

PART IV

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## Iudaea/Palaestina



# 16 | The Roman Legionary Base in Legio-Kefar 'Othnay – The Evidence from the Small Finds\*

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## Introduction

The Roman army in the eastern Roman Empire has been discussed extensively, including its military organization, camps, interaction with the local civilian population and policing and security actions.<sup>1</sup> Historical sources and epigraphical and archaeological finds attest to the presence of the Roman army in the Land of Israel, in *Provincia Syria-Palaestina*,<sup>2</sup> including the Roman legionary base of the Tenth Legion in Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> With regard to the Roman military presence and the establishment of the Roman base at Legio-Kefar 'Othnay, Isaac and Roll argued that the soldiers of Legio II Traiana, who also built roads in the area between the legionary base and Akko-Ptolemais,<sup>4</sup> arrived first, and those of Legio VI Ferrata replaced them slightly thereafter.<sup>5</sup> Inscriptions found in Israel reveal that soldiers of both legions built the aqueducts to Caesarea.<sup>6</sup> The archaeological finds also show the presence of units of the Sixth Legion elsewhere throughout the country, and their bases in or near poleis such as Bet Guvrin-Eleutheropolis,<sup>7</sup> Samaria-Sebaste<sup>8</sup> and Tel Shalem near Bet She'an-Scythopolis (Fig. 16.1)<sup>9</sup> and other sites in Israel where the permanent presence of military units has been proven.<sup>10</sup>

\* This research summarizes parts of the research for my M.A. thesis (Tepper 2003a), advised by Prof. Israel Roll, and my Ph.D. dissertation (Tepper 2014a), advised by Prof. Yoram Tsafirir and Dr. Yuval Shahar, both at Tel Aviv University. I would like to thank the many scholars and friends who assisted me in this work and to dedicate this chapter to the memories of Prof. Yoram Tsafirir and Prof. Israel Roll, who passed away before their time, and in honor of Prof. Benjamin Isaac, who has supported the research on Legio since the beginning.

<sup>1</sup> Isaac 1992.

<sup>2</sup> See Keppie 1986: 411–29; Isaac 1992: 427–35; Millar 1993: 27–111 and Chancey 2005: 43–70.

<sup>3</sup> Tsafirir 1975: 49–72, 286–301; Stiebel 1999: 68–103; Arubas and Goldfus 2005; and Wexler-Bdolach in this book.

<sup>4</sup> Isaac and Roll 1976: 9–14; 1979a: 54–66; 1979b: 149–56; see also Tepper 2007: 66.

<sup>5</sup> See in detail Cotton 2000: 351–7.

<sup>6</sup> Vilnay 1928: 108; Lifshitz 1960: 109–11; Negev 1964: 237–9. See also Lehmann and Holum 2000: nos. 45, 47, 49, 51–4; Eck 2003: 155–6.

<sup>7</sup> Iliffe 1933: 121. <sup>8</sup> Reisner et al. 1924: 251.

<sup>9</sup> Tzori 1971: 53–4. See also Foerster 1985; Eck and Foerster 1999. <sup>10</sup> Isaac 1992: 427–34.