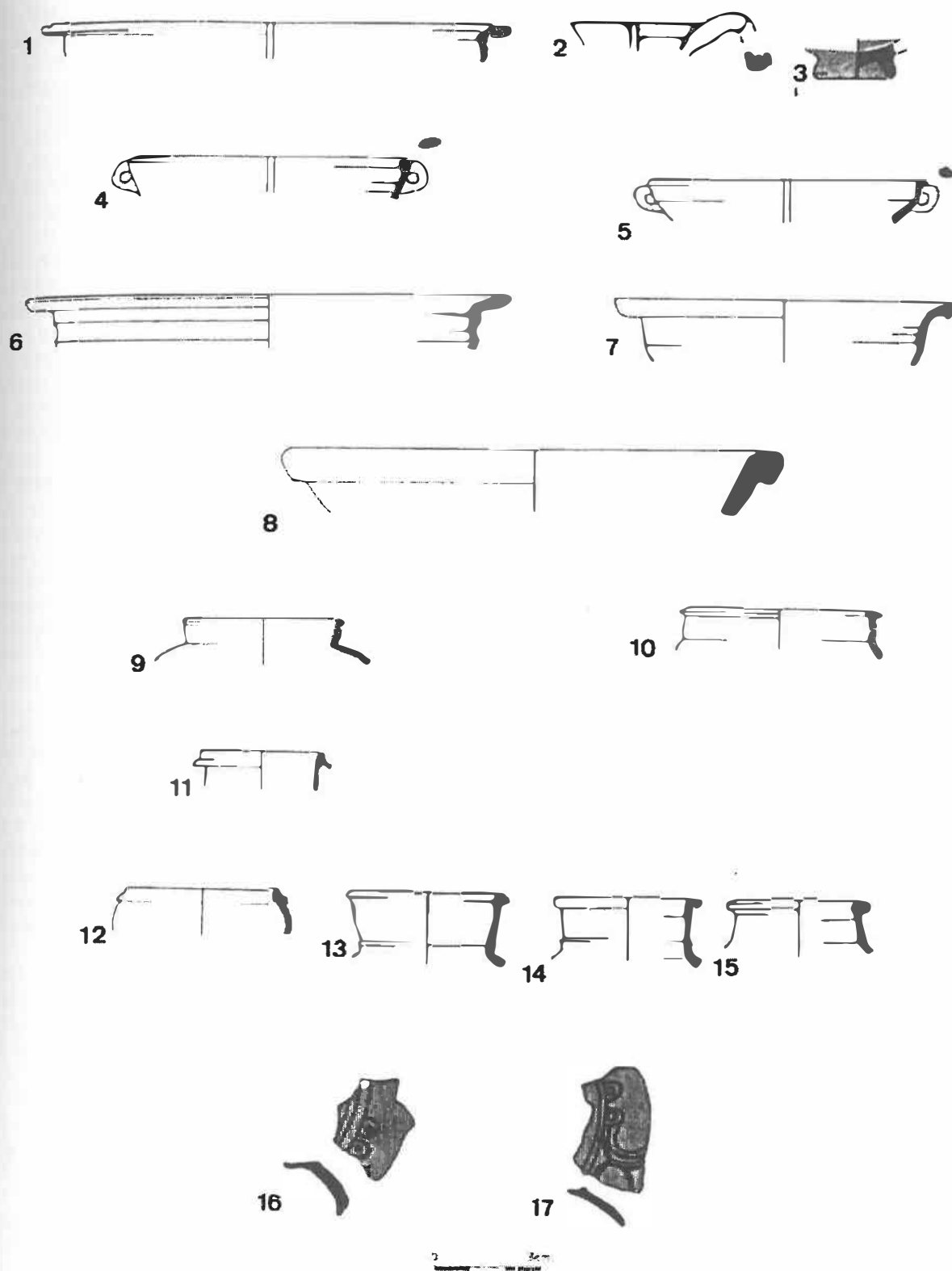


Fig. 10: Hellenistic and Roman potsherds from the hill of el-Manach.

Hellenistic period: 1. Casserole; 2. Jug; 3. Imported ETS bowl.

Roman period: 4-5. "Galilean bowls"; 6-7. Bowls; 8. Mortarium; 9-10. "Kefar Hananya" cooking pots; 11. Juglet; 12. Amphora; 13-15. Storage jars; 16-17. Lamps

alongside Roman camps, which were known as *vicus* when attached to an *auxilia* or small unit and *canabae* when attached to a legionary camp.⁷² The thousands of Roman soldiers who were stationed in a legionary camp represented a large and well-paid consumer force. Consequently, beside each and every military camp sprouted a civilian settlement whose inhabitants supplied the soldiers' needs on a commercial basis. In these settlements were residential structures and other services, and their status and economic power were dependent on the troops stationed in the vicinity. This was the case in the western and eastern Roman Empire and most likely in Judaea as well.⁷³

The excavations conducted in 2003-2005 in Megiddo Prison exposed finds that have important implications for the civilian settlement alongside the legionary camp. We will note here that at the point of meeting between the Roman fort and the Jewish settlement, evidence was found for a local community among whose members women and Roman military officers are mentioned, and also for an Early Christian community on the margin of the Jewish village of Kefar 'Othnai.⁷⁴ This evidence provides an additional tool for our understanding of the area in which a Jewish village and a Roman military camp existed side by side. Moreover, the civilian settlement that developed alongside the Roman camp was apparently the basis of the Roman-Byzantine town of Maximianopolis, founded in the late third century CE or at the latest in the early fourth century.

The Roman Camp at Legio: preliminary summary of the results of the survey

The fact that there was a legionary camp at Legio is indisputable. However, in our study we have proposed that in the area of Legio there were two military installations, a military fort with a Roman legionary camp alongside it. The fort, probably the camp of an *auxilia* or another small unit, was located on the summit of a ridge south of Nahal Qeni in a commanding strategic position overlooking the surroundings. The camp or the headquarters of a legion, was located on the eastern slopes of the hill of el-Manach. Although its position lacked strategic advantage, it was chosen for two other vital purposes, water and roads. Firstly, its location near an abundant and accessible water source avoided the necessity of supplying water via long aqueducts. Secondly, its location at a major junction of Roman roads emphasizes the crucial role played by the road network in the Roman system, in the eastern Empire as a whole and specifically in the province of Judaea.

The legionary camp was founded near a Jewish village rather than a town, a fact that invites wider re-

examination of the links between Roman military camps and civilian settlements in the eastern Roman Empire. In addition to this, however, the location of the legionary camp on the border of the Jezreel Valley is significant in itself. The Jezreel Valley or "Great Valley" (*Mega Pedion*), which was defined as the property of the legion (*Campus Maximus*), contained lands that had long been considered royal estates.⁷⁵ The special status of these rich agricultural lands and the possibility of exploiting them as an economic and agricultural base for the legion comprised an additional motive for the location of the camp. Indeed, land division (*limitatia*) was discerned in the area of Legio. In aerial photographs one can make out remnants of long, thin plots that correspond to the routes of Roman roads, evidence of an organized and orderly Roman system that survived in the valley until the nineteenth century.⁷⁶

Our study strengthens the assumption that both the *Legion II Traiana* and the *Legion VI Ferrata* were stationed at Legio and supports the assessment mentioned above that the *Second Legion* was already established at Legio in the early second century CE and was replaced by the *Sixth Legion* a little later. From the data recovered in the survey it seems likely that the legion remained there during the second and third centuries CE, a conclusion reinforced by studies of other Roman military camp sites in the Land of Israel, whose researchers claim that they were founded and functioned during the reigns of Trajan, Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, in the second and third centuries.⁷⁷ Legionary activity probably continued at Legio until the late third century CE, the days of Diocletian. In this context it is interesting to note that metal objects and accessories associated with the Roman army and legionary equipment that were recovered in the survey at Legio were dated to the first to fourth centuries CE; they constitute evidence of some Roman military presence at the site even after the abandonment of the legionary headquarters and the camp site.⁷⁸

It is well known from excavations of Roman legionary camps in Europe and North Africa that their average area was 180-240 dunams (18-24 hectares), and it has been claimed that legionary camps in the Land of Israel would have been similar in size.⁷⁹ However, as we have demonstrated above by the survey results alone, the camp at Legio was not suitable for the stationing of a full

⁷² Webster 1969: 203-204; Isaac 1998: 89.

⁷³ Webster 1969: 203-204, 220; Safrai 1992: 110-114; Campbell 1994: 142.

⁷⁴ Tepper and Di Segni 2006: 22-54.

⁷⁵ Isaac and Roll 1982: 104-106; Tsafir, Di Segni and Green 1994: 182.

⁷⁶ Applebaum 1971: 155; 1989: 163, 70-96; Isaac and Roll 1982: 121, Fig. 6.

⁷⁷ Tzori 1950: 53-54; Hirschfeld 1991: 170-183; Hashman 1996: 1-19.

⁷⁸ My thanks to G. Stiebel, who assisted in the identification and dating of the objects; see Tepper 2003: 87-88, Fig. 21-21. The issue of the dating of the Roman legionary presence at the camp site at Legio will be addressed in a separate article.

⁷⁹ Cagnat 1904: 1061-1064; Daremberg-Saglio 1962: 940-959; Parker 2000: 121-125. Legionary camps in the East are similar in size to that at Legio or even smaller: the camp at Palmyra (Tadmor) was ca. 41.5 dunams in area (Kennedy and Riley 1990: 123, 136-137) and that at Uduh 47 dunams (Kennedy and Riley 1990: 131-133). See also notes 28-33 above.

legion. Since there is evidence for the stationing of *vexillationes* of the *Legio VI Ferrata* near Beth Govrin,⁸⁰ Sebastia,⁸¹ Tel Shalem⁸² and Tiberias,⁸³ and since inscriptions attest to the participation of troops of this legion in the building of the aqueduct of Caesarea,⁸⁴ it is possible that the camp at Legio was the permanent base of only some of the legion's troops, perhaps as a supreme headquarters, like the headquarters of the *Legio X Frentensis* in Aila.⁸⁵

In summary, we should emphasize once again that our conclusions are based primarily on the results of an archaeological survey. The shortcomings of our analysis and the conclusions presented above derive from the well-known limitations of such surveys. The secrets of this important site in the northern Land of Israel still await archaeological excavation and study by advanced techniques under the soil of the Jezreel Valley.

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⁸⁰ Iliffe 1933: 121.

⁸¹ Reisner, Fisher and Lyon 1924: 251.

⁸² Tzori 1950: 53-54.

⁸³ Avi-Yonah 1946: 91.

⁸⁴ Lifshitz 1960: 110.

⁸⁵ *Notitia Dignitatum*, Ed. Seeck: 73, Line 30.

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