

Object Lessons #4

Byzantines

Timeline

Post Bar Kokhba Revolt Jews not allowed in Jerusalem
Circa 200 CE Completion of the Mishnah, last generation of Tannaim
313 Edict of Milan says Christianity must be a tolerated religion
314 Eusebius becomes bishop of Caesarea
320s Constantine converts to Christianity and converts the empire, Helena visits the Holy Land
430s Empress Eudocia relocates to Jerusalem, rebuilds the city wall
542 Nea Church
Between 542 – 570 Madaba Map
1884 Madaba map discovered
1970s Cardo and remains of the Nea uncovered in Jerusalem's Jewish Quarter

Madaba in Tanakh

וְנִיגְמָם אֲבָד חֶשְׁבּוֹן עַד־דִּיבּוֹן וְנָשִׁים עַד־נֹפֶחַ אֲשֶׁר עַד־מִידְבָּא:

Yet we have cast them down utterly,
Heshbon along with Dibon;
We have wrought desolation at Nophah,
Which is near to Madaba. (Bamidbar 21:30)

עַמּוֹ הָרְאוּבֵנִי וְהַגָּדִי לָקְחוּ נַחֲלָתָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָהֶם מֹשֶׁה בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן מִזְרְחָה כְּאֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָהֶם מֹשֶׁה
עֶבֶד יְהוָה: מִעֲרוֹעֵר אֲשֶׁר עַל־שִׁפְת־נַחַל אַרְנוֹן וְהָעִיר אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹךְ־הַנַּחַל וְכָל־הַמִּישׁוֹר מִיְּדְבָא עַד־
דִּיבּוֹן:

Now the Reubenites and the Gadites, along with the other half-tribe, had already received the shares that Moses assigned to them on the east side of the Jordan—as assigned to them by Moses the servant of God: from Aroer on the edge of the Wadi Arnon and the town in the middle of the wadi, the entire Tableland [from] Madeba to Dibon (Joshua 13: 9)

Is This Map Right Side Up?

וְהָיָה זֶרְעֶךָ כְּעֹפֶר הָאָרֶץ וּפְרָצְתָה יָמָה וּקְדָמָה וְצָפֹנָה וְנִגְבָּהּ וְנִבְרָכְוּ בָּךְ כָּל־מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאָדָמָה
וּבְזֶרְעָךְ:

Your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you and your descendants. (Bereshit 28:14)

וְהָיָה | בְּיָוֶם הַהוּא יֵצְאוּ מִיַּם־חַיִּים מִירוּשָׁלַם חֲצִיָּם אֶל־הַיָּם הַקִּדְמוֹנִי וְחֲצִיָּם אֶל־הַיָּם הָאַחֲרוֹן בְּקֵץ
וּבְחֹרֶף יְהִיָּה: (זכריה 14:8)

וְהַחַיִּים קְדָמָה מִזְרְחָה דָגֵל מִחֲנֶה יְהוּדָה לְצַבָּאתָם וְנָשִׂיא לְבָנֵי יְהוּדָה נִחְשׁוֹן בֶּן־עַמִּינַדָב:

Camped on the front, or east side: the standard of the division of Judah, troop by troop. Chieftain of the Judites: Nahshon son of Amminadab. (Bamidbar 2:3)

עָלָה | רֹאשׁ הַפָּסָגָה וְשָׂא עֵינָיו יָמָה וְצָפֹנָה וְתֵימָנָה וּמִזְרָחָה וּרְאָה בְּעֵינָיו כִּי־לֹא תַעֲבֹר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן
הַזֶּה:

Go up to the summit of Pisgah and gaze about, to the west, the north, the south, and the east. Look at it well, for you shall not go across yonder Jordan. (Devarim 3:27)

Knowledge of the Land:

Eusebius (260-339) and the Onomasticon

Bethsour (Bethaur). (In) tribe of Juda or Benjamin. There is now a village Bēthsōrō at the twentieth milestone on the road going from Jerusalem to Hebron.

Sōrēch. (Name of) wadi. Home of Balila wife of Samson. It is (today) the village called Sōrēch (Cafarsorch) north of Eleutheropolis near (the hamlet) Saraa the home of Samson.

Sephela. (As written) in Isaia. (For which) Aquila (interprets) "plain," Symmachus "valley." Even now it is called Sephela. It is all the region (fields and plains) around Eleutheropolis to the north and the west.

Louza (Luza). Jacob renamed this Bethel. This village, inhabited even now, is on the left of the road going to Jerusalem from Neapolis. Given to tribe of Benjamin.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Then going for a time through the valley of the Jordan on the bank of the river, because our route lay that way for a while, we suddenly saw the city of the holy prophet Elijah, that is Thesbe, whence he had the name of Elijah the Tishbite. There, to this day, is the cave wherein the holy man sat; there too is the tomb of holy Getha, (Jepthah) whose name we read in the books of the Judges. . . and in that valley we saw the cell of one who is now a brother, that is a monk. Then I, as I am very inquisitive, began to ask what was this valley where the holy monk had now made himself a cell, for I did not think it was without reason. Then the holy men who were journeying with us, and who knew the place, said, " This is the valley of Corra (Kerith), where holy Elijah the Tishbite dwelt in the time of king Ahab, when there was a famine, and at the bidding of God the raven used to bring him food, and he drank water of the torrent. For this brook which you see running through this valley into Jordan, is Kerith." Wherefore giving thanks to God Who deigned to show us every thing that we desired, unworthy as we were, we beg to make our journey as on other days. (Travels of Egeria, 4th century CE)

And at the first cockcrow they come down from the Imbomon with hymns, and arrive at the place where the Lord prayed, as it is written in the Gospel . . . There is in that place a graceful church. The bishop and all the people enter, a prayer suitable to the place and to the day is said, with one suitable hymn, and the passage from the Gospel is read where He said to His disciples: *Watch, that ye enter not into temptation*¹; the whole passage is read through and prayer is made. And then all, even to the smallest child, go down with the Bishop, on foot, with hymns to Gethsemane; where, on account of the great number of people in the crowd, who are wearied owing to the vigils and weak through the daily fasts, and because they have so great a hill to descend, they come very slowly with hymns to Gethsemane. And over two hundred church candles are made ready to give light to all the people. On their arrival at Gethsemane,² first a suitable prayer is made, then a hymn is said, then the passage of the Gospel is read where the Lord was taken. And when this passage has been read there is so great a moaning and groaning of all the people, together with weeping, that their lamentation may be heard perhaps as far as the city.

From that hour they go with hymns to the city on foot, reaching the gate about the time when one man begins to be able to recognize another, and thence right on through the midst of the city; all, to a man there, for on that special day not a soul withdraws from the vigils until morning. Thus the bishop is escorted from Gethsemane to the gate, and thence through the whole of the city to the Cross.

And when they arrive before the Cross the daylight is already growing bright. (Travels of Egeria, 4th century CE)

Eudocia Rebuilds the Walls

הַיְטִיבָה בְּרִצּוֹנָה אֶת־צִיּוֹן תִּבְנֶה חוֹמוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם:

May it please You to make Zion prosper;
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. (Psalms 51:20)

Plants Animals and People

But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers [kormim] and husbandmen [yogbim].- 'Kornim:' R. Joseph learnt: This means balsamum gatherers from the En Gedi to Ramah. Yogbim: These are those which catch hilazon from the promontory of Tyre as far as Haifa. (Shabbat 26a)

Anyone who causes strife among his fellow men or informs on them to non Jews or steals his friend's possessions or tells the secret of the city to non

Jews, He whose eyes roam the whole land and see everything hidden will smite that man and his children and destroy him from the earth and everyone say Amen. (Synagogue inscription from Ein Gedi)

Gerizim and Eival

When your God brings you into the land that you are about to enter and possess, you shall pronounce the blessing at Mount Gerizim and the curse at Mount Ebal. Both are on the other side of the Jordan, beyond the west road that is in the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the Arabah—near Gilgal, by the terebinths of Moreh. (Devarim 11:30-31)

How does Rabbi Eleazar uphold “Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal”? They were two mounds called them Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. In the opinion of Rabbi Jehudah, they walked 120 *mil* on that day. In the opinion of Rabbi Eleazar, they did not move at all. (Yerushalmi Sotah 7:3)

Crossing the Jordan

Ketubot 112a When Rabbi Zeira ascended to Eretz Yisrael he could not find a ferry to cross the Jordan River. He took hold of a rope that was strung across as a makeshift bridge and crossed the Jordan. A certain Sadducee said to him: Hasty people who put your mouths before your ears, when you said at the time of the giving of the Torah: “We will do” before “we will hear” (Exodus 24:7), you remain hasty to this day. Why couldn’t you wait a little longer to cross the river on a ferry? Rabbi Zeira said to him: This is a place where Moses and Aaron did not merit entering; who is to say that I will merit

Jewish “Maps”

Shalom. These fruits are forbidden in Beit She'an during the Seventh Year, but during other years of the seven-year cycle they are tithed as *demai*-produce . . . The "permitted" cities (in which one may eat of and work the land during Shevi'it) in the district of Nave (גִּתוֹ נִיּוֹ not גִּתוֹ, see Lieberman), which they [subsequently] forbade, are Saria, Teriya, Jasim (נִשְׁמִי גִשְׁמִי not גִּשְׁמִי), and Zizun, and Yigrei Tov, and Degev, Chorvatah, and Berachah (alt., Karacha (כִּרְכָּא)), and Beit Cherev. The "forbidden cities" (in which one may neither eat of nor work the land during Shevi'it) in the district of Tyre are Shenetz, and Ketzet, and Puma Tziva, and Upper Chanita, and the Land of Chanita, Dashmiya, and Beit Mazil, the "Ruins" (כְּרִיא), and Emek Mazil. (Rehov Inscription, based on the Techumin Beraitta in Tosefta Sheviit 4:5)

Halachic Areas

Rabbi Yehuda says:, from Rekem eastward is considered to be part of the overseas country, and Rekem itself is like east of Eretz Yisrael, i.e., it is outside of Eretz Yisrael. From Ashkelon southward is outside of Eretz Yisrael, and Ashkelon itself is like south of Eretz Yisrael. Likewise, from Akko northward is outside of Eretz Yisrael, and Akko itself is like north of Eretz Yisrael. Rabbi Meir says: Akko is like Eretz Yisrael with regard to the *halakhot* of bills of divorce. (Mishnah Gittin 1:1)

Eretz Yisrael is divided into three separate lands with regard to marriage: Judea, Transjordan, and the Galilee. (Mishnah Ketubot 13:10)

The Sages taught: Moses designated three cities of refuge in the east bank of the Jordan, and corresponding to them, Joshua designated three cities of refuge in the land of Canaan. And the cities were aligned like two rows of vines in a vineyard: In Eretz Yisrael there was Hebron in Mount Judea, corresponding to Bezer in the wilderness; Shechem in Mount Ephraim, corresponding to Ramoth in the Gilead; and Kadesh in Mount Naphtali, corresponding to Golan in the Bashan. (Makkot 9b)

Jewish Travelers

And our colleagues who descended from Eretz Yisrael; and who is the Sage with this title? Ulla said in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan (Berachot 38b)

When Ulla came [from Eretz Yisrael to Babylonia,] he said: They sanctified the New Moon in the West, (Rosh HaShanah 22b)

When Rav Dimi ascended to Neharde'a, he sent to the yeshiva students: The statements I said to you, they are my mistake. However, this is what they said in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan (Shabbat 63b)

When Rav Dimi came from Eretz Yisrael to Babylonia he said: No person has ever drowned in the Sea of Sodom, Rav Yosef said: Sodom is overturned and Rav Dimi's statement is backward. it is a man who does not drown in the Dead Sea, but a plank sinks? (Shabbat 108b)

Rav Yosef, and some say it was Rabba, would announce: Those that ascend [to Eretz Yisrael from Babylonia,] as well as those that descend [to Babylonia from Eretz Yisrael,], all agree to the following *halakha*: (Bava Kamma 23b)

What the Map Doesn't Show #1

Until today it has been forbidden for those poisonous hypocrites to enter Jerusalem because of their murder of the prophets, including the last one, the

son of God. They may come only to cry, because then they are permitted to mourn the ruins of the city in exchange for payment. Just as they once bought the blood of the Messiah, now they buy their own tears and even mourning is not given them for free.

On the day that the Romans conquered and destroyed Jerusalem you can see the members of this nation, women wearing rags and old men carrying a burden of rags and years, gathering to mourn and proving by their bodies and their clothes the meaning of "the anger of the Lord." A collection of miserable rabble appears while the cross of the Lord shines and celebrates its resurrection and on the Mount of Olives is raised a cross. Meanwhile, this pathetic nation cries over its destroyed Temple and they are not worthy of pity. (Jerome (4th century CE), commentary to Zephaniah)

What the Map Doesn't Show #2

All the Muslims in the city and surrounding came, together with a group of Jews. Then they were ordered to sweep the site of the Temple and to clean it. Omar was in charge of their work. Whenever they uncovered another layer, he would ask the Elders of the Jews if this was the stone known as the Foundation Stone. (Letter of Adat HaRabbanim of Jerusalem, found in Cairo Genizah)