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## CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE DECORATED LINTEL OF ET-TELL\*

This paper deals with a decorated lintel attributed to et-Tell. The lintel has chronological value, as, based on iconographical analysis and analysis of style, it may be dated to the reign of the Herodian dynasty. It must have decorated a building of importance. Arguments as to its placement, dating and cultural context will be given below.

### The question of findplace (Fig. 1)

Fascinating is the registration of the movement of this stone in modern times. Contrary to the remarks by Rami Arav<sup>1</sup> this stone was not recorded by pastor Frei while describing the ancient remnants on et-Tell. It does not mean that it was not lying there with the decorated face down, or constituted a non-conspicuous part of domestic architecture of the Beduins. In the late nineteenth century the British traveller Oliphant,<sup>2</sup> recorded multiple archaeological sites apparently dating to the Roman period in the neighbourhood of et-Tell. In many of them antique sculptures and reliefs were recorded by him in secondary usage.

\* Part of this paper was presented at the International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Groningen, The Netherlands, July 25–28, 2004.

<sup>1</sup> Bethsaida 2, p. 22 and note 3 on p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> Oliphant 1889, described the area on p. 243–261, on p. 244 he is mentioning et-Tell.

On et-Tell Oliphant, as the German pastor Frei<sup>3</sup> before him, saw “a small native village” and recorded nothing special as to the antique topography. Although Frei reports one case of decoration, this description does not apply to the lintel in question, however. It runs as follows:

Wir stehen auf den Ruinen von Julias. Aber umsonst spähen wir nach bemerkenswerten Resten, auch der höchste Punkt des niedrigen Hügels, sowie sein Ost- und Südabfall zeigt nichts derartiges. Einzig an einer Oberschwelle findet sich eine Verzierung: sie besteht in drei ungleich und sehr plump gearbeiteten Blumenkronen. Erwähnung verdient allenfalls noch ein kreisförmiger Basalt von 2,10 m Durchmesser. Ein rundes Loch bildet sein Centrum. Der Rand desselben sowie die Peripherie des Steines ist erhöht, so daß der dazwischenliegende Raum eine in sich zurücklaufende, breite, muldenartige Vertiefung bildet. Der äußerste Umkreis ist ein flaches Band, in welches man eine Rinne eingegraben sieht. Sie muß wohl einer Flüssigkeit zum Ablauf gedient haben. Vielleicht hat man Oliven oder Trauben in dem Steine gekeltert. – Am südlichen Abhang fällt ein steinumhängtes, lumpenbehängtes Grab auf. Es trägt den Namen Schech Abdallah. Ein zweites zeigt außer dem genannten Schmuck einen auf eine Stange gespießten, ausgedörrten Hahn.

Neither Oliphant, nor, to my knowledge, anybody after him, has reported any kind of decoration, whether geometric or figural or inscriptions, among the remnants on et-Tell.

The first positive information constituting a description together with a photograph of the lintel in question was given by Mendel Nun, who in 1970 reported its being found on et-Tell to the Israeli Department of Antiquities and Museums. The documentation of this find in the archives of this institution is testified by D. Urman, who was leading a team of surveyors in the Golan. Mendel Nun writes that the lintel was found on the “upper Bethsaida-Julias” which according to his terminology means at et-Tell.<sup>4</sup>

From Dan Urman we learn that the report of 1970 describes the findplace as “among the ruins of the Arab village”.<sup>5</sup> The next information we find is given by Bargil Pixner, who before 1985 saw the lintel “in the nearby Jordan Park” but the stone had apparently been moved there as he in the following specified that it had been found on et-Tell.<sup>6</sup> Thanks to the records of Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn, The University of Munich, it has been possible to establish that in 1993, when he saw it, the lintel was placed at the entrance to the restaurant situated in the Jordan Park (north-west of et-Tell).<sup>7</sup> This restaurant is burned down, but it is not certain whether the

<sup>3</sup> Frei 1886, p. 118–119.

<sup>4</sup> Nun 1977, a photograph p. 21 (Hebrew). The photograph is described as “Lintel from the upper Bethsaida-Julias” (reading H.-W. Kuhn).

<sup>5</sup> Urman 1995, p. 526.

<sup>6</sup> Pixner 1985, p. 207 and 212.

<sup>7</sup> I thank prof. H.-W. Kuhn for this information.

stone had been moved to the north entrance of the city on the tell soon after this event. In 1998 this author observed and photographed the lintel at this exact spot on the lefthand side of the path leading to the site from the north, where it remained to the end of the 2000 excavation season as observed by this author and at least to 2001 as observed by Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn. Thus the following scheme of the movement of the lintel can be proposed:

1. in the year 1970 the lintel was discovered by Mendel Nun on et-Tell (the exact position is unknown);
2. before 1985 the lintel was moved to the Jordan Park, where it was observed by Bargil Pixner;
3. in 1993 it was observed at this spot by Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn;
4. in June 1998 it was lying at the left hand side of a path leading from the north to the archaeological site on et-Tell together with two column drums, where it was measured, drawn and photographed by this author;
5. at this very spot it was recorded by Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn in 2001.

In the light of the above, it appears that the lintel must have originally belonged to some construction on et-Tell. Probably it was hidden in the earth and therefore not seen during visits at the end of the nineteenth century. Probably for the same reason it remained unrecorded during surveys of 1967 and 1968.<sup>8</sup>

### Description of the lintel (Figs. 2, 3)

The lintel appears as a worked block of black basalt, rectangular in section, partially preserved. The right side of the frieze is broken, small chippings can be seen at the edges, the relief itself is chipped in places. The size of the block varies between the highest and lowest values as follows: length: from 105.5 cm to 83 cm, height: from 38 cm to 36.6 cm, depth: from 46 cm to 36.5 cm.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Urman 1995, p. 526, survey teams led by C. Epstein and S. Gutman in 1967 marked the position of the ancient walls at et-Tell. In 1968 the site was again surveyed by D. Urman and his staff, the size of the walled inn area was estimated as 45 dunams, no "decorated architectural artefacts and inscriptions" were recorded.

<sup>9</sup> Compare also: Skupińska-Løvset 2004, p. 79–92; Skupińska-Løvset 2006, appendix 1.

The shape as well as the placement and the art of decoration suggest that the block originally served as a lintel of the entrance probably to a carefully planned building.

The front side of the lintel was carefully decorated. The ornament consisted of a motif of a crossing meander composed with two subsidiary motifs, both in a function subordinated to the meander: a motif of a seven-petal flower, shown frontally, stationary and in movement around its own axis in a so-called whirling blossom. Both blossoms, that in rest and that in movement, probably followed each other rhythmically forming a continuous frieze.

The ornament has the following size: the arms of the meander are 13 cm, 18 cm and 36 cm long, the diameter of the flowers vary within limits of 10.5 cm to 11 cm. All straight-lined bands are of a width from 2.2 cm to 2.8 cm.

The ornament is on the average 2 mm deep, thus the relief could be classified as a flat relief. A flat, carefully carved relief having a simple, rhythmical composition would suggest a comparatively early period of execution, and analogies coming from the city of Rome would suggest the Augustan period. Careful workmanship may also be observed in the relatively even surface of the visible parts of the lintel.

Basalt was as a rule left unpolished and such is also the case of the here-discussed lintel. However, the traces left after the initial carving of the ornament were homogenised by help of a fine-toothed claw-chisel and a finely calibrated bush hammer, which left an evenly rough surface. The hollows are shallow both on the ornament and in the background. It should be mentioned here that the manual technique of texturing blocks of stone by the using of toothed tools, giving an effect similar to that from antiquity, can still be observed in the Near East. At the reconstruction of the ancient Khan in Sidon the stone masters gave the blocks of stone a texture similar to that of the ancient times, using variously toothed claw-chisels and bush hammers in the nineties of twentieth century (Fig. 7).

### **The meander motif in Greek and Roman architecture**

The meander motif such as the one carved on the fragment of a basalt lintel found at et-Tell is not native to Syria or Palestine, but rather introduced here probably as an effect of cultural diffusion from the west. Meander is tightly connected with the art of ancient Greece. From the Geometric period on it is recorded as a leading ornament in the decoration of pottery, terracotta, objects in bronze, small decorative objects in general

and textiles. In stone architecture of continental Greece meander is seldom found before the Hellenistic period, but it appears in Asia Minor, Phrygia especially.

A fourth century marble sarcophagus from Sidon, the so-called "Alexander sarcophagus", which in structure reproduces sacral stone architecture, shows the usage of a meander motif, here in a composition with a square divided into four parts.<sup>10</sup> The same ornament decorated several buildings of the Late Republic and the Augustan period. Chr. Leon, while discussing the carved decoration of Roman buildings, among the so-called non-canonical ornaments to which the meander motif is classified, mentions only one case of usage of such ornament in the reign of Trajan. In this case he speaks about a simple version of crossing meander (Einfacher Kreuzmäander) forming a border of a tondo.<sup>11</sup> For the Augustan period the examples are multiple. Leon points out that in this period, the crossing meander is used in a composite version, as it has in each second field a filling in the shape of a square with a dot in the centre.<sup>12</sup>

In the place of the square we have found carved the motifs of an unmoving, respectively a whirling blossom on the lintel from et-Tell. In explanation of the custom of placing of the blossoms this author searched for topographical and chronological factors. Blossoms and rosettes are the most popular motifs for adornments of Herodian architecture and objects such as ossuaries in the period first century BC – first century AD in Judea, especially around Jerusalem and Jericho, and they are also used as a decoration of the buildings in the Nabatean kingdom. The motifs decorate temples, palaces, entrances of the rock-cut tombs and objects such as sarcophagi and ossuaries, often combined with the motifs of triglyph, diglyph or tetraglyph.

In Rome very popular is at this time also a version of meander without subsidiary elements of ornamentation. Such a version we may see on the famous Ara Pacis Augustae (13–9 BC), a work created in the spirit of the classicising Roman school of sculpting. The temple of Jupiter Optimus

<sup>10</sup> It is carved on an architrave, not frieze, which constitutes a part of the box of a sarcophagus. It should be mentioned that the placement of the meander motif on fasciae of the architrave in the Roman period is considered as a Syrian feature by scholars such as Dentzer-Feydy 1989, p. 468–470.

<sup>11</sup> Leon 1971, p. 279–280; Type B, Einfacher Kreuzmäander. Trajansforum. Tondorahmung (Taf. 25.1).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem.* Typ A:

1. Antiquario Forense, Doric geison from Pathian arch? (= RomGebälke I 14, No 4f, Taf. II).
2. Augustus Forum, frieze in "Sala di Colosso" (Leon 1971, Taf. 77.4) and in The Temple of Mars Ultor, the casettons of the pteron (= RomGebälke, I Taf. IV).
3. S. Nicola in Carcere, geison, outside (Leon 1971, Taf. 77.4).

Maximus Heliopolitanus in Heliopolis, today Baalbek, in Lebanon, has the motif of crossing meander on the cornice (Fig. 4). This temple is traditionally considered as created under the influence of the city-Roman architecture.<sup>13</sup> The temple was erected from local hard limestone. It is worth mentioning that in the period of reign of Herod the Great and his heirs, Roman influence is strong within the territory of their kingdom. G. Foerster also observed it while working on painted decoration adorning the interiors of the palace in Masada.<sup>14</sup> Sources tell that tetrarch Philip propagated the Augustan cultural policy in his tetrarchy. One would imagine, that while refounding the *κομη* Bethsaida into the *πολις* Julias, he took care about the adornment of chosen buildings and that these adornments followed the dominant style of the period.

### Meander in the basalt architecture of Hauran

In the discussion of the fragmentary lintel found at et-Tell of interest is the relationship of the meander motif to the architectural decoration of the basalt area of Hauran. Hauran is situated northeast of the Golan Heights and a great part of its area was included in the kingdom of Herod the Great in the year 23 BC. During the reign of Herod and his heirs, the two Agrippas, the sanctuary at Si was renovated.<sup>15</sup>

The so-called "Nabatean gate" of the sanctuary at Si and the sanctuary itself, besides traditional vegetal motifs and the egg-and-dart ornament are decorated with a meander motif.<sup>16</sup> This phase in the renovation of the sanctuary is usually dated to the middle of the first century AD.

The temple of Sleim has its cornice decorated with meander combined with swastikas. The temple at Sleim is considered a building created under Graeco-Roman influence at the end of the pre-provincial period, dated by Jacqueline Dentzer-Feydy to the 1st century BC – 1st century AD.<sup>17</sup> In her recent publication while discussing the small size temple of Rimet Harem, a site situated close to Souweida, she is of the opinion that the entire

<sup>13</sup> Weigand 1914, p. 43–56, chapter "Die große Tempel und die Augusteische Architektur".

<sup>14</sup> He believes that Roman artists were invited to decorate Masada and that they may also have decorated buildings of some importance in other sites (oral message).

<sup>15</sup> With the renovation is bound the dedicatory inscription by Agrippa, cf. Waddington 1870, no. 2365, which runs: "ἐπι βασιλεος μεγαλου Αγριππα φιλοκαισαρος, και φιλορομα... και Αγριππας υιος ανεθεκαν" (epi basileos megalou Agrippa filokaisaros, kai filoroma... kai Agrippas hios anethekan).

<sup>16</sup> Dentzer-Feydy 1985, p. 270, Pls. VII, VIII. Plates reproduced after Butler, PPUAES IIA.

<sup>17</sup> Dentzer-Feydy 1985, p. 278–279, Pl. X.

complex of the Hauranite temples should be dated to the second part of the first century AD. Such dating was proposed upon style analysis of the decoration. Both the frieze and the cornice of the temple at Rimet Harem include the motif of crossing meander in combination with four-leaf rosettes and some figural motifs, which have been later hammered away.<sup>18</sup> The meander motif shows some similarities to that decorating the temple at Mushenef, but its execution is more careless.

According to the same author in the provincial pagan period (II<sup>nd</sup> – III<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD) the meander motif in combination with the swastika became quite popular. It is recorded on broad bands decorating the architraves (*fasciae*), niches, and lintels. During the later Imperial period, in two sub-periods, namely during the reign of the Antonine dynasty and during the reign of Philip the Arab, the Roman influence in Hauran is distinct. Typical of the Antonine period is the meander motif which decorated the temple in Atil<sup>19</sup> and the temple in Mushenef.<sup>20</sup> This motif is also recorded at Qanawat.<sup>21</sup>

In the initial phases of the provincial-Christian period the meander motif is still present in decoration, but its execution is characterized by unorganic uniformity.

### Meander in the adjacent territories

In the architectural decoration of the Galilean and Gaulanite synagogues, meander appears, as it seems, on the earliest constructions. Such are the synagogues in Gamla and Migdal (Magdala). Fragments of architectural decoration containing meander, but without any closer provenience or dating

<sup>18</sup> Dentzer-Feydy 1998, p. 201–211; fig. 14, p. 207 – architrave with the motif of crossing meander combined with four-leaf rosette (oak-leaves) and hammered motifs. The temple of Rimet Harem was small with outside dimensions 8.13 m × 11.15 m, inside dimensions 6.27 m × 9.94 m. The walls were 0.87 m broad. It was composed only from the cella and had no peristasis.

<sup>19</sup> PPUAES, II A5, p. 355–356, dated by inscription to 151 AD.

<sup>20</sup> Recently Dentzer-Feydy 1998, p. 289 ff, Pl. XIV. With the temple at Mushenef (Nela) are bound three dating inscriptions, quoted here after Waddington 1870, no. 2211 with the name of Agrippa I, no. 2212 with the tituli of Marcus Aurelius, and no. 2213 with the tituli of Commodus.

<sup>21</sup> Dentzer-Feydy 1998, Pl. XIII. The meander motif was used for decoration of the so-called “central gate” in the northern side of the eastern church, vide Amer et al. 1982, p. 257 ff, figs. 32, 33. As the parts of the complex were used walls dated from the II<sup>nd</sup> to the VI<sup>th</sup> cent. AD. Among these were distinguished walls forming an Antonine peribolos (temple or pretorium), walls forming probably a grave monument from the III<sup>rd</sup> century AD, and two Christian basilicas.

are present among the objects stored at the District Museum for the Cultural Heritage of the Golan Heights at Katzrin.

The meander motif on the column from Gamla is widely known.<sup>22</sup> Dating *post quem non* allows us to define the period of usage of the column as the first half of the first century AD, or maybe slightly earlier. The relief is flat, but the execution of the motif is of distinctly lesser quality than in the case of the decoration of the lintel of et-Tell.

Remains of the biblical Magdala lie close to the modern settlement of Migdal in the district of Safed; its geographical position is 198 north and 247 west. Franciscan excavations discovered at Magdala Hellenistic and Roman architectural remnants, the most prominent among them was identified as a synagogue. Of interest are mosaics and architectural decoration of Magdala. In the so-called "block C" a mosaic having a meander motif combined with a rectangle with a line in the centre was discovered.<sup>23</sup> It was a black and white mosaic, carefully laid down. The dating of the mosaic reconstructed on the basis of analysis of the typology of the pottery and the coins found under the floors is early (*al primo periodo romano*), while the higher levels of usage of the building, identified as a villa, are dated to the IVth century AD. "La data iniziale del mosaico a meandri della prima fase di occupazione" is according to the excavators secure.<sup>24</sup> At the time of this author's stay in Magdala the mosaic had been removed for conservation, but accessible photographic material was adequate for study of this monument in detail.

Above the mosaic level were found mixed up coins, including issues starting with an edition by Herodes Archelaos and ending with coins issued in the second decade of the fourth century AD.

The same motif of crossing meander with fillings was recorded on the architectural fragment found "su quarto conci di un arco, fosse provenienti da una antica sinagoga, tre pezzi dei quali furono riadoperati nel muro B del blocco F".<sup>25</sup> (Fig. 5) This ornament was carved in a block of white limestone. Each field between the crossings of the meander was filled with a diverging motif. There were recorded a head of a man in a Phrygian hood, a four-leaf blossom and a six-leaf blossom as well as a whirling five-leaf blossom. Some years earlier still another fragment of architectural decoration with meander was found, but far away from the area of the

<sup>22</sup> Ma'oz 1981, fig. p. 36.

<sup>23</sup> Corba 1976, p. 360-363, fig. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Loffreda 1976, p. 341. The author, however, explains that further digs in depth were hindered by sighing of the water: "per sicurezza é necessario scavare più in basso, ma a questo punto le acque sorgive ci sono di inciampo."

<sup>25</sup> Corbo 1976, p. 363 and p. 377-378, fig. 13.

Franciscan excavations.<sup>26</sup> There were also found other decorated blocks of limestone in the village, such as fragments of columns, two fragmentary heart-shaped capitals, and various plinths. Taking under consideration the comparatively many architectural parts found, the excavators assume the existence at Magdala of a large "white synagogue", that was built in limestone.

The meander motif cut on the blocks of limestone found in Magdala shows distinct technical differences in comparison with the here discussed basalt block from et-Tell. The relief is more deep and less carefully executed. One should, however, take into consideration the probably much higher placement of the reliefs in Magdala, as they decorated entablature of a public building, not the lintel of a door. From a technical point of view important is also the difference in hardness between limestone and basalt as the limestone, being softer and easier to work, often has deeper carved decoration.

The crossing meander from the lintel of the "white synagogue in Capernaum" (Fig. 6) shows also diverging technical characteristics. The execution of this motif is distinctly less careful. This very interesting relief, having a similar function to the et-Tell lintel, will, however, only be signalled here. Because of the still continuing discussion about the dating of the so-called "white synagogue in Capernaum" the inclusion of this block will not be possible without a separate consideration of the dating of the synagogue as a whole, a subject much too large for this article.

From the territory of the Golan Heights many decorated architectural fragments, executed in basalt are known. However, this material is at present non-indicative as comparative neither for the purposes of dating nor for typology. In general the decorated basalt blocks are only preliminarily published, and the question of publishing rights for some important items is not clear. Other hindrances lie in the fact that the provenience of many items is unknown or unclear, thus the fragments of architectural decoration lack cultural context. Taking these factors into consideration it can be only signalled that the meander motif is frequent on the basalt material of Golan, and exhibits typological variations. Unfortunately as stated above the architectural blocks of the Golan lack functional and topographical context and thus they have limited value for dating. However, if looking at the technique of execution of some items several early features may be observed. Of early date appears for instance the meander decorating the fragment of a tympanum apparently coming from ed-Dikke.<sup>27</sup> Similar are the cases of some fragmentary blocks of basalt brought to the District

<sup>26</sup> Corbo 1976, p. 372 "Tra le rovine del villaggio arabo di el-Megdel sulla riva del lago..."

<sup>27</sup> Oliphant 1889, p. 251, fig. 149.

Museum for the Cultural Heritage of the Golan Heights at Katzrin by its director Dr. Zvi Uri Ma'oz. Dr. Ma'oz describes these fragments as belonging to the early phases in the cultural development of the Golan Heights.<sup>28</sup> Their dating, leaning on traditional methods is not secure, however, it is worth stressing the relative popularity of the meander motif.

### Conclusion

In summing up, it is apparent that the meander motif was frequently used in Southern Syria and Palestine for the purpose of decoration of architecture in the Roman period. The motif is relatively abundant in the decoration of the basalt architecture of Gaulanitis and Hauranitis. As for limestone architecture Augustan analogies can be supplied. Augustan influence, although most of the buildings are dated to the first century AD, in the kingdom of Herod the Great and his heirs is archaeologically attested and confirmed by the written sources, which speak about the romanophilia of the Herodian dynasty. While comparing the decoration of the lintel found at et-Tell its style properties suggests connections with the city-Roman architecture of the time of Augustus, but also with the early architecture of Syro-Palestine. Thus, an Augustan date will be proposed for this fragment.

Such dating may bring the lintel in connection with some public buildings in the newly founded Bethsaida/Iulias, or, with a private villa, or even the tomb of tetrarch Philip, who according to Josephus Flavius was attracted to this beautiful spot.<sup>29</sup>

Considering the topographical questions, however, we must keep in mind the "afterlife of monuments" in Antiquity. This topic has been little studied for Roman Syria. The "floating" and "itinerant" temples and in general the

<sup>28</sup> Here, I would like to express my deep felt gratitude to Dr. Zvi Uri Ma'oz and the staff of the Museum of the Culture of Golan Heights in Katzrin, for all the help given in finding of the provenience of many fragments of basalt architecture stored at the Museum in July 2000. I also thank them for granting me the permit to photograph the monuments. The publication by Zvi Uri Ma'oz "Ancient synagogues in Golan", vol. II reproduces only one fragment of basalt architecture decorated with the meander pattern. With the provenience Golan Heights were published by R. Hachlili in her article "Late Antique Jewish Art in Golan", [in:] *The Roman and Byzantine Near East. Some Recent Archaeological Research*, Ann Arbor 1999 the following items: under No. 8, p. 194 – a fragment from Ein Nashut; No. 48, p. 205 – a fragment from Katzrin; No. 49, p. 206–207 – a fragment from el-Yahudiyeh.

<sup>29</sup> Ant. XVIII, 106–108.

question of reuse of monuments or their parts in new settings has been recently discussed for Greece.<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, at the end, I would like to make a citation of a line by R. Bradley telling that chronological issues should be viewed in context as "We tend to lose that dimension of archaeological record as we become immersed in chronological analysis".<sup>31</sup>

As mentioned above this block of basalt was recorded on the summit of et-Tell in the early seventies. To the specific traits of this region belongs the custom of reusing of all the useful materials from the past. Thus blocks taken from Roman and Byzantine architecture could be recognized in the walls of Arab houses by the first travellers as they may be recognized in the gardens and lapidaria of present inhabitants. As a result decorated as well as plain worked blocks of basalt appear in a steadily changing historical and functional context. In effect their original placement is often impossible to ascertain. Such is presently the case of the block here discussed.

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<sup>30</sup> Alcock 2002, p. 36-98.

<sup>31</sup> Bradley 1993, p. 129.

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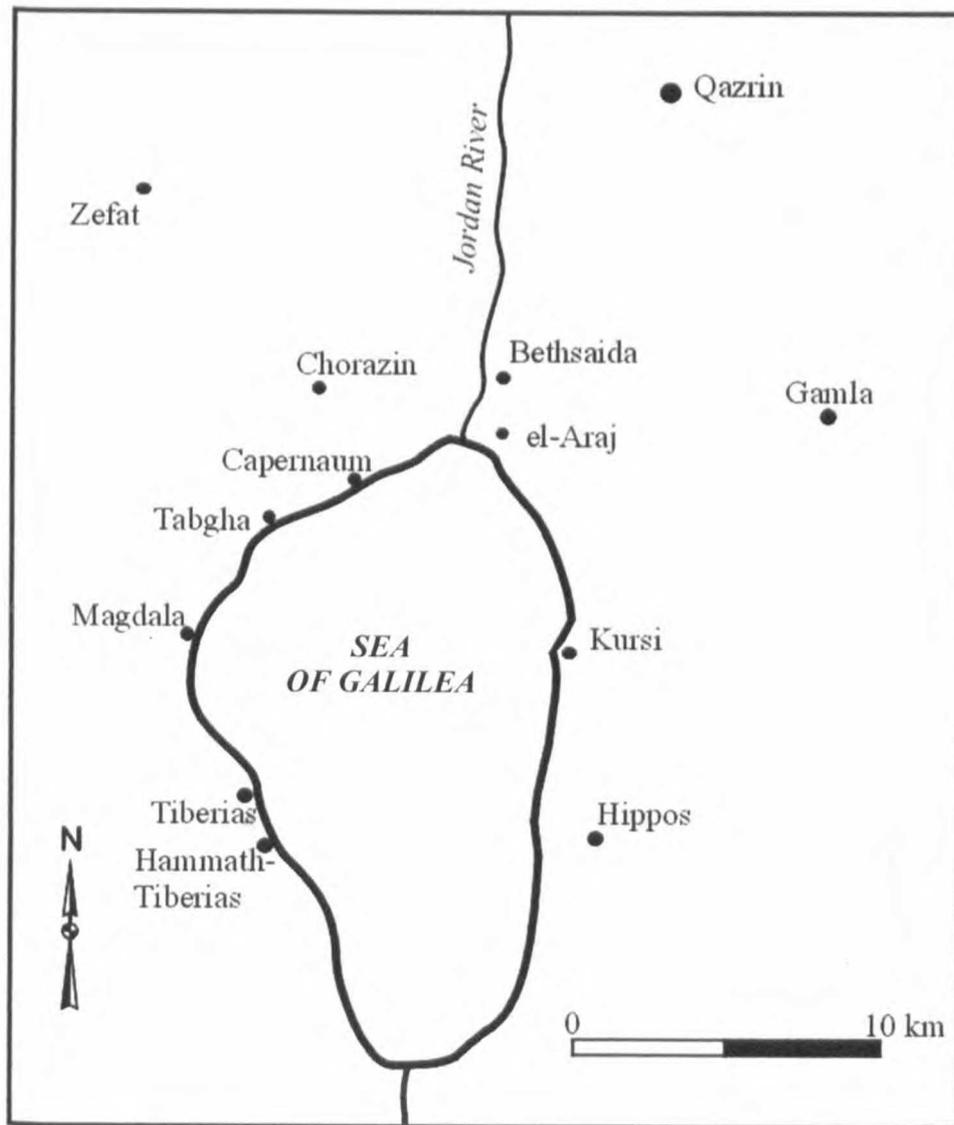
## Analiza kontekstu topograficznego i historycznego nadproża odkrytego na et-Tell

### Streszczenie

Artykuł omawia fragmentaryczny blok bazaltowy o przekroju prostokątnym, odkryty podczas prospekcji archeologicznej na et-Tell – tellu identyfikowanym z biblijną Betsaidą. Fragment ten, interpretowany jako nadproże, ma wymiary: długość wahającą się pomiędzy 105,5 cm a 83 cm, wysokość wahającą się w granicach od 38 cm do 36,6 cm, głębokość wahającą się w granicach od 46 cm do 36,5 cm.

Zabytek jest dobrze zachowany; dekorację strony przedniej stanowi motyw krzyżującego się meandra z wypełnieniem rozetowym. Dekoracja jest staranna, relief płytki. Artysta-kamienniarz w celu uzyskania chropowatej faktury posługiwał się drobno kalibrowaną gradzią i groszkownikiem.

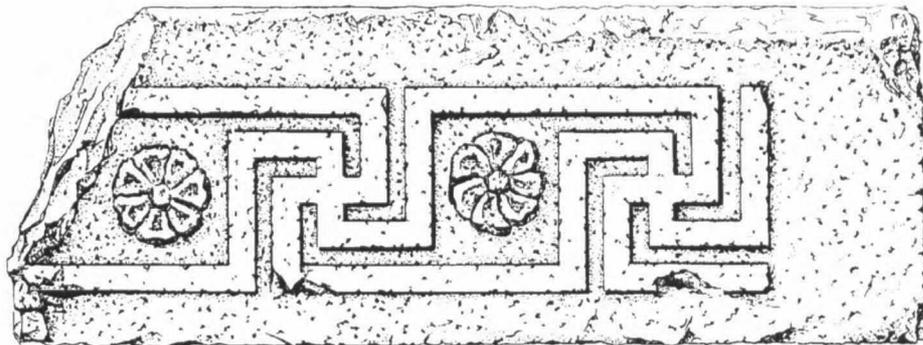
Na podstawie analizy ikonograficznej, analizy stylu oraz analizy porównawczej autorka datuje zabytek na okres panowania dynastii julijsko-klaudyjskiej, ukazując jego związki kulturowe ze sztuką okresu Augusta. Następnie rozpatrywany motyw zestawia z podobnymi motywami występującymi w zdobnictwie architektury bazaltowej Hauranu i Wzgórz Golan oraz na zabytkach architektury wapiennej Galilei. Ukazuje także wędrowkę motywu zdobniczego oraz wędrowkę samego zabytku, w sensie dosłownym, jako konkretnego obiektu użytkowanego na przestrzeni wieków.



1. Map of the area



2. Lintel on et-Tell  
(Photograph by the author, July 1998)



3. The meandermotif decorating the lintel  
(Drawing by the author)



4. Baalbeck. The cornice of the temple of Jupiter  
(Photograph by the author, 29.09.1994)



5. The cornice found at Migdal  
(After *Terra Sancta* 2000, vol. 3, p. 45)



6. The lintel found in Caparnaum  
(Photograph by the author, May 2000)



7. Stonemasters working with claw-chisel on the reconstruction of Khan in Sidon  
(Photographed by the author, 2.10.1994)