

Title: *The Madaba Mosaic*

Date: *ca. 565 A.D.*

Author: *unknown*

Description: In Christianity, the Holy Land was a topography or region filled with the presence of God in which physical placement and positioning had much to do with spiritual meanings. Early major Christian thinkers like Egeria and John of Damascus held that such places as Mount Sinai and Mount Zion are not mere topographical features but, as a matter of fact, holy places where the presence of the Lord was made manifest. These sites were regarded as "receptacles of divine energy," where the physical environment had directly observed the miraculous events in the life of Christ and the manifestation of divine grace. This conviction, by the fourth century, had already shaped these locations into central sites of Christian pilgrimage. For pilgrims, such journeys to these holy places were a chance to reach-both physically and spiritually-closer to the divine. The topography of the Holy Land thus became fundamental to Christian worship, not only serving as a memorial of biblical events but also as an arena for the faithful to come into contact with the astonishing power of God and to reaffirm faith through personal contact with such sacred places.

After Palestine was denoted as sacred land for Byzantine Christians, it found representation in various forms of religious art, including maps. One of the most significant examples is the fragment of a floor mosaic map found in Madaba, Jordan. The Madaba map was uncovered at the end of the 19th century during the construction of a new church on the ruins of a Byzantine building, which was also identified as a church. The map, set into the ornamented walls of the church, represents one of the outstanding works of cartography to stem from the Late Antique period. While other holy itineraries of the time often depend on verbal descriptions, the Madaba map is an accurate pictorial expression of the Holy Land that includes Jerusalem and other major biblical locations.

This mosaic is the earliest example of Christian topography known to exist, dating from the sixth century. In the church of St. George in Madaba, Jordan, there is a floor mosaic depicting the *Terra Sancta*. It dates to the time of the Emperor Justinian I (6th century). Originally, it measured 50 x 20 ft, (15.24 x 6.10 m.), today it is fragmentary, measuring 15.7 m x 5.6 m. The mosaic shows the Holy Land from Lebanon in the north to the Nile delta in the south, from the desert beyond the Dead Sea in the east to the Mediterranean shore in the west; Jerusalem is at the center of the composition. The Madaba map is oriented with its east at the top and it shows from Charach-Moba (*al-Karak*) in the east to the Mediterranean coast in the west and from the Jordan River in the north to the Nile in the south. It is detailed with the depictions of geographical features such as mountain ranges, seas, rivers, streams, towns, villages, fortresses, and holy sites. Jerusalem is present prominently as an oval-shaped location, marked as '*The holy city Ierusa[lem]*'.

The Madaba map features four distinct types of holy places: sites of divine presence, sites of miracles, locations that relate to some biblical figures, and tombs of saints. The inscriptions frequently mention terms such as "here" or "there," which indicate places where particular sacred events took place. The map also contains symbolical signs of major biblical events: twelve stones at Gilgal, the tree at Mamre, baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, two huge boats on the Dead Sea, perhaps a reference

to Ezekiel's prophecy concerning the dead sea transformed into fresh waters with fish, a symbol of eschatological fulfillment when Christ is present. These elements allow the Madaba map to transcend simple geographical documentation and create a deeply theological narrative that interlaces topography of the land with its spiritual significance.

The Madaba map gave the pilgrims a complete and idealized view of the sacred landscape. Concise inscriptions together with symbolic signs, which evoke complete biblical episodes, are used on the map to provoke mental visualization of the land among the viewers based on their earlier biblical knowledge. Devised near Mount Nebo, this map expressed a comprehensive spiritual view, much like early Christian church decorations that emphasized the continuity of divine planning and the fulfillment of Biblical *Old Testament* prophecies in Christ. It placed Jerusalem at the center of the map surrounded by a range of references to the *Old Testament*, underscoring its message of Christian fulfillment by depicting Jerusalem as a Christian city.

Most probably the map was composed by an unknown artist by using the *Onomastikon* written by Eusebius of Caesarea (ca 260/264–337/340). It is very detailed and presents many Greek legends; its elaborateness makes it important for the historical geography of the region. The depiction of the Church Nea Anastasis in Jerusalem, which was dedicated in November 542, is important for dating the mosaic; buildings erected after the year 570 are not shown, so the time of its creation is clearly delimited. The most important part remaining shows a perspective plan of Jerusalem.

The earliest reference to the discovery of a mosaic at the site appears in a letter that the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, Nikodemos, received in 1884 from his representative in Madaba. It noted that a mosaic had been discovered by local Christians who were digging up the ruins of an ancient Byzantine structure in order to build a new church. The letter identified the Byzantine building as a church, explaining that the workers noticed the shape of a sanctuary in the remains. It was only in 1890 that Nikodemos' successor Gerasimos commissioned the master-mason Athanasios Andreakis to inspect the floor mosaic and decide whether it should be kept in the new church. In fact, Andreakis paid little attention to preserving the mosaic map, which was fully revealed only once the new church of St George had already been built; according to a few testimonies, some damage to it occurred during the construction process.

It is possible that the peculiar format of this map, compared to its manuscript counterparts, might stem from the religious importance of the sites represented and from this map's function either as a pilgrimage guide or as an illustration for biblical stories told to the faithful.

In 2006, the scientific world celebrated the 120th anniversary of one of this most significant archaeological discovery in the study of the Holy Land - the map of Madaba. This map, actually a mosaic tile floor, was revealed when the foundations were being dug for the construction of a Greek Orthodox church, St. George, in a place that had once been a central town in the biblical kingdom of Moab on the floor of a late sixth century Byzantine church in Madaba, a town about fifteen miles from the Dead Sea which is today in Jordan. It was settled by Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians.

The late Israeli archaeologist, Prof. Michael Avi-Yonah, who worked on the mosaic together with several other researchers, dated the building of the mosaic floor to the second half of the sixth century (A.D. 565-560). In any event, it is certain that the map was made during the Byzantine period and it is one of the most beautiful

geographical testimonies extant to the biblical Land of Israel, from Babylon to Egypt and from the Arabian dessert to the Mediterranean Sea.

During the *Byzantine* period (324 until the Persian conquest of A.D. 614), Madaba was on the eastern border of the province of *Palaestina*, the smallest of the provinces of the Byzantine Empire. It was one of four cities (together with Heshbon, Philadelphia modern Amman and Jerash) on the western border of the Byzantine province of Arabia, which shared a northern border with *Palaestina Secunda*, in the center with *Palaestina Prima*, and in the south, with *Palaestina Tertia*. These were the main districts of the province, which were later divided into sub-districts.

When Christianity was adopted as the religion of the Byzantine Empire, the ecclesiastical division of the government was adapted to suit its administrative division. Each administrative area was headed by a bishop, who was the head of the churches in his district. All the bishops were subject to the rule of the Archbishop of Caesarea who sat at the administrative and ecclesiastic center of *Palaestina* and was head of all the churches in the area. This hierarchy lasted until the days of Juvenal, who was bishop of Jerusalem in the first half of the fifth century. Juvenal contended for, and won, the title of Patriarch of Antioch in the decisive meeting at Chalcedon (A.D. 451) and became head of the Eastern Church.

The Chalcedon Order determined that the archbishops of Caesarea, Beisan (Beit Shean) and Petra would come under the rule of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, while the bishops of Arabia and Phoenicia would remain subject to the Patriarch of Antioch.

Thus the church at Madaba was no longer in the area of *Palaestina*; neither politically nor ecclesiastically. It is therefore amazing that the church maintained such a close relationship with Eretz-Israel and Jerusalem. This relationship is clearly expressed in the mosaic floor which apparently decorated a church or magnificent public edifice, and which avoided the use of religious symbols or portraits of political and ecclesiastic rulers of the period.

In 1880, the Bedouin tribe of Aziziat, Christian by faith, settled in the by now ruined site of Madaba. Members of the Greek Orthodox community living in the area had flourished, and while involved in construction work, had discovered the mosaic floor, with its depiction of the Holy Land in the form of a map. Notice of the discovery was conveyed to the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, Nicodemos (1883-1890), but he did not recognize its importance. His successor, the Patriarch Gerasimos, (1890-1897) realized the significance of the discovery and determined to erect a church at the site. In 1890, he sent an architect to Madaba, and ordered him to examine the remains and to include them in the new church "if he deemed them worthy of inclusion."

But the architect saw no value in the mosaic floor. The new church was therefore situated partly on the foundations of the ancient church, and later the construction itself actually destroyed parts of it (the part of the floor depicting the area between Hebron and Beersheba, the southern area till the Zered Stream, and more). According to witnesses who saw the floor before the builders got to work, the mosaic had been almost complete at that time.

The first scholar who appreciated the scientific and artistic value of the floor was Father Kleopas Koikylides, the librarian for the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem. He visited Madaba in December, 1896, and he began to publicize it in March, 1897. The map was first copied and issued in a colored print in 1906.

This map is the most significant example of the biblical school of mapmaking to have survived and probably descends from the lost map of Eusebius, the bishop of

Caesarea. Koikylides halted the reconstruction, which tragically had damaged the mosaic, and drew scholarly attention to this unique and splendid artifact.

The surviving sections depict biblical Palestine from Salem, south of Bet She' an, to the Nile Delta. The map is oriented with East at the top, and the Mediterranean coastline runs straight from left to right, aligning Alexandria with the Holy Land coast and tracing the Nile east to west. A study of the source material and three fragments elsewhere in the floor indicates that originally the map measured nearly seven by twenty-two meters, plus a wide margin, and depicted the area from Byblus and Damascus in the north to Alexandria and the Red Sea in the south.

The biblical focus of the map is immediately apparent, though the mapmaker carefully locates ancient sites within a contemporary framework of the local Roman roads. The regions of five of the Twelve Tribes of Israel are distinguished in the existing sections. There are numerous sites associated with the Old Testament, such as the *Oaks of Mamre*, *Jacob's Well*, the *Desert of Zin* that figured in the Exodus, and the location of the brazen serpent, which saved the Israelites. New Testament features include the *Garden of Gethsemane* and *Beth Abara*, where St. John was baptized.

Much of the map also depicts non-biblical information. The Nile Delta contains many cities. Specific Roman references include several mileposts outside of Jerusalem and the *Hot Springs of Callerohe*, where Herod, the Roman King of Palestine, took a rest cure. There are also two local ferries crossing the Jordan River.

Natural features include the Jordan River, the Dead Sea, three portions of the Mediterranean coastline, the Nile Delta, and a number of mountain ranges. The twin mountains of Gerizein and Gegal are shown twice in different locations in deference to both Jewish and Samaritan traditions. Palm trees line the Jordan, and fish swim in the Jordan and the Nile. Two fishing boats sail on the Dead Sea.

The city of Jerusalem is dominant among the nearly 150 places described. It occupies the center and is shown in intricate detail, nearly ten times larger than other parts of the map. Virtually all the buildings in the city, such as the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, may be identified. Individual gates are designated as well as a column thought to be the point of reference for Roman surveyors and road builders.

Jerusalem is seen as if from the air and is presented in three-dimensional form with a considerable degree of realism. Despite the schematic interpretation, the stereotypical design of the buildings and the selectivity in choosing them, it gives a tangible depiction of Jerusalem in the sixth century, with its walls, towers and gates, its streets and main buildings. This is the most ancient pictorial representation of Jerusalem ever found and it is a primary source for studying the plan of the city.

Because the anonymous artist wished to emphasize Jerusalem's prominence on the map, it is as if he split the city into two: the *Cardo*, which is its main street, divides it into two projections, the eastern part leans west while the western part slants downwards. The buildings in the western part of the city are displayed from their western side except for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and a few other important buildings whose façades point eastward.

In the walls of the city, 21 towers can be seen. The largest is the one erroneously called *The Tower of David* and which probably should be called *The Tower of Phasael*, built by King Herod. North of it and behind the *Tower of Phasael*, the *Tower of Hippicus* can be seen. The walls of the city are pierced by six gates, the number of gates in the wall until the New Gate was opened in the Christian Quarter in the 1890's.

The excellent detail of Jerusalem allows scholars to date the map between A.D. 560 and 565. The Church of the Theodokos was consecrated on November 23, 542, and the Wall built by Eudocia to enclose Mt. Sion was completed shortly afterwards, in the middle of the sixth century. Accounts of Jerusalem from about A.D. 570 begin to record alterations not depicted on the map.



According to the prophet Ezekiel, verse 5, *thus saith the Lord, this is Jerusalem. I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her*. Believers assumed this to signify that Jerusalem was situated at the center of the world and many manuscripts and early maps really did portray the city in this manner.

The mosaic is the earliest surviving original map of the Holy Land area and the first to show the Twelve Tribes of Israel. It was innovative at the time in being orientated to the east and the artist tried to unite both the floor plan and view in the same way that such drawings are made today. As mentioned above, the most important section is the plan of Jerusalem, which is depicted oval-shaped, a novel interpretation as it had always previously been shown circular. The city is also shown narrowing from west to east but this may have been because the background mountains restricted the artist. The floor is made up of North African mosaics, which closely resemble other mosaics found in another ruined church in the old town of Madaba.

Strangely enough, although Madaba was visited a good deal by pilgrims, no pilgrim reports exist about the mosaic. This might be explained by the fact that the Persians attacked Palestine in 614 AD and left behind only the burning ruins of the holy places.

Nobody knows who the artist was and there is no name on the map. Usually a patron or the ruler of the land lent his name to such an important work but the section

where this name was generally placed is severely damaged. According to one of the mosaics inscriptions, construction was sponsored entirely by the inhabitants of Madaba. The project required at least three mosaicists as well as a specialist in biblical topography. The artist chose from a wide selection of cubes: eight different colors were used, as well as ten additional shades of red and blue. The artist lavished on this work the resources of an unusually varied palette: four shades of red, five to six of green-blue, dark brown, violet, black, white, yellow and grey. The map measured 190 square meters and the number of mosaic cubes used in a square decimeter numbered up to 150 in the most elaborate parts. It is believed that the total number of cubes approached over two million for the whole floor. An accomplished mosaic artist can lay up to 150-200 cubes per hour, so the Madaba map mosaic demanded approximately 1,000 working days of twelve hours each day. Taking into consideration that the preparation of the cubes also took time, one can get an idea of the immense amount of work involved. It is reasonable to assume that the creator was of Eastern origin, familiar with the language and the layout of the land. He may have been a monk and the map may have been intended to offer devout pilgrims a view of the city of Jerusalem as witness of a great past.

The procedure involved composing a sketch map, drawing the outlines in wet cement, and then placing lines of black cubes; the interior was filled in next with colored cubes. In the mountainous areas, the hills were drawn first, then captions, and finally the symbols for villages and churches. In the plains the order was reversed, and the placement of symbols preceded the inscriptions.

The map was damaged, probably during the *Iconoclastic Controversy* in the eighth or ninth century. The *Iconoclasts*, followers of the Byzantine emperors, believed that it was idolatrous to portray living figures in churches. They effaced scenes of a lion chasing a gazelle in the wilderness of Moab, and sailors rowing two boats on the Dead Sea.

Damage was repaired by filling in the obliterated spaces with a random assortment of cubes. Unfortunately, the map suffered again while the church was being rebuilt in the 19th century, and these portions have been replaced by brown and tan cement. Otherwise, the *Madaba Mosaic* has been preserved as it was constructed over fourteen hundred years ago.

The two main sources for information on the map are Eusebius's *Onomastikon* (A.D. 388) and a Roman road map. Copies of the *Onomastikon* were probably in Madaba from a very early date. Madaba was also the seat of a bishop after the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451. Madaba and Caesarea, where Eusebius had been bishop over a century earlier, were both under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. More importantly, most of the inscriptions and place names are identical with the unique surviving Greek manuscript of Eusebius' text.

Jerome's version of Eusebius' map, known from a 12th century copy, bears some similarities to the *Madaba Mosaic*, particularly in the rectangular format and treatment of the Nile Delta and Mediterranean Sea. Both show a huge inlet, called on Jerome's map the Egyptian Sea, between Palestine and the Nile Delta (also visible on medieval maps like the Matthew Paris map of Palestine and the *Hereford* world map of about 1275, *Book IIB*, #225 and #226). The *Madaba Mosaic*, however, probably reflects the lost map of Eusebius more accurately than Jerome's does. In addition to the close textual relationship, the mosaic is divided by the territories of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, a distinguishing feature of Eusebius' map.



*The Madaba Mosaic as it presents itself today
in the Greek Orthodox Church in Madaba*

The second major source is a Roman road map, similar to the *Peutinger Table* (#120). Madaba was on a Roman road that linked Damascus, *Philadelphia* (Amman), and Petra with *Aela* (Eilat) on the Gulf of Aqaba and that brought incense and spice caravans from the East to the Roman Empire. All the cities on the mosaic lie along major routes; lesser towns near roads are depicted to the exclusion of larger but more remote places. Some villages are located on a road from which they were actually far removed. Finally, a column is shown in Jerusalem that was the point of reference for local surveyors, and two mileposts are identified just outside the city.

The *Madaba Mosaic* is spectacular proof of Roman and Byzantine accomplishment. It illustrates the scholarly work of Eusebius and the technical capabilities of provincial mapmakers and mosaicists. No other map of Palestine is as old, and few so masterfully portray biblical topography.

The *Madaba map* also gives prominence to other areas. We see the Jordan Valley south of Beit Shean to the Cannubian tributary of the Nile. The Dead Sea is drawn with

boats and sailors. In the plains of Moab, a lion appears and fish swim in the Jordan and the Nile. In the Jordan Plain there are palm trees, and adjacent to each item are written explanations. Important cities and tribal lands appear in red in Greek. Next to the names of some of the cities, are the names of important events that occurred later in the area.

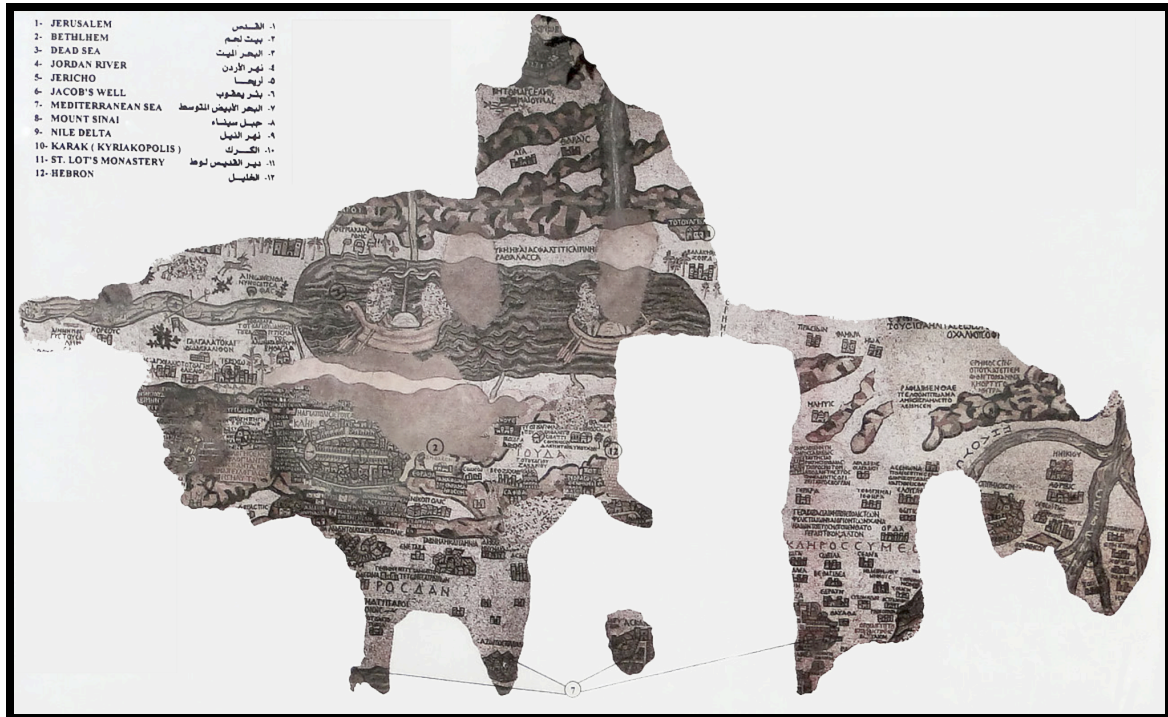


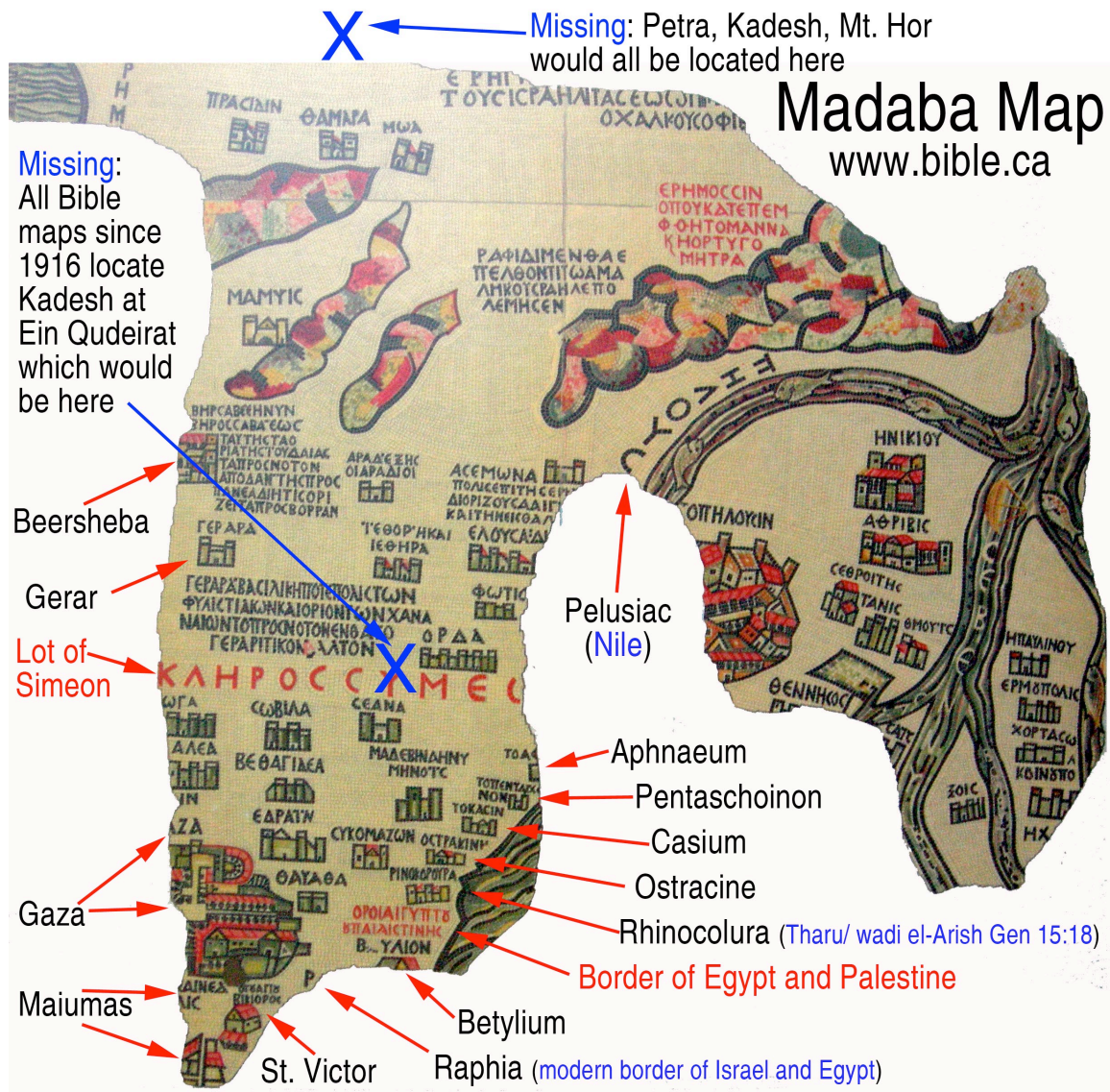
Other researchers were aided by inscriptions found in a nearby cistern, in which there is mention of the Emperor Justinian (A.D. 527-565), who built the Nea Church in Jerusalem. This epigraphic evidence has been discounted by other researchers because of the lack of any connection between the cistern and the church; despite their proximity, the cistern is outside the wall of Jerusalem and the church is within its walls.

Professor Avi Yona produced nine supporting pieces of evidence for his hypothesis that the map should be dated to the second half of the fifth century: the depiction of the Sanctuary of John the Baptist near Beit Evra shows that the map cannot be dated prior to the builder of the sanctuary, the Emperor Anastasius (491-518); the description of the Nea Church, built by Justinian and dedicated in 543, shows that the map is later than this date; the Church next to the Well of Elisheva is first mentioned by Theodosius in about 570, as is the church of Saint Victor near Gaza.

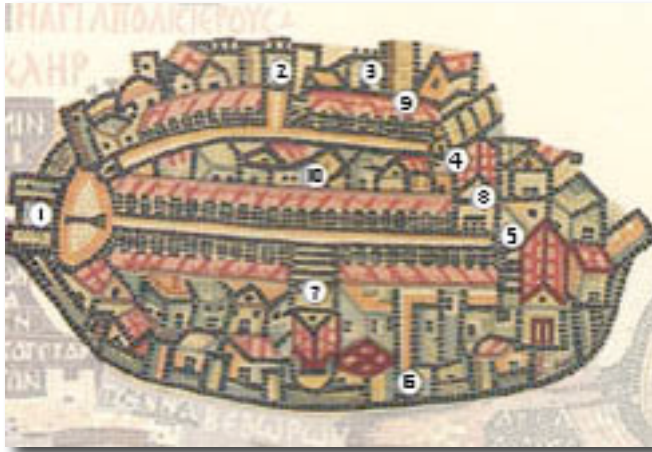
Another researcher, Thompson, draws a parallel between the mosaic floor and another Madaba mosaic in the Church of the Apostles, built in the days of Bishop Sergius in 579. According to another inscription, Sergius served at least until 596. Both of these mosaics resemble the floor of Hiram's grave near the city of Tyre, dating from 573.

Besides its scientific and historical value for the study of Eretz-Israel in the Byzantine period, the *Madaba map* is a unique and priceless source of information and documentation of the Land of Israel and of Jerusalem for those interested in places that are sacred to Judaism and to Christianity.





Detail from the Madaba Map showing the "Salt" or "Asphalt" Sea - The Dead Sea



Section of the Madaba Map showing Jerusalem - the most prominent site on the whole map.

- 1 Damascus Gate
- 2 St. Stephen's Gate
- 3 Golden Gate
- 4 Dung Gate
- 5 Zion Gate
- 6 Jaffa Gate
- 7 Church of the Holy Sepulchre
- 8 Nea Church
- 9 Temple Mount
- 10 The Cardo

In summary the over 150 captions in the Map, most of which have been positively identified, refer to localities of the Near East extending from Tir and Sidon to the north up to and including the Nile Delta to the south, and from the Mediterranean Sea to the Arabian Desert. Apart from this the physical characteristics of Palestine are so realistically rendered as to make them easily identifiable. Upon the central axis, formed by the flow of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, there extend the trans-jordanian plateau with its deep valleys (wadi) to the east, and to the west the mountains of Samaria and Judea distinctly separated by the Mediterranean coastal plain.

The map is oriented to the East, as are the cities and buildings therein represented as well as the captions accompanying them. As one made his way to the altar he could see and read all. Notwithstanding the unavoidable approximations, due to the limited space available, it is obvious that the disposition of the localities followed the road network prevailing at the time in the region. The localities are represented by a vignette and a caption.

The way the locality is represented gives an indication of its importance: Jerusalem, Neapolis, Ascalon, Gaza and Pelusium are distinguishable from minor cities the like of Kerak, Lod, Iabneel, Ashdod, Eleutheropolis, smaller towns of a certain importance such as Jericho, Bet Zachar, Bersabea down to mere symbols such as a gate with lateral towers or simply a church representing a village or shrine.

Apart from the rivers, the sea and mountains, the mosaicist used other symbols which are easily understood: palm trees that go with the oases in the Jordan Valley, bushes along the river banks, the fording places of the River Jordan with the characteristic pulley-drawn ferries, fish represented in the water and the two ships figured in the Dead Sea. More important, from the historical point of view, are the very particular indicative details used for certain localities, like the Twelve Stones placed in the walls of the church at Galgala, Jacob's well at Sichem, the baptism font/pool at Philippi near Bethzur, the *terebinth* or oak tree at Mambre, the pools at the spa of Calliroe, the configuring of Kerak as a fortress-city isolated upon a mountain.

The representation of Jerusalem reaches the apex of the art of representation in this mosaic. In a certain way the City is the ideal center of the whole composition even if it is not physically situated in the center of the map. The bird's eye view of the city is shown with its walls, gates, streets and major buildings that are partly identifiable even today.

From the geographic history point of view, the map owes its originality to these details. As to the rest of the contents it owes its sources to an antique journey diary, updated to cater for the needs of the sixth century Christian pilgrims who visited the Holy Land, with the Bible at hand. This can be clearly seen from the preponderance of churches and shrines over other public buildings. From the artistic point of view, the Map must be viewed in the context of a return to the classical style prevailing in the Justinian epoch (half way through the sixth century), of which the mosaics of Madaba and its surrounding region have given us many a dated witness.

The contents of the captions, especially the direct references to the tribes of Israel, names, quotation of biblical benedictions, clearly indicate that the Map is primarily a document of biblical geography based on the *Onomasticon* of biblical locations by Eusebius (sixth century). The Map therefore covers the territory of the 12 biblical tribes and the surrounding regions, defined, as it were in the boundaries of Canaan promised to Abraham.

The addition of places mentioned in the New Testament, and the primary importance given to Christian shrines, churches and to the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher makes of the map a Christian re-reading of the story of salvation in a geographic context. The Holy City of Jerusalem is represented at the center of the redeemed *ecumene*, and the building which is given the greatest importance is the Constantine complex built upon Calvary and Jesus' Sepulcher.

The way in which the Madaba mosaic map and the ruins of the Byzantine structure were found, documented, and interpreted is crucial to understanding the differing views about the building's function and the map's meaning. It has recently been claimed that the *Madaba* map illustrates notions of law and ownership, and that it was displayed in a hall with secular functions. Pnina Arad rejects this claim, asserting that while we have insufficient evidence for determining the building's context, the map speaks in religious language. Arad argues that the *Madaba* map conveyed the very same message communicated by both early Christian typological imagery and Palestinian pilgrimage art, suggesting that apart from conceptualizing the topography of Palestine in religious terms and as a sacred space, the map gave expression to the theological notion of *Fulfilment*.

The *Madaba* map is the earliest known map to display the Holy Land and the only known instance in the first millennium of a map depicting a country in full. That is to say that the *Madaba* map was novel due to the fact that it represented a new kind of visual medium – a graphic description of an entire country, one of the striking features of which was that it didn't show roads. The map does show mountain ranges, rivers, streams, architectural symbols representing towns and holy sites.

The holy places are depicted via simple structures with red roofs, probably symbolic representations of churches that existed there. The towns are represented through a range of symbols that hint at their varying importance. The Greek titles mostly note place names, but there are also short inscriptions associating particular locations with specific biblical events.

What we have here is a picture that combines topography and religious tradition, and that eliminates the gaps between past and present. The inscriptions create a narrative that seemed to have two aims: to place the past of the Scriptures in the geographic space of the land, and to conceptualize that land as a sacred space.

When the inscriptions are categorized by content, one finds that they describe four types of locations: places linked to the divine presence; places where miracles

happened; sites where biblical figures operated; and the tombs of biblical figures and martyrs.

The city of Jerusalem's portrayal reflects the appearance of the city in the sixth century, with the two streets of the main thoroughfare, the *cardo*, running through it from north to south, and with a large number of churches. The depiction is not precise, however, because it is the product of a deliberate manipulation of the urban area. The archaeologist Yoram Tsafrir demonstrated that the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (the site of the crucifixion and burial of Christ) and the main *cardo* (*cardo maximus*) were shifted toward the middle of the city emblem to make the church the central core of the city. By contrast, the Temple Mount, Jerusalem's most prominent topographical feature, doesn't appear at all.

As a result, Jerusalem is depicted as the city of Christ's Passion and without a hint of its Jewish past. According to the reconstruction of the Byzantine church building around the surviving part of the map, it appears that the symbol of Jerusalem was deliberately placed at the center of the map. Therefore, in presenting Jerusalem as a Christian city – with the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in its center but with no hint to the city's Jewish past – at the center of a land that is full of church buildings but is also divided among the Tribes of Israel and dotted with events from both Testaments, the map essentially conveys the notion of fulfillment: fulfillment of the Old Testament in the New Testament and in the Passion of Christ.

In this context, what is particularly interesting and prominent is the depiction of the Dead Sea, on which two boats can be seen containing four figures, which were defaced during the period of iconoclasm (8th century). If the figures are meant to be fishermen, it would portray Ezekiel's prophecy (47: 1-12) that the day would come when fresh water would issue out from under the platform of the Temple and flow to the desert, turning it into a paradise and filling the Dead Sea with fresh water, fish and fishermen. Ezekiel's prophecy may seem relevant to the map not simply because of its reference to the land's topography, but also because during the early Christian period, it was interpreted in the context of the revelation of Jesus.

The *Madaba* map was designed to create a narrative for the land and reflect a religious message. It was certainly not designed for practical navigational purposes or to help one find one's location. It's important to note that in the Byzantine Roman world, maps were not used for navigational purposes. The *Madaba* map was another kind of instrument. It was an innovative visual image that depicted an image of a sacred landscape. This image was meant to represent the religious significance of the landscape and to conceptualize the narrative of the Scriptures in topographical terms.

Location: Madaba, Jordan

Size: 16 ft. 5 in. x 34 ft. 6 in. (5 m x 10.5 m)

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<http://www.christusrex.org/www1/ofm/mad/index.html> (A virtual tour of the Madaba Map)

*illustrated



This portion of Madaba's famed Mosaic Map shows boats and fish in the upper Jordan River, as



well as several nearby cities.



DAMASCUS
GATE

NORTH-SOUTH
RUNNING CARDO
AND COLONNADED
STREET, BOTH
LINED WITH COLUMNS

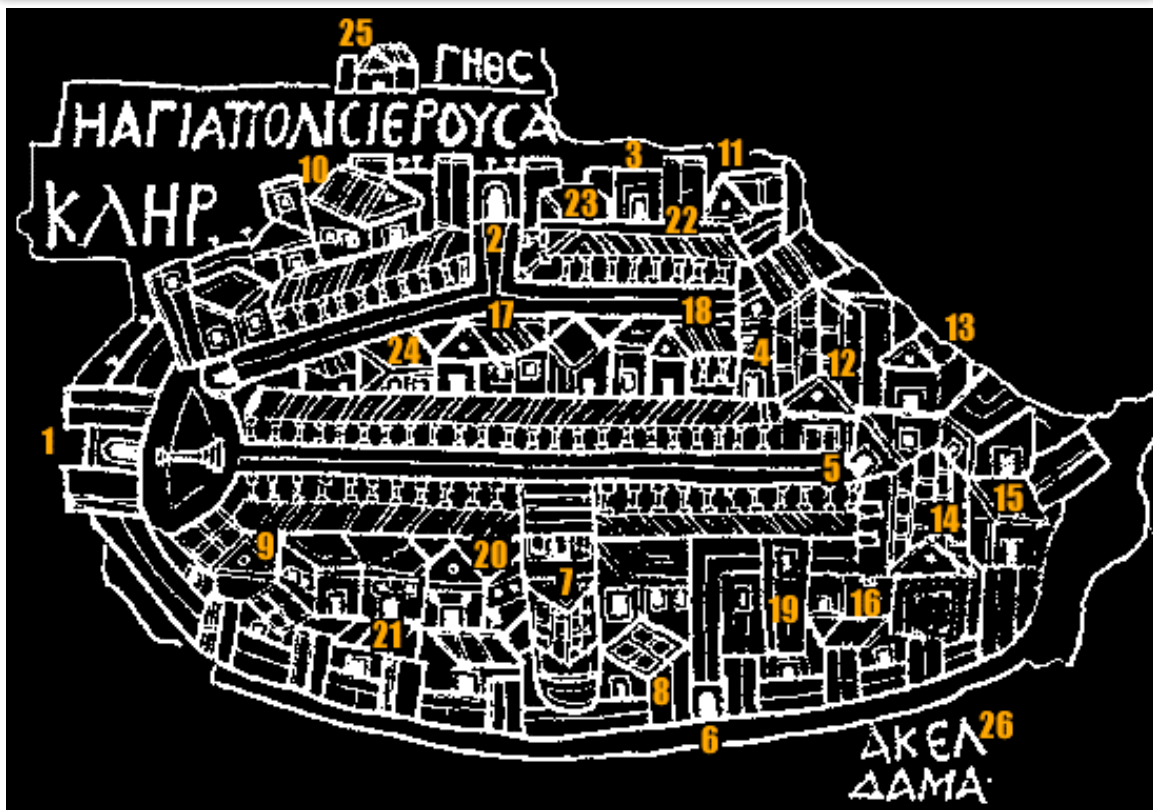
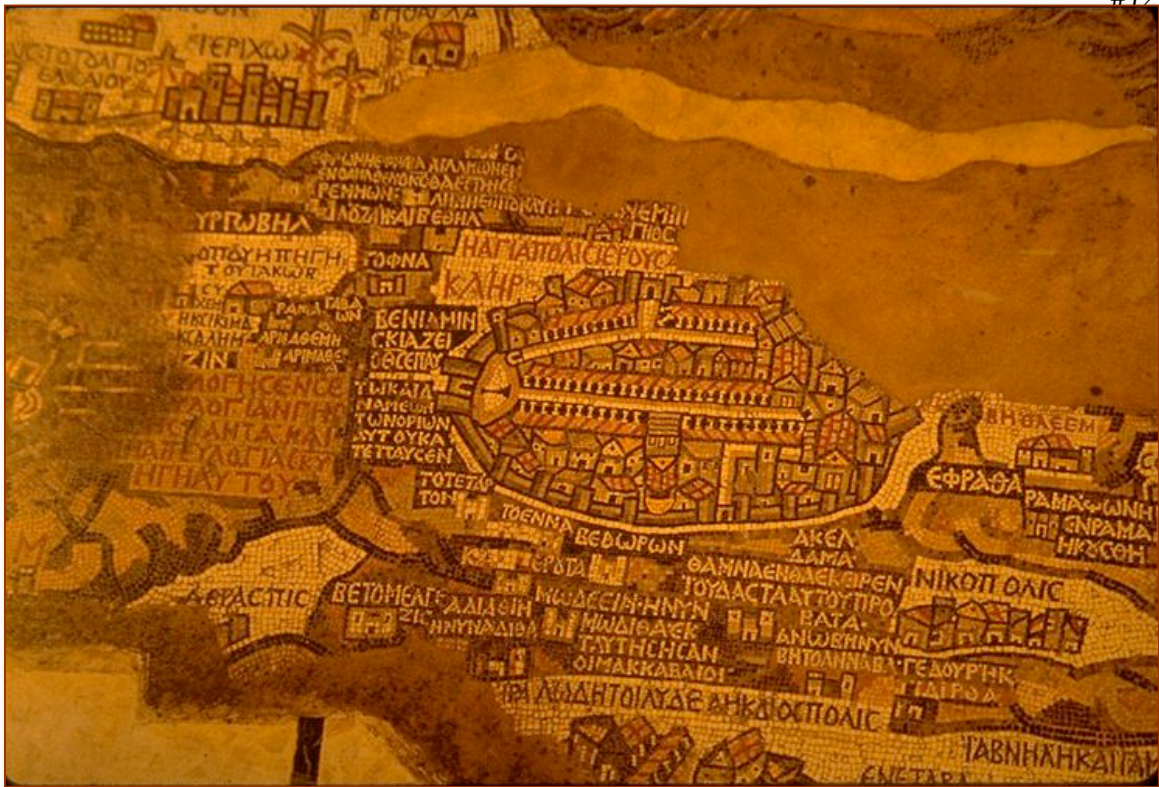
CHURCH OF
HOLY SEPULCHRE
WITH YELLOW
DOME

OLD CITY
WALLS

NEA
CHURCH



The outline of the Madaba Mosaic overlaying a complete map of the area



Places list of Jerusalem	
Ancient Name	Modern Name
1. St. Stephen's Gate	1. Damascus Gate - Bab al-'Amud
2. Gate of the Sheep Pool	2. St. Stephen's Gate - Bab Sitti Maryam
3. Golden Gate - Gate Beautiful	3. Golden Gate - Bab ar-Rahma / Bab at-Tub
4. Dung Gate	4. Bab al-Mugariba
5. Sion Gate	5. Bab an-Nabi Da'ud
6. Gate of the Tawer (Porta Purgu)	6. Jaffa Gate - Bab al-Halil
7. Church of Anastasis	7. Holy Sepulchre
8. Baptistery of the Church of Anastasis ?	8. Baptistery of the Holy Sepulchre ?
9. Monastery of St. Serapion ?	9. ?
10. Church of Sheeps Pool (Probatica)	10. Church of St. Anne
11. Church of Pinnacle of the Temple	11.
12. New Church of Mother of God	12. Nea Church
13. Church north of Pool of Siloam	13.
14. Basilica on Mount Sion	14. Basilica on Mount Sion
15. Diaconicon of the Basilica on Mount Sion ?	15. Coenaculum
16. Church of the House of Caiphas	16. House of Caiphas
17. Church of St. Sophia ?	17.?
18. Church of St. Cosmas and St. Damianus ?	18.?
19. The Citadel	19. al-Qal'a
20. Patriarchal Quarter ?	20.?
21. Monastery of the Spoudaei ?	21.?
22. Temple Esplanade	22. Haram as-Sharif
23. Fortress of Antonia ?	23. ?
24. Public Baths of Jerusalem ?	24. Hammam as-Sultan ?
25. Gethsemane	25. Gethsemane
26. Aceldama	26. Aceldama

