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The Madaba Map * □□□□ □□

Stock#: 63373
Map Maker: Survey of Israel
Date: 1906 (1954)
Place: n.p.
Color: Color
Condition: VG+
Size: 28 x 22 inches
Price: \$675.00



Description:

The Oldest Known Geographic Floor Mosaic

Later edition the Palmer & Guthe image of the Medaba map, the oldest surviving map to show the Holy Land and the oldest surviving floor mosaic map.

The earliest example of Christian topography known to exist is the Madaba Tile Mosaic Map, dating from the sixth century. It shows Palestine and parts of Arabia, Egypt and the Mediterranean and was originally on a large scale, measuring roughly 50 x 20 ft.

Lost to time until its re-discovery in the 1880s, the map is of tremendous historical importance. Around 1901 Jerusalem architect Paul Palmer made drawings based on a large-scale painting of the mosaic, and these were published in Leipzig in 1906 under the title *Die Mosaikkarte von Madeba*, which is the source of the present image.

The Madaba Map

The Madaba Map is part of a floor mosaic in the early Byzantine church of Saint George in Madaba, Jordan. The Madaba Mosaic Map depicts Jerusalem with the New Church of the Theotokos, which was dedicated on November 20, 542. Buildings erected in Jerusalem after 570 are absent from the depiction, thus limiting the date range of its creation to the period between 542 and 570. The mosaic was made for the Christian community of Madaba, which was the seat of a bishop at that time. In 614, Madaba was conquered by the Sasanian Empire. In the eighth century, the ruling Muslim Umayyad Caliphate had some figural motifs removed from the mosaic. In 746, Madaba was largely destroyed by an earthquake and subsequently abandoned.



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The mosaic map depicts an area from Lebanon in the north to the Nile Delta in the south, and from the Mediterranean Sea in the west to the Eastern Desert. Among other features, it depicts the Dead Sea with two fishing boats, a variety of bridges linking the banks of the Jordan, fish swimming in the river and receding from the Dead Sea; a lion hunting a gazelle in the Moab desert, palm-ringed Jericho, Bethlehem and other biblical-Christian sites.

The map may partially have served to facilitate pilgrims' orientation in the Holy Land. About 150 towns and villages are identified by name.

The largest and most detailed element of the topographic depiction is Jerusalem, at the center of the map. The mosaic clearly shows a number of significant structures in the Old City of Jerusalem: the Damascus Gate, the Lions' Gate, the Golden Gate, the Zion Gate, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the New Church of the Theotokos, the Tower of David and the Cardo Maximus. The recognizable depiction of the urban topography makes the mosaic a key source on Byzantine Jerusalem. Also unique are the detailed depictions of cities such as Neapolis, Askalon, Gaza, Pelusium and Charachmoba, all of them nearly detailed enough to be described as street maps.

The mosaic was rediscovered in 1884, during the construction of a new Greek Orthodox church on the site of its ancient predecessor. In the following decades, large portions of the mosaic map were damaged by fires, activities in the new church and by the effects of moisture. In December 1964, the Volkswagen Foundation gave the Deutscher Verein für die Erforschung Palästinas ("German Society for the exploration of Palestine") 90,000 DM to save the mosaic. In 1965, the archaeologists Heinz Cüppers and Herbert Donner undertook the restoration and conservation of the remaining parts of the mosaic.

Detailed Condition: