

A New Tetrarchic Boundary-Stone from the Northern Hula Valley

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The stone was found at Tel Tanim (Tell Wawiyat, map ref. Israel grid 20552909).¹ It was found by Israel Antiquities Authority inspector I. Shaked.² The place where the stone was found is apparently not its original location, but it is not likely that it has travelled very far. It is the bottom right fragment of a boundary stone (Fig. 1).³ The frag-



ment is 45 cm wide at the top, 60 cm high and 15 cm thick. The bottom is blank since it is the side that was inserted in the ground.

Only the right margin of the four lowest lines is preserved, with three additional letters visible in the first preserved line (Fig. 2). The height of the letters is 4-5 cm.

Figure 1: The boundary stone

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1]ΛΙΘΟ[----- | [-----]λίθο[ν διορί-] |
| 2]ΜΕΘΟΡΙΑΒΕΘΑ | [ζοντα τὰ] μεθορία Βεθ 'Α- |
| 3]ΧΘΗΝΕΕΚΕΛΕ | [χών σπηρ]ιχθῆνε ἐκέλε- |
| 4]ΤΙΔΙΑΙΛΙΟΥΣΤ | [υσαν φρον]τίδι Αιλίου Στ- |
| 5]ΔΙΑΧΜΩΤΑ | [ατούτου τοῦ] διασημ<ο>τά(του) |

¹ The authors gratefully acknowledge the helpful suggestions made by Leah Di Segni. The epigraphic and geographical parts are written by D. Syon, the table and the discussion on the state of research by M. Hartal.

² I wish to thank I. Shaked for originally inviting me to publish the inscription (DS). The stone is currently at the IAA offices in 'Akko.

³ Photographs by H. Smithline, IAA.

Translation

[Diocletianus and Maximianus Augusti, Constantius and Maximianus Caesars] ordered the erection of this stone marking the boundary of Beth 'Aḥon under the care of the most eminent Aelius Statutus.



Figure 2: The inscription

Commentary

In line 1 traces of three or four letters are visible. The first appears very much like N, but could be Λ, followed by a carelessly executed I. This in turn is followed by one round letter, either O or Θ, and then by the very bottom of another round letter, Ε, O or Θ. Though the letters of the inscription are in general very carefully executed, and in the other occurrence of the combination ΛΙ, in line 4, they are not joined, I nevertheless prefer the reading of 'ΛΙ' over 'N' which

fits well with the next two round letters to yield λιθον, a standard formula well attested on other boundary stones.

Based on similarity to other such boundary stones found in the area, probably three or four lines are missing at the top. The letters are very well executed. The notable details are the decorative forms of the letters Α, Δ, Λ, which have a vertical extension at the top, and the shape of the letter Μ, which is more like a cursive μ. The round Ε and Ω are a regular feature of inscriptions of this period.

This stone joins a large existing corpus of 39 boundary stones from the Ḥula valley, the Golan, the limestone massif of Syria, Hauran and Batanea, which have most recently been treated (with full bibliography) by Di Segni (1997: 159-60 and Nos. 6, 8-18, 26, 65-66), Millar (1993: 194-5; 535-44) and Hartal (2003: 291-6). The inscriptions have a long version (see below) and a short one, which mentions only the names of the villages on whose boundary the stone was set.

The name of Aelius Statutus is known from nine other inscriptions (Table 1, Nos. 2, 7, 11, 14, 17, 19-22), all with the long version, with an opening formula mentioning the Augusti Diocletian and Maximian and Caesares Constantius and Maximian. They are thus dated to 293-305 CE, though the actual census work involving the erection of these boundary stones probably did not begin until 297 (Di Segni 1997: 160). Aelius Statutus was a censor working in the area, as has been decisively proven by a new inscription (Di Segni 1997, No. 26) and not the governor of Syria-Phoenice, as had been previously assumed because of his honorific title.

The present inscription departs from the others in the use of the term τὰ μεθόρια (boundaries, borders) rather than ἀγροῦς or the like.

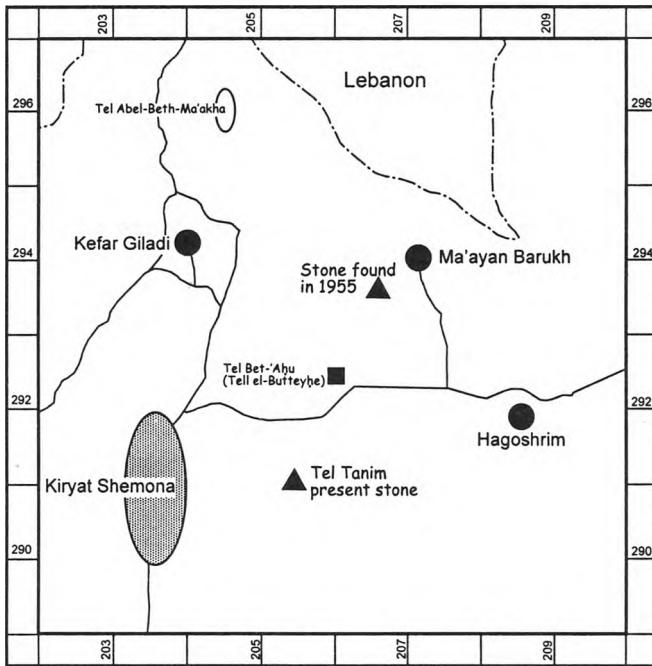


Figure 3: Location map of the boundary stone

ferred to Tel Abel-Beth-Ma'akha, which is tentatively identified with Tel Abil (map ref. 204296), three kilometers to the northwest (*TIR*, s.v. Abila).

The present inscription seems to prove Aharoni right. First, the two stones have the same spelling, thus there can be no question that the name by which the village was known at the time was $\text{B}\epsilon\theta \text{ 'A}\chi\acute{\omega}\nu$, though it cannot be ruled out of course that this was a corruption of an older form. Second, both stones were found far closer to Tell el-Butteyhe than to Abel-Beth-Ma'akha. The present stone was erected not too far from the place where it was found if the two are more or less equidistant from Tell el-Butteyhe to the north and south. Thus, we have two (of probably many) stones marking the boundary of the territory of $\text{B}\epsilon\theta \text{ 'A}\chi\acute{\omega}\nu$, the name of which is preserved in Tell el-Butteyhe.

The State of Research

We take the opportunity here to present the latest discoveries and research concerning boundary stones in northern Transjordan and the Hula valley in tabular form. For a fuller historical discussion on the significance of these boundary stones in general, the

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$\text{B}\epsilon\theta \text{ 'A}\chi\acute{\omega}\nu$ is mentioned on one other stone, with a short inscription mentioning the border between $\text{B}\epsilon\theta \text{ 'A}\chi\acute{\omega}\nu$ and $\text{M}\alpha\mu\epsilon\iota\alpha$, which was found near Kibbutz Ma'ayan Barukh, originally published by Aharoni (1955:110, No. 3 = Di Segni 1997, No. 9). Aharoni (*ibid.*, p. 111) tentatively suggested that the name was preserved in nearby Tell el-Butteyhe (map ref. 20612923), a suggestion later adopted by the state of Israel's naming committee, which gave the ancient site the name Tel Bet-'Ahu. Kaplan (1978) thought the name was rather a corruption of BETMAXWN , and re-

reader is referred to Millar 1993:194-5; 535-44, Di Segni 1997:159-60 and Hartal 2003:291-6.⁴

The new evidence adduced since the publication of Millar⁵ makes it possible to correct him on two points (Millar 1993:535-6). It can now be asserted that boundary stones do appear in Palaestina as well (Nos. 35-40), and the stones show that more than one team of censitores could work in the same region, perhaps with one team relieving the other, as in the case of Arabia, where we find Lucius and Acacius working as one team and Marius Felix as another. A censor did not, however, cross the provincial boundary. Thus, all the sites with stones bearing the name of Aelius Statutus were in Syria-Phoenice. The map on the left shows all 40 stones now known and the suggested course of the triple boundary between the provinces of Palaestina, Phoenice and Arabia.

Israel Antiquities Authority

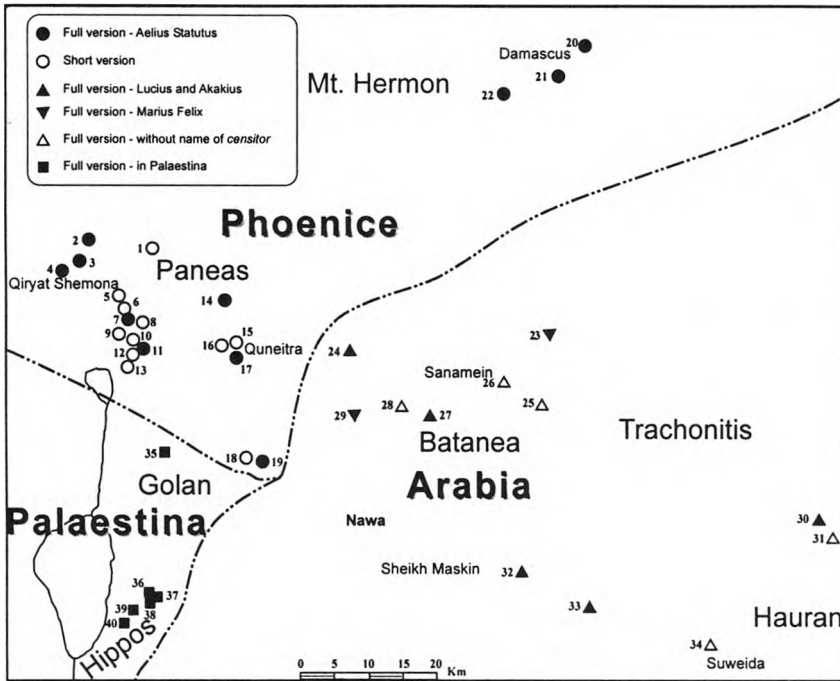


Figure 4: Map of the boundary stones in Table 1

4 Thomson in *SEG* 8:23 suggested taking Fig. 15 on plate LXVIII of R.W. Hamilton, 'Notes on a Chapel and Winepress at 'Ain el-Jedide', *QDAP* 4 (1935) as a fragment of a boundary stone — the only one found to date in the area of Jerusalem.

5 Millar could not have known Sartre (1992) which contains more boundary stones, as his work was already in the publishing stage when Sartre's book appeared.

References

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Table 1. Boundary stones of Palaestina, Phoenice and Arabia.

| no. | Site | Village names | Full version | Censitor | Province | Main Reference (with further bibl.) |
|-----|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-----------------|----------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Paneas | 'Panion and the city' | | | Syria- | Di Segni 1997, no. 6. |
| 2 | Jisr Ghajar | Chresimianos estate | Yes | Aelius Statutus | Phoenice | Di Segni 1997, no. 8. |
| 3 | Ma'ayan Barukh | Mamcia, Beth 'Aḥon | | | ↓ | Di Segni 1997, no. 9. |
| 4 | Tel Tanim (present inscription) | Beth 'Aḥon | Yes | Aelius Statutus | | |
| 5 | Shamir | Galania, Rama | | | | Di Segni 1997, no. 12. |
| 6 | Shamir | Migerame, Galania | | | | Di Segni 1997, no. 10. |
| 7 | Shamir | Galania, Migerame | Yes | Aelius Statutus | | Di Segni 1997, no. 11. |
| 8 | Shamir | Galania, [O]se[a] (?) | | | | Unpublished ⁶ |
| 9 | Shamir | Betocho[...], Belo[...] | | | | Unpublished |
| 10 | Lahavot Habashan | Dera, Migerame(?) | | | | Di Segni 1997, no. 13. |
| 11 | Lahavot Habashan | Dera, Osea | Yes | Aelius Statutus | | Di Segni 1997, no. 15. |
| 12 | Lahavot Habashan | Osea, Perise | | | | Di Segni 1997, no. 14. |
| 13 | Lahavot Habashan | Osea, Perise | | | | Di Segni 1997, no. 16. |
| 14 | Buq'ata | | Yes | Aelius Statutus | | Gregg and Urman 1996, no. 240. |
| 15 | Quneitra | Sarisa, Achane | | | | Gregg and Urman 1996, no. 209. |
| 16 | Quneitra | Achane, Sarisa | | | | Di Segni 1997, no. 18. |
| 17 | Quneitra | Sarisa, Bernike | Yes | Aelius Statutus | | Di Segni 1997, no. 17. |
| 18 | Faḥm | | Yes | | | Gregg and Urman 1996, no. 141. |
| 19 | 'Ashshe | Agrippina, Rhadanos | Yes | Aelius Statutus | | Di Segni 1997, no. 26. |

⁶ Stones Nos. 8, 9 are in the Kibbutz Shamir local museum. A preliminary reading of the village names was made from a copy supplied to us by Y. Ben Efraim for which we are grateful.

| no. | Site | Village names | Full version | Censitor | | Main Reference (with further bibl.) |
|-----|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------|--|
| 20 | Jisrîn | Beth Mara, Enaaso (?) | Yes | Aelius Statutus | | Aharoni 1955, no. 8. |
| 21 | Jermane | Gindaros (?), | Yes | Aelius Statutus | | Aharoni 1955, no. 7. |
| 22 | Dâreyah | Mezze, Pamoion | Yes | Aelius Statutus | | Aharoni 1955, no. 6. |
| 23 | Ghabaghib | | Yes | Marius Felix | Arabia | Sartre 1992, no. 4. |
| 24 | 'Aqrabeh | Aqrabe, Asichon | Yes | Lucius and Acacius | ↓ | Sartre 1992, no. 7. |
| 25 | Chabab | | Yes | | | Sartre 1992, no. 6. |
| 26 | Başir | | Yes | | | Sartre 1992, no. 9. |
| 27 | Inkhil | | Yes | Lucius and Acacius | | Sartre 1992, no. 1. |
| 28 | Simlin | | Yes | | | Sartre 1992, no. 5. |
| 29 | Namar | Gasimea, Namarin | Yes | Marius Felix (?) | | Sartre 1992, no. 8. |
| 30 | Jûneyneh | Orelos, Maximianopolis | Yes | Lucius and Acacius | | Sartre 1992, no. 10. |
| 31 | Rðeimeh el-Sharqiyyeh | | Yes | | | Sartre 1992, no. 11. |
| 32 | Mleiḥatt el-'Aṭash | | Yes | Lucius and Acacius | | Sartre 1992, no. 2. |
| 33 | Mleiḥat Sharqiyyeh | | Yes | Lucius and Acacius | | Sartre 1992, no. 3. |
| 34 | Between Suweida and 'Atil | Dionysia (?), Athelene | Yes | | | Sartre 1992, no. 12. |
| 35 | Aḥmadiyye | Arimos, Eusom | | | Palaestina | Gregg and Urman 1996, no. 92. ⁷ |
| 36 | Afiq | | Yes | | ↓ | Gregg and Urman 1996, no. 42. |
| 37 | Afiq | | Yes | | | Gregg and Urman 1996, no. 43. |
| 38 | Afiq | | Yes | | | Di Segni 1997, no. 62. |
| 39 | Kefar Haruv | Kapar Harib | Yes | D...and Agelippus | | Di Segni 1997, no. 66. |
| 40 | Kefar Haruv | | Yes | | | Di Segni 1997, no. 65. |

⁷ The names of the villages were read by B. Isaac, as quoted in Ma'oz 1995:174.