

# Religion, Ethnicity, and Identity in Ancient Galilee

A Region in Transition

edited by

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Dedicated to  
Carol L. and Eric M. Meyers  
Pioneers and Leaders of Galilean Studies

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# Distribution Maps of Archaeological Data from the Galilee: An Attempt to Establish Zones Indicative of Ethnicity and Religious Affiliation

MORDECHAI AVIAM

The definition of borders and regions between ethnically and religiously defined groups is gaining more attention in the world of archaeology and history.<sup>1</sup> Although no one would suggest that finding some thin and decorated "eggshell" pottery on the cliff of Masada necessarily means that it was a Nabatean fortress, no one doubts today that such ware is connected to the Nabateans. A distribution map of quantities of Nabatean pottery will show the area of Nabatean influence as well as the core of the Nabatean *ethnos*.

While there are many archaeological finds that are shared by both Jews and non-Jews in the Galilee, such as common types of pottery, coins, certain types of tombs, clay and stone sarcophagi, agricultural tools, and more, some types of finds can give us a very sharp line of division between zones.

In this article I would like to show some groups of archaeological finds from the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods in the Galilee, identify their places of origin and distribution, and draw conclusions about their significance as evidence for defining population zones relevant to ethnicity and religious affiliation.

As test cases I will compare the distribution of the archaeological data with some historical references from Josephus and the Talmudic sources.

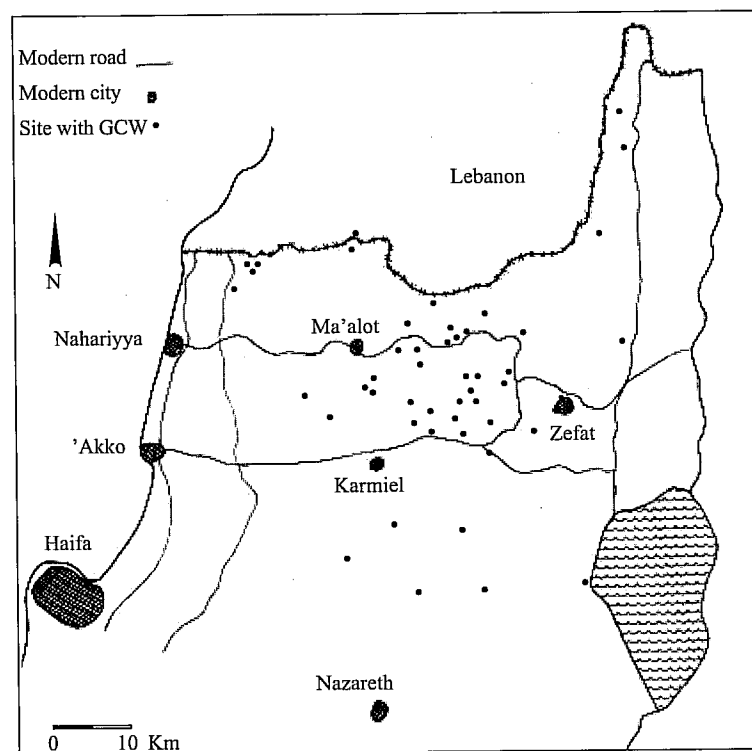
## 1. The Archaeological Evidence

Some years ago, and recently in my book,<sup>2</sup> I discussed the identification of a type of pottery, which I named Galilean Coarse Ware (GCW), as a group of clay

<sup>1</sup> See Eric M. Meyers, "Identifying Religion and Ethnic Groups Through Archaeology," in *Biblical Archaeology Today* (ed. Avraham Biran and Josef Aviram; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993), 738–45. The importance of borders and zones is also prominent in Mark A. Chancey, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee. The Population of Galilee and New Testament Studies* (SNTSMS 118; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Rafael Frankel, Nimrod Getzov, Mordechai Aviam, and Avi Degani, *Settlement Dynamics and Regional Diversity in Ancient Upper Galilee* (IAA Reports 14; Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2001), 61–2, and Mordechai Aviam, *Jews, Pagans, and Christians in the Galilee*:

Map 1: The Distribution of GCW Sites



vessels produced in the Hellenistic Galilee by the local pagan population. This identification was initially only based upon survey finds (pottery, coins, and figurines from Beer Sheba of the Galilee), but later more firmly established by important excavations at the temple of Mispay Yamim, in Jotapata,<sup>3</sup> Kedesh,<sup>4</sup> Kh. esh-Shuhara,<sup>5</sup> and Qeren Naftali.<sup>6</sup> The distribution (Map 1) of this type of pottery describes a clearly defined zone in the Upper Galilee including its edges in the northern Lower Galilee. Its absence in the southern Lower Galilee, on the

<sup>3</sup> *25 Years of Archaeological Excavations and Surveys: Hellenistic to Byzantine Periods* (Land of Galilee 1; Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2004), 46.

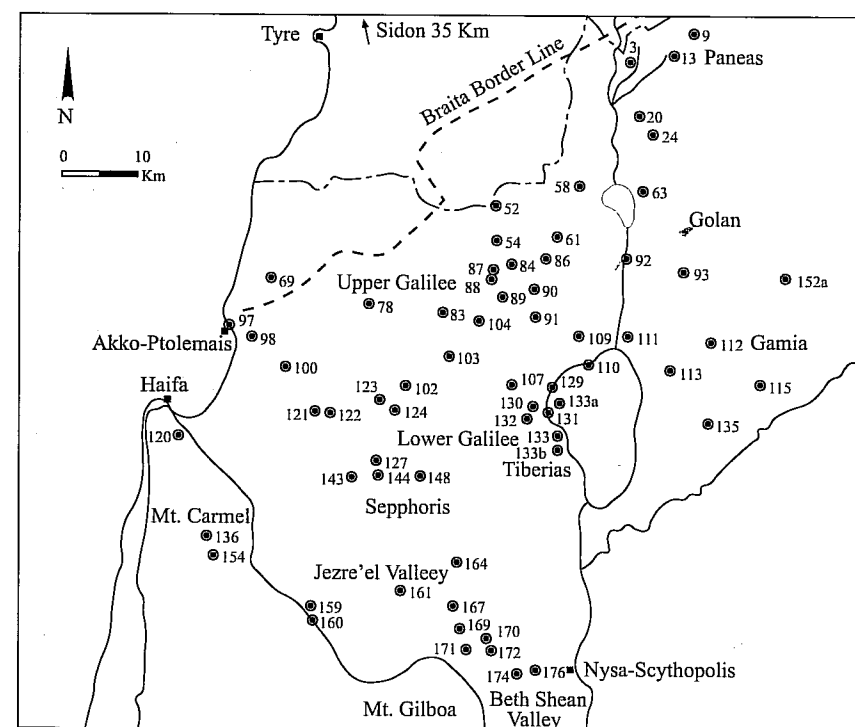
<sup>4</sup> David Adan-Bayewitz and Mordechai Aviam, "Jotapata, Josephus, and the Siege of 67: Preliminary Report on the 1992-1994 Seasons," *JRA* 10 (1997): 131-65.

<sup>5</sup> See Sharon C. Herbert and Andrea M. Berlin, "A New Administrative Center for Persian and Hellenistic Galilee: Preliminary Report of the University of Michigan/University of Minnesota Excavations at Kedesh," *BASOR* 329 (2003): 13-59.

<sup>6</sup> Mordechai Aviam and Aharoni Amitai, "Excavations at Khirbet esh-Shuhara," in *Eretz Zafon* (ed. Zvi Gal; Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2002), 119-33 (Hebrew).

<sup>7</sup> Aviam, *Jews*, 59-88.

Map 2: Hasmonaean Coins (According to Syon 2004) and the "Baraita of the Boundaries" Border Line

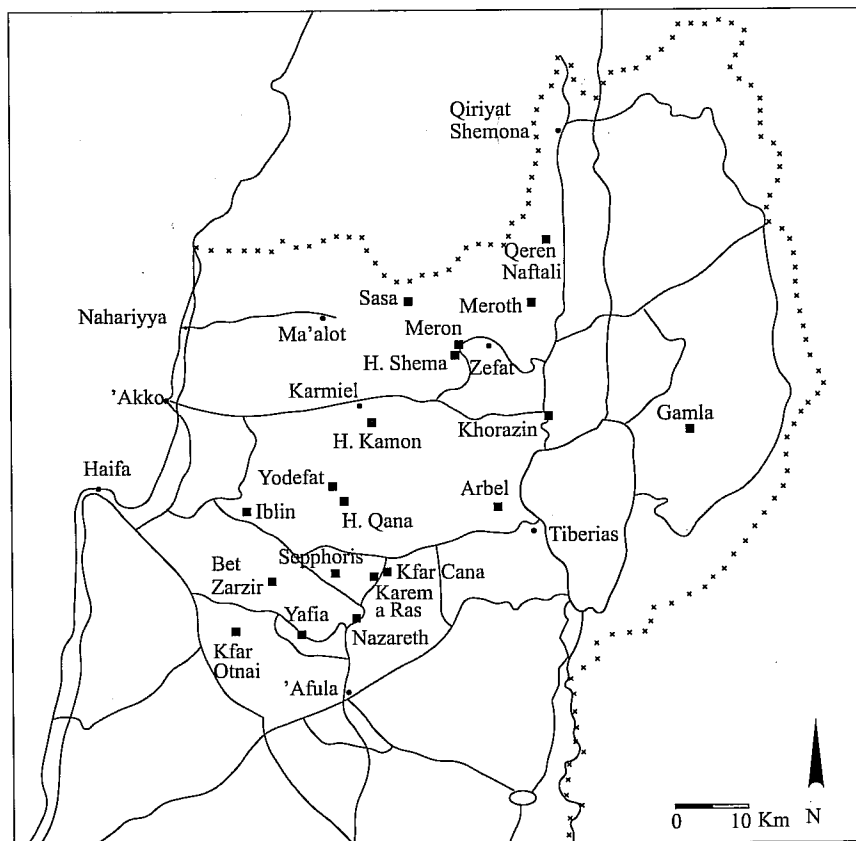


3 Hagoshrim	89 Sammuyia	115 Hispin	144 Sepporis
9 H. Snaaim	*90 Zefat	120 Rusmiya	148 Kafr Canna
13 Paneas	91 Akhbara	121 Ibilin	152a Golan (Hoard)
20 Tel Anafa	92 Ateret	122 Tel Mador	154 Umm El Zinat
24 Tel Yardinon	93 Qasrin	123 Jotapata	159 Meggido
52 Kh. El Shuhara	97 Akko-Ptolemais	124 H. Kana	160 Legio
*54 Gush Halav	98 En Hamifraz	127 Shihin	161 Merhavva
58 Qeren Naftali	100 Tel Keisan	129 Ginosar (Boat)	164 H. Zafzafot
61 Merot	103 H. Zalmon	130 Arbel Caves	167 Givat Boler
63 Darbashiya	104 H. Beer Sheva	132 Arbel	169 Givat Qumi
69 Kh. Muslim	107 Huquq	133 Tiberias	170 Shatta
78 H. Tefen	109 Chorazim	133a Kinneret (Hoard)	171 Tel Slawim
83 Rama	110 Capernaum	133b Bet Maon	172 H. Shamot
84 H. Qiyyuma	111 Bethsaida	135 El Al	174 Tel Basul
87 Meiron	*112 Gamla	136 Sumaqa	176 Hanot Bet Shean
88 H. Shema	113 H. Kanaf	143 H. Shimshit	

other hand, marks the suggested region of Jewish population as reflected in the 1 Maccabees and some other sources.

Some of the GCW sites were completely abandoned at the end of the 2nd c. B.C.E., probably as a result of the Hasmonaean conquest. Other sites continue to exist, but now without GCW and instead with Hasmonaean coins.

Map 3: Ritual Baths (Miqvaot). Hellenistic to Byzantine Periods



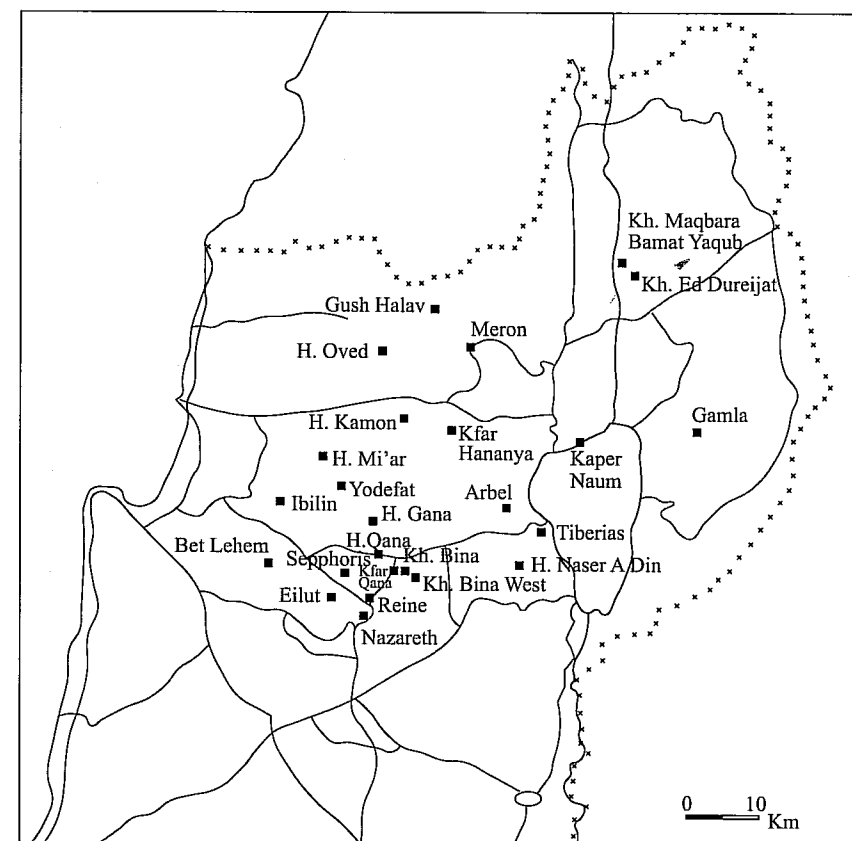
An analysis of the distribution of Hasmonaean coins<sup>7</sup> (Map 2) shows a very clear picture. Western Upper and Lower Galilee have a very small amount of Hasmonaean coins, e. g. out of the thousand coins from 2nd c. Akko only a few are Jewish. The Hasmonaean coins are the majority in some fortresses surrounding Akko such as sites no. 78 (Tefen fortress) and 120 (Rushemiya fortress). Sites nos. 52, 54, 87, 88, 104, Yodefata no. 123 and more, were once sites with GCW.

Most scholars agree today that the plastered, stepped installations in different sizes but of similar shape were used as ritual baths.<sup>8</sup> This type of installation occurs only in Palestinian Jewish sites that are dated from the Hasmonaean to the late Byzantine period. They are rare in the north during the Hasmonaean period

<sup>7</sup> Based on Danny Syon, *Tyre and Gamla: A Study in the Monetary Influences of Southern Phoenicia on Galilee and the Golan in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* (diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2004) (Hebrew).

<sup>8</sup> Eric M. Meyers, "Yes, They Are," *BAR* 26:4 (2000): 46–49, 90.

Map 4: Distribution of Stone Vessels



and have so far been found only in three sites, as very few Hasmonaean layers have been uncovered in the Galilee (Qeren Naftali,<sup>9</sup> Sepphoris,<sup>10</sup> and Gamla<sup>11</sup>). During the Roman period the appearance of miqva'ot increases considerably only to drop again in the Byzantine period. The distribution map of miqva'ot in the Galilee equals exactly those areas that are known from other sources as (Map 3) having been inhabited by Jews.

There is almost no dispute about the correlation of chalk vessels to Jewish communities. Magen's monumental book<sup>12</sup> supplied complete information on

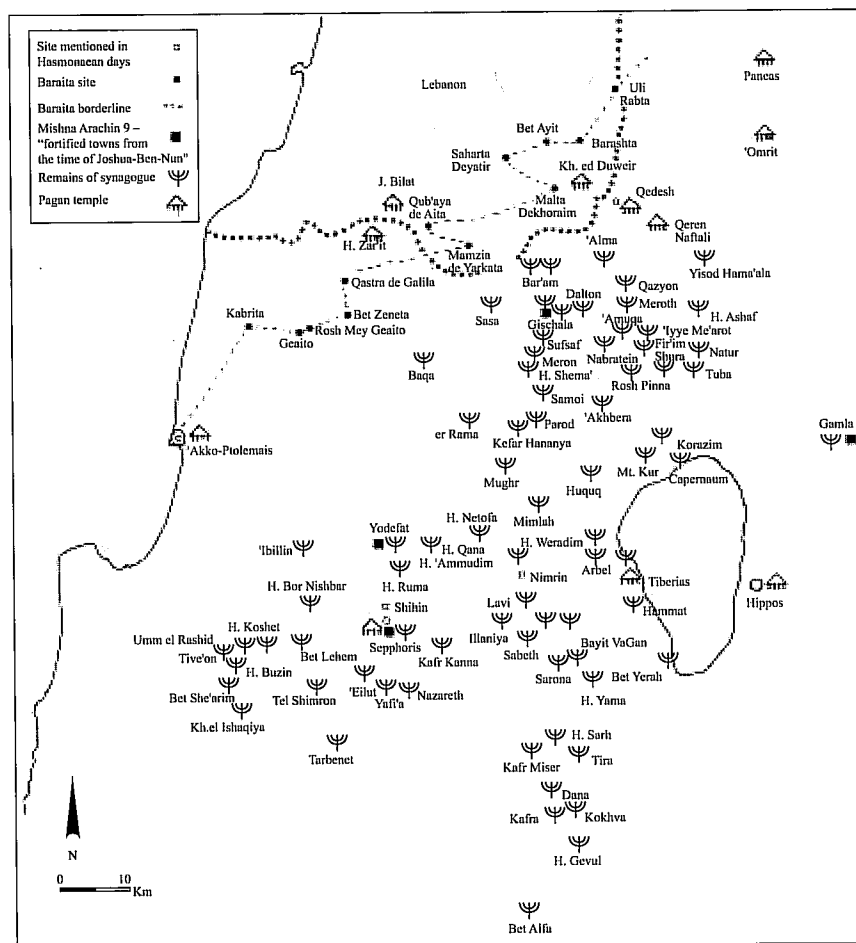
<sup>9</sup> Aviam, *Jews*, 69–70.

<sup>10</sup> See short description and bibliography in Chancey, *Myth*, 71

<sup>11</sup> Shemaryahu Gutman, "Gamla," *NEAEHL* 2:463, and idem, *Gamla – A City in Rebellion* (Tel Aviv: The Ministry of Defense, 1994), 118–9.

<sup>12</sup> Yitzhak Magen, *The Stone Vessel Industry in the Second Temple Period* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2002).

Map 5: Pagan Temples and Jewish Synagogues



the subject. Since his book was published, we have gathered more evidence on Jewish stone vessels in Galilee, especially with the discovery and excavation of a workshop cave between Reina and Nazareth (excavated by David Amit for the IAA, whom I thank for permission to use this information) and Shaked's survey in the Huleh Valley.<sup>13</sup> Presently, more than 25 sites (Map 4) are known that have yielded stone vessels. Most of the vessel types seem to have originated from Judea, but there are probably some "Galilean" types as well.

<sup>13</sup> See Idan Shaked and Dina Avshalom-Gorni, "Jewish Settlement in the Southeastern Hula Valley in the First Century CE," in *Religion and Society in Roman Palestine: Old Questions, New Approaches* (ed. Douglas R. Edwards; New York, London: Routledge, 2004), 28–36.

There is no doubt at this point that synagogues are the best indication of a Jewish community. The Galilee is the area in Israel most crowded with ancient synagogues (Map 5). About 80 sites are known today where evidence for synagogues is found, and about 20 of them are excavated. The earliest ones date to the 2nd to 3rd c. c.e. (apart from Gamla which is dated to the 1st c. c.e.) and some of them survived to the Early Arab period. After a hundred years of field surveys and research, the borders of distribution of the synagogues in the Upper Galilee stretches from Yesod HaMa'ala in the east as far as Sasa in the west, and from Baqa (Peqi'in) in the north west to Rama in the south. In the Lower Galilee, the territory extends from Tiv'on and Bet She'arim in the west down to Beth Alfa in the Jezreel Valley and along the Sea of Galilee in the east.

The distribution of pagan temples produces just the opposite picture (Map 5): Jabel Bilat, ed-Duweir, Kedesh, Qeren Naftali, Omrit, Paneas, and Hippos.

In the Byzantine period the Upper Galilee continued to display the same distribution lines. The place of pagan temples was taken by Christian churches. In the hundred years of research, not even one church was identified in eastern Upper Galilee. The most southern examples are the remains of a little monastery at Kh. Battia, North of Yesod HaMa'ala (excavated by Hana Abu Uqsa on behalf of the IAA<sup>14</sup>). (Map 6)

The situation in Lower Galilee is completely different. Churches and monasteries were erected near, around, and sometimes inside Jewish villages, as is clearly evident in Rama, Capernaum, Nazareth, and elsewhere. This is probably the result of Christian veneration of some sites and regions in Lower Galilee because of their connection with the origins of Christianity; sites such as Kfar Cana, Mt. Tabor, Nazareth, and the Sea of Galilee became not only places of worship but also important destinations of pilgrimage.

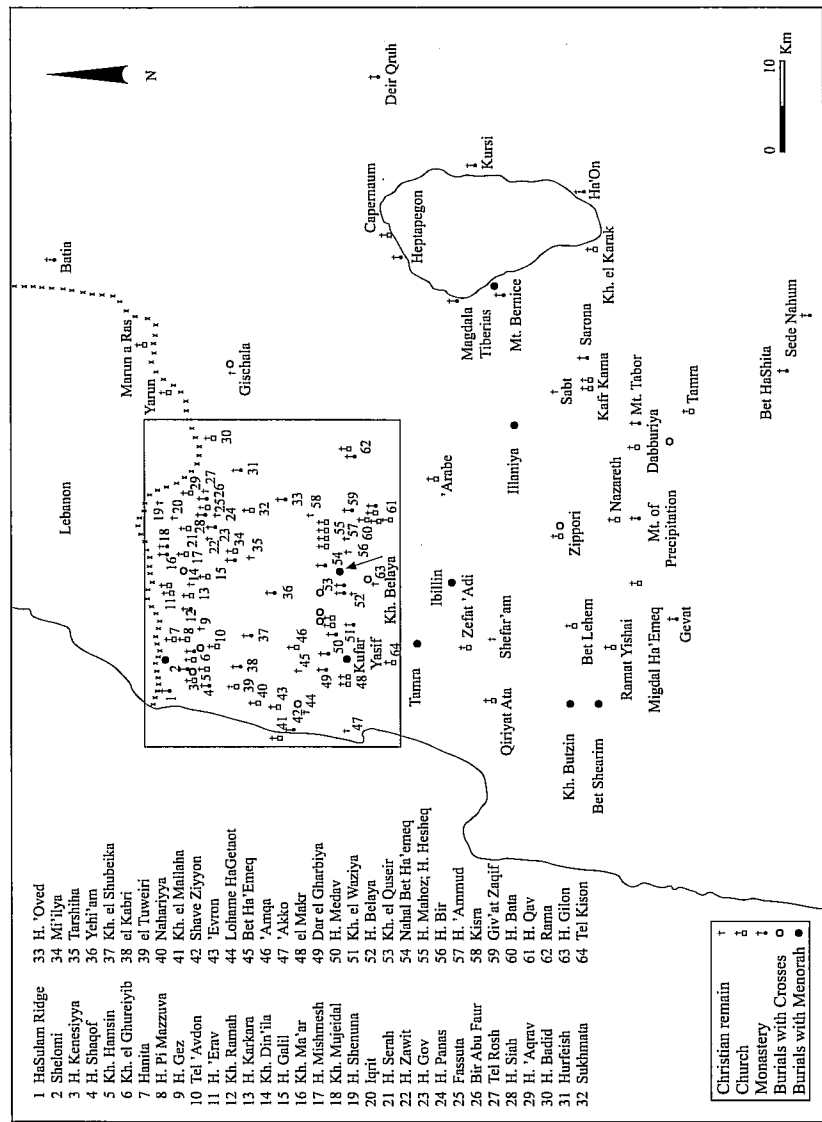
In the field of pottery, one of the best examples for the importance of distribution maps is the comparison between two types of vessels (Map 7).<sup>15</sup> The first is the so called "Kfar Hananiah 1 C–E type," generally known as "Galilean Bowl." Because it was produced at Kfar Hananiah and maybe in other Jewish villages as well, it was commonly used by Jews, perhaps for religious or nationalistic reasons. The second is the "Roman Phoenician" jar which was mainly used by the non-Jewish population in the western Galilee. They both existed in the 2nd and 3rd c. c.e. Their distribution is a stunning example of a complete "mirror view." The demarcation line is the same as in the former examples. The phenomenon of Jewish religious avoidance of certain types of pottery was already identified and discussed.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Hana Abu Uqsa, "Excavations at Horvat Battiya," *Atiqot* (forthcoming).

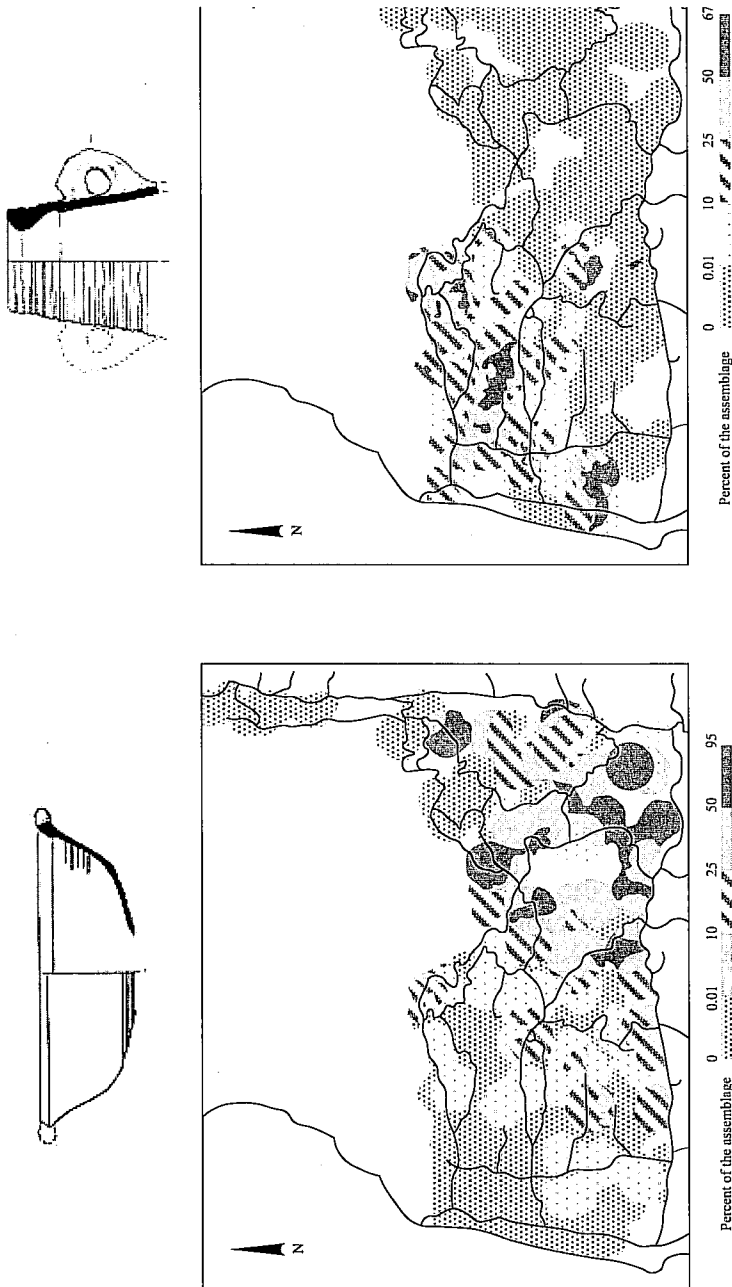
<sup>15</sup> Already discussed by Frankel et al., *Settlement Dynamics*, 47–95.

<sup>16</sup> Donald T. Ariel and Aryeh Strikovsky, "Appendix," in *Excavations at the City of David 1978–1985 directed by Yigal Shiloh*, vol. 2: *Imported Stamped Amphora Handles, Coins*,

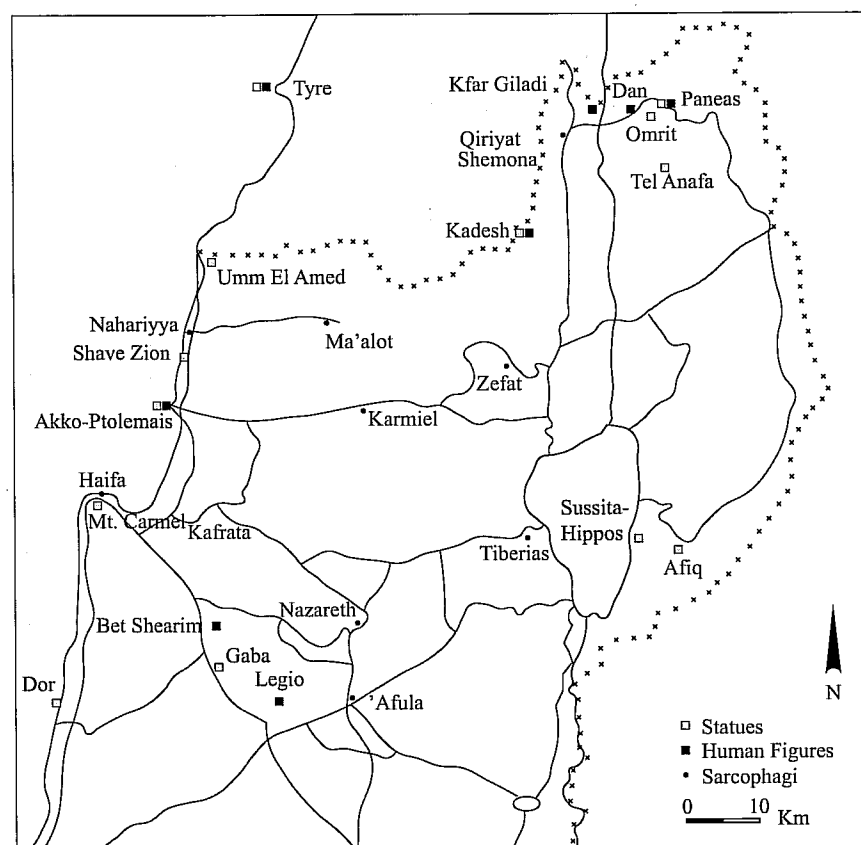
Map 6: Churches, Monasteries, Tombs with Crosses and Tombs with Menorahs



Map 7: Distribution of Pottery in Upper Galilee (According to Frankel, Getzov, Aviam and Degani, 2001)



Map 8: Human Statues and Human Figures and Decorated Sarcophagi, from the Hellenistic and Roman Periods



Other archaeological items illuminating ethnicity are remains of statuary and figurative art (Map 8). A large group of Roman pagan statues was excavated and published at Paneas<sup>17</sup> while few statues and fragments were found at the nearby temples of Omrit<sup>18</sup> and Dan<sup>19</sup>, bases for statues and other fragments were found

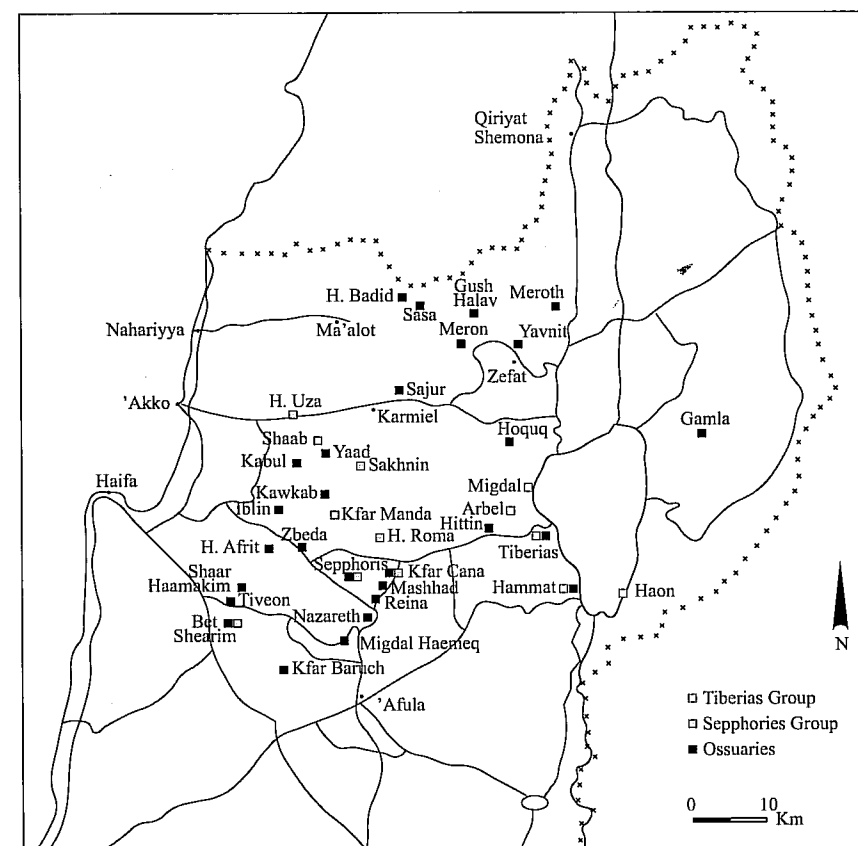
*Worked Bone and Glass* (ed. Donald T. Ariel; Qedem 30; Jerusalem: The Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1990), 25–8

<sup>17</sup> Elise A. Friedland, "Graeco-Roman Sculpture in the Levant: the Marbles from the Sanctuary of Pan at Caesarea Philippi (Banias)," in *The Roman and Byzantine Near East* (ed. John H. Humphrey; Portsmouth: JRA, 1999), 7–22.

<sup>18</sup> Oral information from the excavator, J. Andrew Overman, and I thank him.

<sup>19</sup> Avraham Biran, *Dan* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992) (Hebrew).

Map 9: "Non-Figurative" Jewish Sarcophagi and Ossuaries



at Hippos,<sup>20</sup> Akko, Qedesh,<sup>21</sup> Shave Ziyon, Gaba,<sup>22</sup> Hammath Gader,<sup>23</sup> and Dor,<sup>24</sup> all surrounding the Galilee in a wide circle.

Secondary burial in ossuaries (*ossilegium*) was already recognized as a typical Jewish burial custom. During our research on Galilean ossilegia, where we found

<sup>20</sup> Arthur Segal, Jolanta Mlynarczyk, Mariusz Burdajewicz, and Michael Eisenberg, *Hippos-Sussita* (Haifa: Zinman Institute for Archaeology at the University of Haifa, 2003) and Arthur Segal, Jolanta Mlynarczyk, Mariusz Burdajewicz, Mark Schuler, and Michael Eisenberg, *Hippos-Sussita* (Haifa: Zinman Institute for Archaeology at the University of Haifa, 2004).

<sup>21</sup> Moshe Fisher, Asher Ovadia, and Israel Roll, "The Epigraphic Finds from the Roman Temple at Kedesh in the Upper Galilee," *TA* 13 (1986): 60–6.

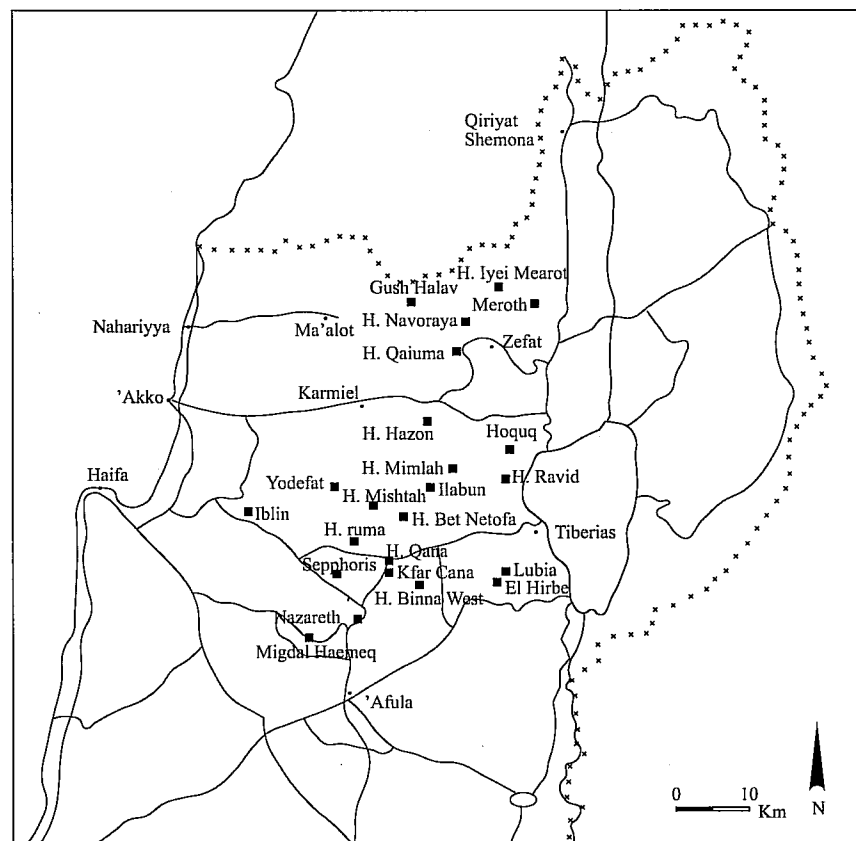
<sup>22</sup> Benjamin Issac, "Two Greek Inscriptions from Tell Abu-Shusha," *Geva* (ed. Benjamin Mazar; Jerusalem, 1988), 224–5 (Hebrew).

<sup>23</sup> Roni Ben Arieh, "The Marble Statues from Hammat Gader," in *The Roman Baths of Hammat Gader* (ed. Yizhar Hirschfeld; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1997), 456–62.

<sup>24</sup> Andrew Stewart, "Marble Sculpture," in *Excavations at Dor*, vol. 1B (ed. Ephraim Stern; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1995), 457–9.



Map 10: Secret Hideaways



about 30 sites with ossuaries (Map 9),<sup>25</sup> we suggested that this custom did not arrive in the Galilee before mid-2nd c. C.E. as nowhere in Galilee has a “clean” 1st c. Jewish tomb with ossuaries ever been found. Moreover, the ossuaries in the Galilee are different from those of Jerusalem and Judea in the 1st c. C.E., being cruder and mostly not decorated; there is also a group of clay ossuaries. The distribution zone is very clear and matches the other data surveyed above.

The phenomenon of secret hideaways was intensively researched in Judea, most are thought to be associated with the second revolt.<sup>26</sup> Without getting into the discussion of how to date these complexes, it is clear that they appear only in Jewish sites. In my recent explorations in the Galilee I surveyed 22 sites where

<sup>25</sup> Mordechai Aviam and Danny Syon, “Jewish Ossilegium in Galilee,” in *What Athens Has to Do with Jerusalem* (ed. Leonard V. Rutgers; Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 151–87.

<sup>26</sup> Amos Kloner and Yigal Tepper, *The Hiding Complexes in the Judean Shephelah* (Tel Aviv: HaKibbutz HaMeuchad/Israel Exploration Society, 1987) (Hebrew).

these complexes were identified<sup>27</sup> and their distribution is similar to the other features identified as Jewish mentioned above (Map 10).

## 2. Comparing the Archaeological Evidence

After surveying 11 different groups of archaeological data and their distribution such as pagan Hellenistic period pottery (GCW), Hasmonaean coins, miqva’ot, stone vessels, synagogues, pagan temples, churches and monasteries, Roman period pottery, statues and figurative art, ossuaries, and secret hideaways, we can now compare them with some historical borders, and the reflection of borders as attested in Jewish textual sources.

One of the best study cases to combine both archaeological evidence and historical sources is the survey followed by excavations at the fortress of Qeren Naftali.<sup>28</sup> The site is located in northern Upper Galilee, just south of the suggested border line of the “Baraita of the Boundaries of Eretz-Israel,” which gives the hypothetical borders of “those who returned from Babylon.” While all borders are marked with a few names, that of northwestern Galilee is marked with the names of a long list of sites.<sup>29</sup> The survey and excavations carried out at the site presented a well preserved fortress located on a high peak above the Huleh Valley, above the main road and the largest spring in the valley, and in eye contact with Kedesh, the local administration center of southern Phoenicia in the Hellenistic period.<sup>30</sup> In the first stage the site served as a Hellenistic fortress and probably belonged to the local authorities of Tyre and its branch at Kedesh. At the end of the 2nd c. B.C.E., the fortress was conquered by the Hasmonaean as proven by Hasmonaean coins, and mainly by the construction of a large, typical Hasmonaean miqve that was planted inside the basement of an earlier Hellenistic room. In the next stage, the miqve was put out of use by filling it with ashes that included a lot of Eastern Terra Sigillata –otherwise rare in Jewish settlements in the Galilee– figurative oil lamps and animal bones that included non-kosher and hunted species. The date of the fill is the second half of the 1st c. B.C.E. This, with the remains of a circumvallation wall that surrounds the fortress and a number of possible siege camps on the saddle to the west, suggest to me identifying this phase with a Hasmonaean fortress that was besieged by the Herodian armies in their campaign against the Galileans and the Hasmonaean garrisons in the Galilee in 38 B.C.E. as described by Josephus.

The fortress went out of use during the 1st c. C.E., when it was located north of the Jewish habitation zone of the Galilee according to the border description of

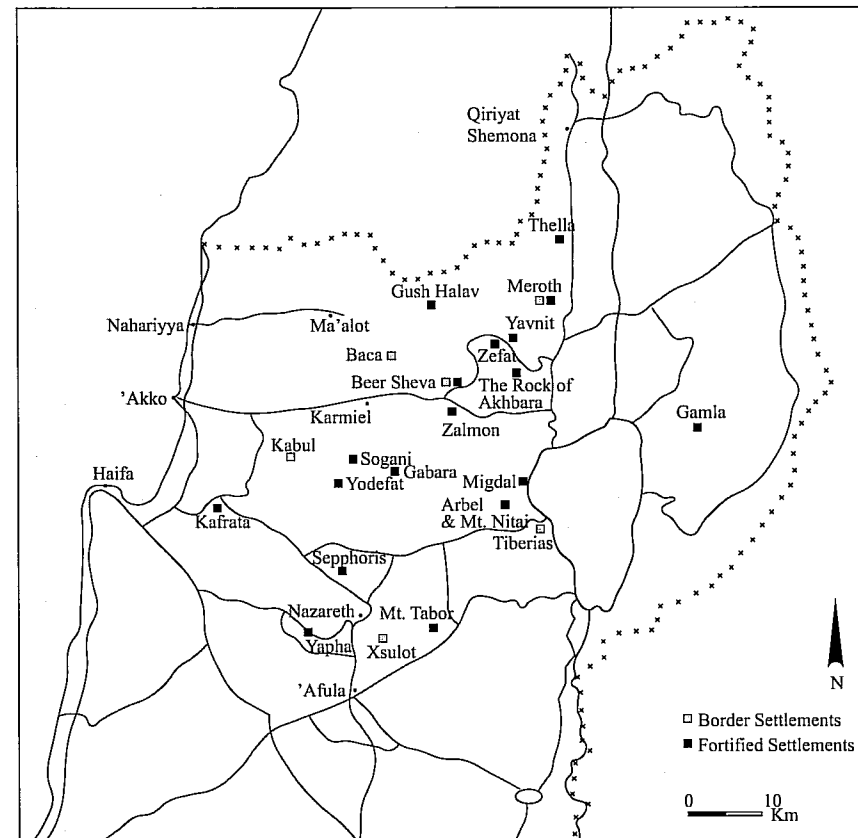
<sup>27</sup> Aviam, *Jews*, 123–32.

<sup>28</sup> Aviam, *Jews*, 59–88.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 11–2.

<sup>30</sup> Herbert and Berlin, “Administrative Center.”

Map 11: Josephus' Fortifications and Border Settlements



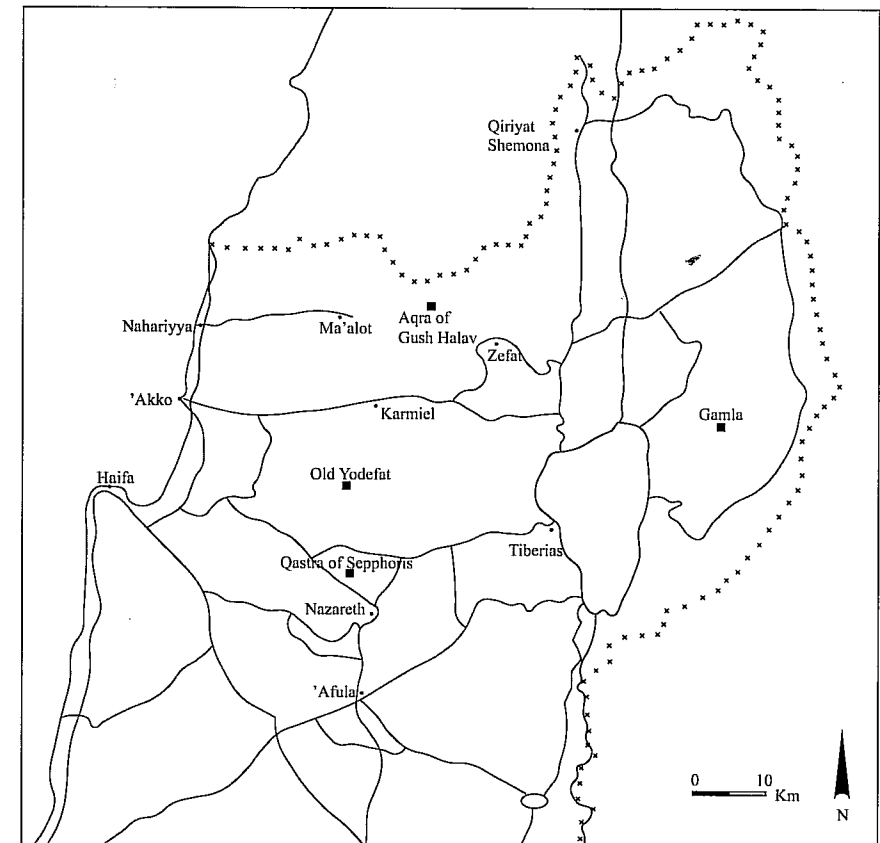
Josephus. This is probably the reason why Josephus did not fortify it against the Romans during the First Revolt. During the 2nd and 3rd c. C.E., a pagan village existed on the site; this included a temple, as evidenced by two Greek inscriptions found there, as well as by architectural fragments uncovered in our excavations.

The remains at Qeren Naftali present many elements that are used above and below to identify ethnicity and ethnic changes in the Galilee: a fortress with GCW shards, a Hasmonaean/Jewish miqveh, Hasmonaean coins, Roman-pagan figurative oil lamps, pagan temple remains, and compatibility with historical records.

The earliest "ethnic" demarcation line in my opinion is the "Baraita of the Boundaries of Eretz-Israel" which I suggest dating to the time of the Hasmonaean, in the first half of the 1st c. B.C.E.<sup>31</sup> This line marks the largest Galilean

<sup>31</sup> Aviam, *Jews*, 59–88.

Map 12: "The Walled Cities From the Days of Joshua Ben-Nun" (Arakhin 92)



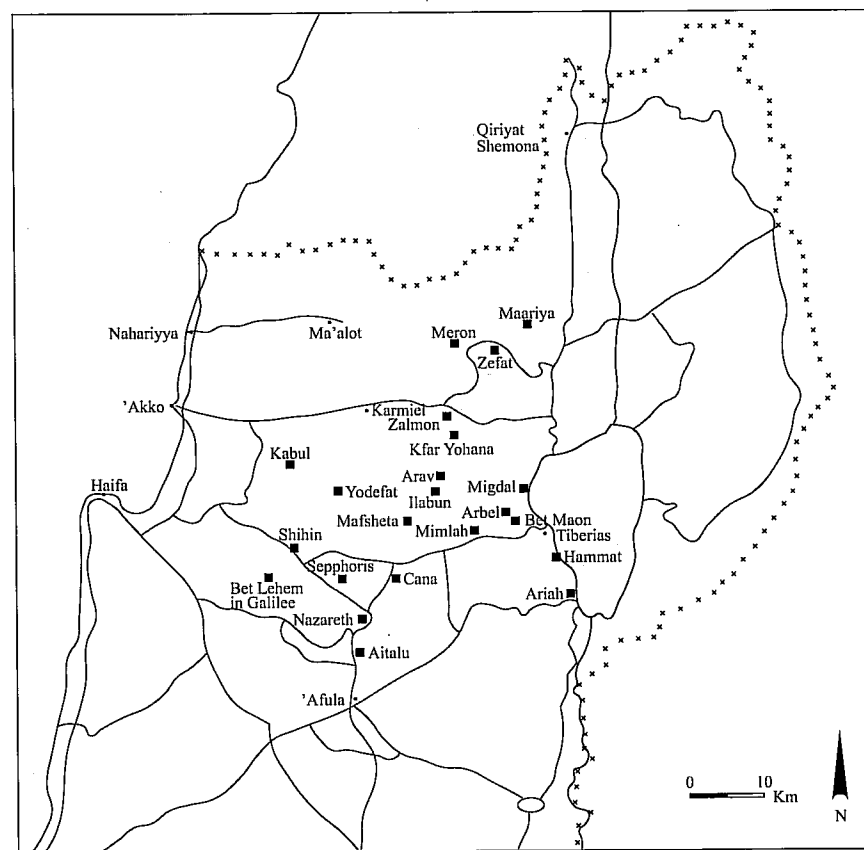
territory to be identified as Jewish and it clearly correlates with the distribution of Hasmonaean coins, miqva'ot, and the fortress of Qeren Naftali.

Another zone-definition is made by the Mishnah which presents a list of "walled towns from the time of Joshua Ben Nun" (*m. 'Arak. 9:2*) that mentions the "Acra" of Gischala in Upper Galilee, "old" Jotapata and "Qastra" of Sepphoris in Lower Galilee, as well as Gamla in the Golan (Map 12). Following Richard A. Horsley,<sup>32</sup> I suggest identifying them as Hasmonaean strongholds in the newly conquered region projected back into the legendary times of Joshua. Although only four places are mentioned, they are all in central Lower Galilee, eastern Upper Galilee and the Golan.

The next border of the Galilee is described by Josephus at the end of the 60s of the 1st c. C.E. (Map 11). The territory described is much narrower than the

<sup>32</sup> Richard A. Horsley, *Archaeology, History and Society in Galilee* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996), 26.

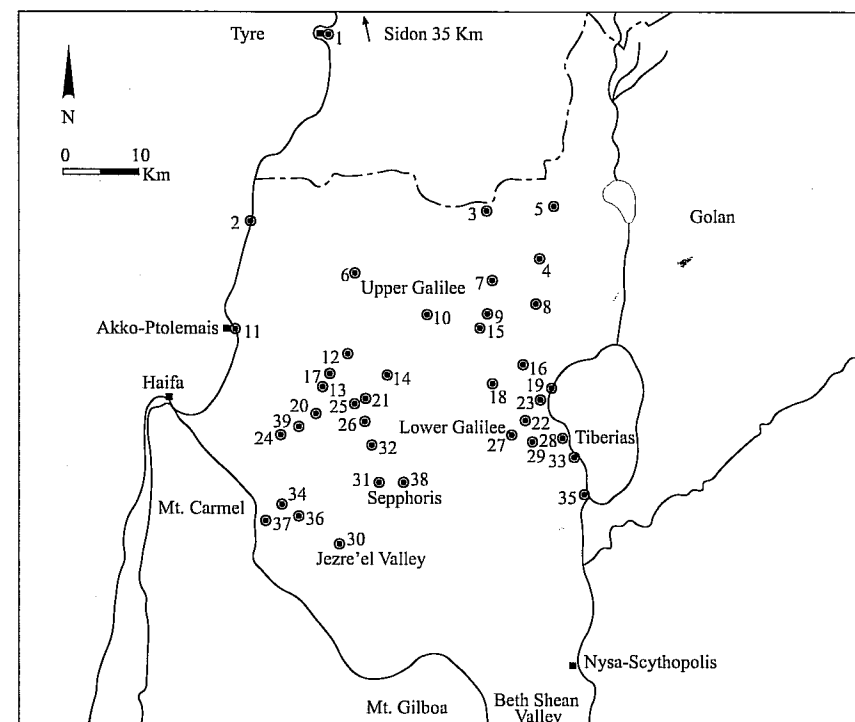
Map 13: Priestly Courses in Galilean Villages



one presented in the Baraita, which certainly reflects a shrinking process that took place mainly at the end of the first half of the 1st c. C.E., probably after the exile of Herod Antipas.

The borders mentioned by Josephus provide the best description of the territory inhabited by Jews, as they extend from Thella in the northeast to Baca in the northwest, from Kabul in the west to Tiberias in the east, and as far south as Xaloth. Around and outside of it are "the Carmel, a mountain once belonging to the Galilee and now to Tyre (...); Gaba, the city of cavalry (...); on the south the country is bordered by Samaria and the territory of Scythopolis (...); on the east by the territory of Hippos and Gadara (...); on the north Tyre and its dependent villages, e.g. (...) the village of Baca, marking the frontier of Tyrian territory" (*J.W.* 3.1). For Josephus, the Tyrians and the citizens of all the other cities are not just inhabitants, they are "foreign nations," living on the other side of the border.

Map 14: Sages and Their Homes



- |  |                                  |                                 |   |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 Tyre – many                              | 10 Shezor – R. Shimeon           | 21 Yodefah – R. Menahem         | 31 Zippori – many                       |
| 2 Akhziv-Segavion (Head of a Synagogue)    | 11 Akko – R. Abba                | 22 Arbel – R. Mar Okavia        | 32 Ruma – R. Elazar                     |
| 3 Biri (Baram?) – many                     | 12 Shaab – R. Mani               | 23 Magdala – R. Yodan           | 33 Hamat – R. Meir                      |
| 4 Kfar Navoraya – R. Yaakov                | 13 Tamrata – many                | 24 Usah – many                  | 34 Tiveon – many                        |
| 5 Qazion – R. Yohanan                      | 14 Sakhnin – many                | 25 Kokhva – R. Dosta            | 35 Ariah – Scholar                      |
| 6 Yanoah – Abba Yossi Ben Hanan (Doubtful) | 15 Kfar Hananya – Many           | 26 Kfar Manday – R. Issaskhar   | 36 Ardaskus – R. Meir Rabbi             |
| 7 Teqoa – R. Shimeon                       | 16 Huquq – R. Hizkia             | 27 Kfar Hittin – many           | 37 Bet Shearim – Rabbi                  |
| 8 Akhbarei – many                          | 17 Kabul – many                  | 28 Tveria – many                | 38 Gofa of Zippori – R. Yonathan Soffer |
| 9 Parod – R. Tanhum                        | 18 Mimiah – R. Yossi             | 29 Maon – R. Yossi              | 39 Shefaram – Sanhedrin                 |
|  | 19 Ginosar – R. Yehuda (?)       | 30 Terbanat – R. Shimeon Soffer |   |
|  | 20 Ibilin – R. Elazar Bar Yehuda |                                 |   |

The same zones are reflected in the list of 24 priestly courses that (Map 13) is known from both Jewish sources as well as archaeological finds. According to Jewish tradition, the priestly courses that fled from Jerusalem settled in Galilean villages and their names and locations are preserved in some hymns.<sup>33</sup> None of these villages is located outside of the territory described by Josephus.

<sup>33</sup> Ze'ev Safrai, *The Galilee in the Time of Mishna and Talmud* (Maalot: Maalot, 1981) (Hebrew). On the priestly courses, see pp. 261–74.

The distribution map of the homes of rabbis mentioned in the Mishnah and Talmud provides the best support for the congruence of the distribution maps based on archaeological data and other historical evidence (Map 14). Although there were rabbis who lived and taught in Gentile cities like Akko-Ptolemais or Akhziv, all the other villages mentioned as homes of rabbis are within the borders of the Jewish Galilee. There is a complete overlap between the two groups of data – archaeology and history. The regions from which the rabbis came, the settlements and fortifications from the times of Josephus and the priestly courses concur with the regions delineated by synagogues, miqva'ot, stone vessels, secret hideaways and ossuaries were found.

### 3. Conclusion

As a conclusion, I think that the method followed here can also be used in other regions of Israel, as well as in any other country and region. Human material culture, especially the elements that concern religion, can be surveyed and mapped and the results will yield borders of demarcation that define zones. The Galilee from the end of the 2nd c. B.C.E. to the 4th c. C.E. was inhabited mainly by Jews living in villages, towns, and cities. The majority of these Jewish settlements continued well into the Byzantine period, even though there was a growing number of Christians in the two capitals of Galilee – Tiberias and Sepphoris – as well as in new Christian villages and monasteries. The archaeological remains consistently point not only to a vast majority of Jews but also to a clear isolation of Jewish villages in the Jewish region from Gentile villages around it.

## The Inhabitants of Galilee in the Hellenistic and Early Roman Periods

Probes into the Archaeological and Literary Evidence

MILTON MORELAND

### 1. Introduction

For those who are interested in the history of Early Roman Galilee, archaeology need not be separated from the ancient literary materials that discuss or stem from the region; historical archaeologists can benefit greatly from a careful and critical reading of the extant textual materials. But we do ourselves a great disservice when we simply use the archaeological material to illustrate text-based historical reconstructions. While Galilean archaeology is still in its early stages of expansion (and publication), there is enough data from the material culture remains to begin to shed light on the complex cultures that developed in this small slice of Roman territory. While text-based historical reconstructions of Early Roman (ER) Galilee tend to assume that there were well-defined, objective groups, identities, and boundaries in this region, careful studies of the extant material culture can provide a needed corrective by helping to demonstrate the extent to which these were unfixed and socially constructed. Text based reconstructions have traditionally focused on the elite, male groups that were neatly categorized as stable and objective institutions in ancient Palestine by Josephus, Philo, and the New Testament; archaeology allows us not only to be more circumspect with regard to the role of these groups in common life, but also forces us to reconstruct alternative histories that take into account the majority population of the region: those outside of the elite, male, socially constructed groups.

The following discussion focuses on several questions related to the setting of Hellenistic and ER Galilee for which archaeology promises to provide significant – and possibly surprising – insights into the identities of the people who lived there prior to the First Revolt. In the context of the ongoing discussion of Jewish identities in ER Galilee, this essay considers the origins and self-identifications of the majority inhabitants of the region. In this context I briefly evaluate the extent to which we can define 'ethnic' or 'religious' differences with material culture. I then suggest that the archaeological and literary data point to a diverse population that lived in the region from the Persian to the Early Roman period – though its numbers certainly expanded throughout the Hasmonean and