The inscriptions in this entry represent the modern city of Haifa. The inscriptions from the ancient city Shikmonah (Tell as-Samak) have been studied in CIAP, addendum (2007:99-103) in the chapter on Haifa, introduced by a short presentation about the ancient city which lay to the west of the modern one (Abel, 1938, 2:347-48). Until the beginning of the 19th century, Haifa was still a small village that had been rebuilt in 1769 after the former village had been demolished by Zahir al-ʿUmar, the Bedouin ruler of the Galilee (see CIAP 1:26-27). ‘Akka, Acre (‘Akko) was, until the middle of the 19th century, the emporium, so to speak, at the northern end of the bay (now called the Bay of Haifa). It was fortified, it was an administrative and commercial centre and it was the main harbour of northern Palestine. The initial push for the development of modern Haifa occurred in 1868 with the arrival of the German Templars who established the German colony at the foot of Mount Carmel. The German Colony was, as can be seen to this day, a piece of Europe planted in the Middle East, with its modern stone buildings, its churches and local administrative institutions, its perfect town-planning all supported by German order and devotion, professionalism and the dedication of the inhabitants. Concurrently, Jews started settling the territory to the south of Haifa, in the Sharon Plain, and to its north and northeast in the Galilee. At the end of the 19th and early 20th century, Haifa became a major centre for the railway line to Hijāz and Damascus, and later also the primary station on the Palestinian–Egyptian railway line. The beginning of the 20th century, therefore, saw the mushrooming of the present modern city which, after WW1 and the British mandate on Palestine, became the most important port on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. Both the Arab and Jewish populations grew dramatically so that by 1944, combined they numbered almost 130,000 people.
The city also proved to be an open and tolerant place which attracted the founders of two persecuted religions, first the Bahá’ís and then the Ahmadiyyah. The Bahá’ís first established themselves in Acre-Akka to which Bahá’u’lláh was sent by the Ottoman authorities as a prisoner in 1868. Soon, however, he was released from prison and established a solid community in Acre while extending his authoritative vision to Haifa and particularly Mount Carmel which he announced to be the Mountain of God, that is to say his own mountain since he declared himself to be the manifestation of God. Haifa grew to be the twin holy city of Acre for Bahá’í believers, particularly after the building of the mausoleum of Bahá’u’lláh’s predecessor—the Báb, who was executed in Iran in 1850, and the interment of his remains in it in 1909. It was ‘Abd al-Bahá’ (‘Abbās Effendi), Bahá’u’lláh’s son and successor, who emphasized the centrality of Haifa after Acre when he moved his residence and his activity to the new modern and clean city so very different to the suffocating Acre with its bad sanitation and frequent epidemics. Soon Haifa became the major destination for Bahá’ís from the West (particularly Americans) who came to meet the Master (this is how ‘Abd al-Bahá’ was admiringly called), and, after his death in 1921, his heir and grandson Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian. Haifa, not Acre, became, as a consequence, the administrative centre of the universal Bahá’í community and a whole elaborate and modern complex was built on Mount Carmel, surrounded by magnificent gardens with the shrine of the Báb towering over it, glittering with its white marble walls and golden dome (built more than forty years after ‘Abd al-Bahá’ had built the initial mausoleum). The centrality of Haifa is represented by the fact that the large and impressive complex on Mount Carmel includes the building which is the permanent seat of the House of Justice, the highest authority in the administrative system of the faith. This does not diminish in anyway the great importance of Acre as the holiest place on earth and the direction of prayer (qiblah) of the Bahá’ís all over the world, being the site of Bahá’u’lláh’s tomb, and his final residence in the estate of Bahji near the city.

The Ahmadiyyah, which was established in India by Mírzá Ghulām Aḥmad Qadyānī, only reached the vicinity of Haifa around 1926 and established itself in the village of Kabābîr near Haifa. In spite of the fact that the village was joined to Haifa in 1934, it still retained its own character and name. The mosque, where all the inscriptions are found, was only established in 1926 and renovated in more recent years; but, because of the importance of Kabābîr for the development of the Ahmadi community, the story of this community and the inscriptions relating to it will be studied under the entry of Kabābîr in Corpus K. Already in 1924, the second khalīfah, Mírzá Maḥmūd Aḥmad visited Palestine on his way to a conference in London. In 1927, the first missionary, ʿustādh Jalāl ad-Dīn Shams, was sent to Damascus and, encountering enmity there, he moved to Kabābîr in 1928 where he found a tolerant