

Josephus' "Cydasa of the Tyrians" (Tel Qedesh) in eastern Upper Galilee

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Eastern Upper Galilee in the Roman period evidently housed two ethnic groups in an often hostile relationship (cf. Jos., BJ 3.35-40): in the north, a pagan population belonging to the *chora* of Tyre, which would have included Qedesh, and in the south a Jewish population. The two ethnic-based territories, which exhibit clear differences in their material culture,¹ were separated by the deep ravine of Nahal Dishon (wadi Hindaj).² Other than urban temples, pagan temples, usually dated to the 2nd and 3rd c. A.D.,³ are limited to the area north of Nahal Dishon, while synagogues, which continued to be erected into the late-antique period,⁴ lie to its south.⁵ Qedesh lies 35 km southeast of the large metropolis of Tyre (fig. 1) across a rough mountainous area which made communication somewhat difficult.

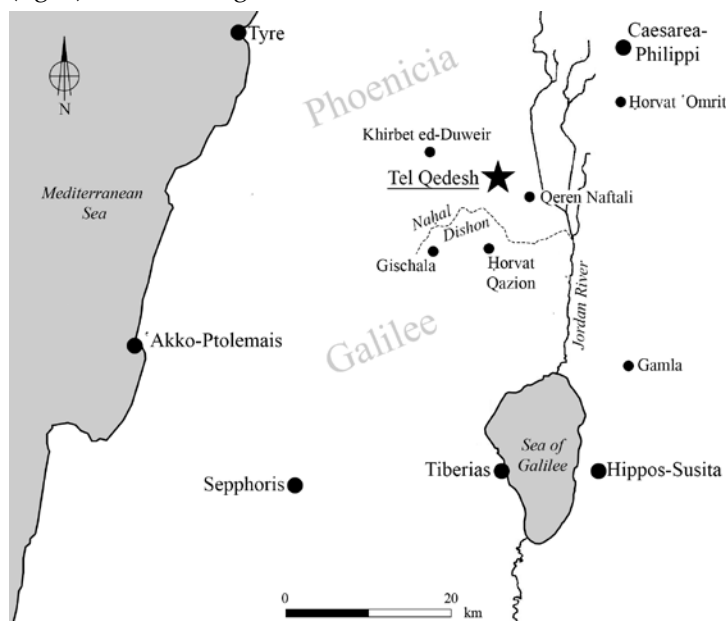


Fig. 1. Location of Tel Qedesh and other Roman sites (large circles indicate urban sites, small circles rural sites (author).

Until recently, the site was best known for its well-preserved and impressive Roman remains set on the eastern hill, some 200 m east of the tell, that include the best-preserved Roman temple façade in Cis-Jordan, along with two fine mausolea and several decorated sarcophagi, probably part of the settlement's necropolis. The present article aims to address some key questions about the location and layout of the Roman settlement. After reviewing relevant historical

- 1 M. Aviam, "Distribution maps of archaeological data from the Galilee: an attempt to establish zones indicative of ethnicity and religious affiliation," in J. Zangenberg, H. W. Attridge and D. B. Martin (edd.), *Religion, ethnicity and identity in ancient Galilee: a region in transition* (Tübingen 2007) 115-32; D. Syon, *Small change in Hellenistic-Roman Galilee: the evidence from numismatic site finds as a tool for historical reconstruction* (Jerusalem 2015) 87-101.
- 2 R. Frankel *et al.*, *Settlement dynamics and regional diversity in ancient Upper Galilee* (Jerusalem 2001) 111.
- 3 M. Fischer, A. Ovadia and I. Roll, "The Roman temple at Kedesh, Upper Galilee: a preliminary study," *Tel Aviv* 11 (1984) 146-72; M. Aviam, *Jews, pagans, and Christians in the Galilee: 25 years of archaeological excavations and surveys: Hellenistic to Byzantine periods* (Rochester, NY 2004) 14.
- 4 R. Hachlili, *Ancient synagogues — archaeology and art: new discoveries and current research* (Leiden 2013) 586-95. There is an ongoing debate regarding the date of Galilean synagogues: cf. C. Spiegel, "Debating ancient synagogue dating: the implications of deteriorating data," *BASOR* 376 (2016) 83-100.
- 5 Frankel *et al.* (supra n.2) fig. 4.4. The northernmost Galilean synagogues are at 'Alma and Bara'am.