

Masterarbeit / Master's Thesis

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

Women in ecclesiastical spaces in Arabia and Palestine:
A study of late antique mosaics from the 4th to 8th centuries

verfasst von / submitted by

Michaela Löffler, BA BA

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2022 / Vienna, 2022

Studienkennzahl lt. Studeinblatt/
degree program code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 066 885

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree program code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Masterstudium klassische Archäologie

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. Basema Hamarneh PhD

I would like to thank Univ. - Prof. Basema Hamarneh,
who supported my work on this thesis
during all stages of development.

She always had an open ear for any of my questions
and guided me to find the solutions for my problems.

I would also like to thank my parents and family, as well as my friends
who helped me through the difficult times of the last few years
and always supported my decisions.

Last but not least I want to thank my fiancé and partner in crime
for his never-ending support and his endless patience.

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1. Preface

The idea for this thesis came to me after a teaching excavation in Jordan. During my stay, many visits to various archaeological sites throughout the country triggered my interest in the aspects related to church donations and the personal agency of various members of local communities in Late Antiquity. The importance of the churches discovered in Southern Levant¹ is indicated by several inscriptions written in Greek attesting the building date and providing valuable information on the social fabric of local society.

The specific focus on women and benefactresses mentioned in these spaces was motivated not only by my interest in the role played by females in building and endowment, but also because the theme has been relatively neglected in scientific research until recently.

Limited studies, such as Baumann, who acknowledge that there are some benefactresses and women mentioned in the inscriptions, some even with an important role. Nevertheless, Baumann considers the aspect of donorship mainly linked to male

figures: “The vast majority of founders were male. This finding highlights their superior position as head of families in a strictly patriarchal society ...”.²

In this statement, Baumann reflects much of what has set female donorship in a secondary position, subordinated to complex gender balances, the attitude of the church, and a general attempt to marginalize female efforts.

In her article “The contribution of Women to the Construction and Decoration of Churches in the Holy Land”, Habas³ sheds more light on the few preserved sources on female activity within the community of the Early Church. A broader attempt to give visibility to those inscribed benefactresses has yet to be undertaken.

Not only female aspects of donations and founding in early Christianity but also the confrontation with facets of ancient female history brings hindrances that must be confronted. Women and their role and life in ancient societies have, if only marginally, been part of modern ancient studies since the 19th century. One of the most discussed

¹ The area of the Late Roman provinces of the three Palestines, Phoenicia and Arabia now lying in the territory of Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine and Jordan.

² Baumann 1999: 299-300. „Die große Mehrheit der Stifter war männlichen Geschlechts. Dieser Befund

macht ihre übergeordnete Stellung als Familienoberhäupter in einer streng patriarchalischen Gesellschaft deutlich...“

³ Habas 2016: 881-293.

and controversial publications on ancient studies about women is “Mother Right” by Johann Jakob Bachofen. Even if Bachofen’s perception of ancient “gynocratic” systems could never withstand,⁴ it still managed to shed a spotlight, a new focus, and many unasked questions on the topic of women in antiquity – concerning life, rights, duties, and privileges in previous societies. Social changes during the 20th century again influenced the questions and perceptions of ancient societies and thus the role and history of women: women and gender history gained a foothold in the field of ancient studies and opened new research areas⁵. Since then, ongoing research on these topics has provided new insights into social, cultural, religious, and family structures and the role that women fulfilled in all these aspects of their life.

The long-lasting tendency to marginalize women, the fact that almost all literary evidence on ancient women comes from the hands and minds of men,⁶ as well as the many contributions of the 19th century that shaped and influenced understanding of ancient female worlds, are only some of the obstacles encountered when engaged with this topic.

Most ancient texts on marriage and divorce rights, financial matters and allowances,

and roles within the household, together with public functions and activities, are found within law texts and additional imperial legislation, as well as philosophical and theological writings.⁷ Throughout Late Antiquity, written sources specifically target a privileged group of socially high ranking women, such as empresses who had their own biographers or members of “high society” (e.g., Egeria, Paola and Eustochium) who had the necessary education and means to write of their own experiences whilst on pilgrimage.⁸ Although there are references to the lives of women from other social backgrounds in different literary sources, these secular or religious texts can only provide general information on how women should have lived or behaved according to these guidelines – they do not give insight into female realities of the time.⁹

Conversely, because of their broad agenda and audience, as well as inscriptions and their place in public spaces, hagiographic texts open a small window for a glimpse of the lives of women of lower social backgrounds, their duties, economic possibilities, and motivations. The information provided through dedication inscriptions gives some insight into the women of the Early Christian communities

⁴ Wagner-Hasel 1992: 1-12.

⁵ Hartmann 2007: 207-207.

⁶ Hartmann 2007: 7. Constantinou 2014: 43-44.

⁷ Clark 1993: 3; Hartmann 2007: 7-8.

⁸ Hartmann 2007. Egeria - *Itinerarium Egeriae*.

⁹ Clark 1993: 13.

in the sample area, their relation to the community and the church, their relation to other donors and members of their parish, and to their financial capacities. Combined, all these perspectives render the research on female realities through archaeological evidence and literal sources highly fascinating.

1.1. General questions and objective of this thesis

This thesis analytically addresses the subject of female donorship in mosaic floors to increase understanding of the role of women in church building and endowment from a quantitative, qualitative, and social point of view. To approach this, the initial step towards organization of the rich epigraphic material involved collecting all donation mosaic inscriptions as these represent the main source for the investigation. The selected texts are those that include female names.

The chronological frame was limited to the wider period of Late Antiquity. The earliest collected inscriptions date to the 3rd/4th century when the imperial shift towards the East and towards Christianity began. The latest mosaics considered in this thesis date to the 8th century when the region was under Arab rule. All mosaics within these geographical and chronological perimeters

were fitted into a catalogue. These include site name, church name, dating, place of the inscribed text, pictures or drawings, as well as transcriptions, translations, and bibliography.

Due to a longstanding history of research into the mosaics of the Southern Levant, and especially the Holy Land, as well as into inscriptions and donation inscriptions from this region specifically, the amount of information on this topic is imposing. Within this surplus of information, two studies marked the direction of the first analytical part of this paper. The first is Avi-Yonah's (1958) "The Economics of Byzantine Palestine"¹⁰ and the second is a more recent study from Di Segni (2017),¹¹ "Late Antique Inscriptions in the Provinces of Palaestina and Arabia: Realities and Changes".

On the basis of these two studies, as well as other studies on development and change, this thesis presents a chronological analysis of the gathered inscriptions to discover whether general stated developments and changes in epigraphical culture linked to economy, geographical distribution, and society can also be demonstrated concerning the marginalized group of inscriptions within ecclesiastical spaces specifically mentioning women.

¹⁰ Avi-Yonah 1958: 39-51.

¹¹ Di Segni 2017: 287-322.

The period under consideration is not only one of great changes and developments in different aspects of society, but also a timeline in which imperial and aristocratic families' donations to the church, especially in the Holy Land, under Constantin and his successors, along with the visibility and influence of the women of the Theodosian dynasty, such as Eudoxia, are at their peak.¹²

It is possible that most women of late antique Southern Levant neither experienced such liberty nor had the same social and economic advantages as those inherited by imperial women. Nevertheless, these women who left their visible impact in donation inscriptions throughout the Holy Land offer adequate evidence to understand development and changes in epigraphical culture concerning the marginalized party of female donors.

From examples of foundresses/abbesses in the Holy Land and Constantinople in Late Antiquity, it is known that even highly ranking, wealthy women did not gain social, personal, and economic independence easily.¹³ In fear of economic damage for members of wealthy families, legislation in 390 AD prohibited high scale donations for religious purposes that potentially harmed families' fortunes.¹⁴

To gain insight into the social structure and relations of female donors and benefactresses, a second focus is on the content of the inscriptions, especially on parts mentioning titles and positions within ecclesiastical or secular structures, along with inscriptions stating family and social relationships. This will clarify whether there was a tendency for individual donations or whether women were more likely to donate together with their family or as part of a greater community. Another line of investigation is whether it is possible to find any signs that quantity of donors or quality of donation had influence on the visibility of the inscription.

Based on Watta's¹⁵ analysis of "Sacred zones in the early church building of the Middle East", the collected floorplans and positions of mosaic inscriptions were analysed to ascertain if there is a connection between the type of dedicatory inscription and the position and thereafter, the visibility of the inscription.

Gaining more visibility in a male dominated space through their donations and beneficial activities was, even if not actively politically intended, a major side effect of few female economic liberties in Late Antiquity. This is more so in light of the religious worth for the donors since this visibility through

¹² Baumann 1999: 19-27. Grünbart 2012: 23-25.

¹³ Constantinou 2014: 43-62.

¹⁴ Whiting 2014: 76-77. Britt 2008: 120-121.

¹⁵ see Watta 2018.

perpetually inscribed names could be remembered thought time by their Christian community and thus promote salvation for the remembered person.¹⁶

Epigraphical sources, such as donation inscriptions throughout the provinces of Arabia and Palestine, demonstrate that some women achieved a certain level of social and economic autonomy, even in small rural areas, that allowed them to manifest their piety through donations and euergetism.

Viewing donation inscriptions in combination with literary sources not only allows for recognition of development and change throughout the time but also offers an outlook on the society and community beyond those ecclesiastical spaces and eventually provides some insight into the social, economic, and religious realities of the female donors and benefactresses.

¹⁶ Grünbart 2014: 22-24.

2. Research history

To collect the necessary data and information for this thesis, several studies, publications, and articles considering donation mosaics and donation inscriptions, in addition to sources concerning female realities in Late Antiquity were consulted. However, the dedication mosaic inscriptions consulted for this work are far from complete. According to Patrich,¹⁷ there are over 400 churches at 335 different sites throughout the research area.

Selection of mosaics for this thesis was based on the material discovered and published to date. Clearly, for time reasons, further unpublished or new discoveries were not included in this study.¹⁸ The 68 mosaics that were brought together are the result of this research and are part of this specific type of inscription.

2.1. The archaeological and epigraphical research

The subject of donors in mosaic pavements has attracted considerable scholarly attention in the past decades. However,

focus on female donors is only marginal in these studies. Therefore, the attempt to gather information on female donors was set on a wide range of primary basic research concerning history and archaeology of early church development and settlement, research on mosaic pavements, donations and donors, epigraphical culture, and social factors.

Ovadia's "Corpus of Byzantine Churches in the Holy Land" (1970) provides valuable insights into the rich ecclesiastical landscape east and west of the Jordan river. The corpus includes information on the location of Byzantine churches, the character of the structure, size and measurements, information on connected structures, inscriptions on dedication or memorial purpose, builders and donors, references, and dates. It further provides general information and a bibliography that leads to the full inscriptions, which must be researched since there is no specification as to whether the donors were men or women. Furthermore, the corpus also provides numerous floorplans for the discussed churches.

¹⁷ Patrich 2006: 351, note 2. Horn/Hunter 2012: 1098-1099.

¹⁸ Due to ongoing research activity in the region of the south Levant there are numerous new discoveries each season. For example, the "Church of the Deaconesses" in Ashdod, excavated from 2017 to 2021, so far published in an article of Haaretz

Magazine, www.haaretz.com/archaeology/MAGAZINE-byzantine-basilica-with-female-ministers-and-baffling-burials-found-in-israel-1.10387014. To mention just one discovery that would have had impact on this thesis, and that will eventually in the future shed more light on female Ministers.

Another important corpus is Michel's (2001) "Byzantine and Umayyad churches in Jordan (5th–8th century), architectural typology and liturgical arrangements" offers detailed insight and discussion on early Christian churches in Jordan, their architectural features and developments, their liturgical function and inventory, an analysis of several different architectural types of churches, and also the geographical differences between urban and rural sites. Further insights into ancient churches within the territories of the Holy Land are provided by the collective volume in honour of the Franciscan Corbo, "Christian Archaeology in the Holy Land. New Discoveries", edited by Bottini, Di Segni and Alliata in 1990; as well as the collected essays, "Ancient Churches Revealed", edited by Tsafir, published in 1993, which provides an independent evaluation of the rich ecclesiastical culture of the region. The book "Christian Archaeology in the Holy Land. New Discoveries" describes the excavation activity throughout the Holy Land at the beginning of the 1990s. It includes two chapters by Di Segni about the church complexes in Herodion and Horvath Hesheq that provide information on inscriptions with female names.¹⁹ Tsafir's

"Ancient Churches Revealed" gives a compact review of the ecclesiastical landscape of the Holy Land in Late Antiquity. Different chapters provide inscription analysis from several ecclesiastical spaces, depictions, or drawings of several mosaics with female names and church plans with locations of these mosaics.²⁰ An article from Patrìch 2006,²¹ provides more recent insight into the development, distribution and social factors concerning Early Christian Churches in the Holy Land. These publications on general church settlement throughout the area lead to various articles and excavation reports on specific ecclesiastical buildings in Megiddo, Rihab, Hippos, Horvath Hani, Horvath Hesheq, Ozem, and many more sites.

The overview of the ecclesiastical landscape built the underlying foundation for further research into mosaics found within these complexes. On the side of the three Palestines, Rina Talgam's corpora "Mosaics of Faith: Floors of Pagans, Jews, Samaritans, Christians and Muslims in the Holy Land"²² delivers an in depth analysis of the development and use, and differences and similarities of mosaic floors over several centuries.

¹⁹ Di Segni 1990A: 177-190 and 1990B: 379-390.

²⁰ see: Di Segni 1993: 66-70. Patrìch/Tsafir 1993: 265-272. Gazit/Lender 1993: 273-276. Cohen 1993: 277-282.

²¹ Patrìch 2006: 351-395.

²² Talgam 2014: 77-256, 379-404.

A corpora of mosaics from the provinces lying to the east of the Jordan Valley, “Mosaics of Jordan”, was completed by Piccirillo (1993).²³ This provides a broad overview of the historic development of mosaics in Jordan, as well as plans and brief historic introductions and research history about the mentioned sites and structures. Further research on Early Christian churches, mosaic pavements and epigraphical culture in Jordan was led by Piccirillo, Gatier and Di Segni.²⁴ This proved to be the most profitable source for inscriptions and mosaics for this thesis. C.B. Welles analysed the ecclesiastical buildings and inscriptions found throughout the city of Jerash in 1938.²⁵ These are classified according to secular or religious connotation and include insights into donation inscriptions. Together with excavation reports such as the “Jerash Archaeological Project in two Volumes”,²⁶ the secondary sources mentioned above provide information on the inscriptions, including graphic and photographic documentation, transcriptions, and translations, as well as further epigraphic

and analytic information, position within the complexes, size and measurements, date, and further references. Led by these comprehensive literary sources on the eastern Jordan Valley and Jordan, further literature was used to locate mosaic inscriptions in the context of donations.²⁷

Complementing the research on dedication activities, inscriptions, and donors, Baumann’s (1999) book on late antique donors in the Holy Land provides a general view of the subject of donations. “Spätantike Stifter im Heiligen Land” discusses selected examples or case studies represented by church complexes and their inscriptions, and offers an index of female names mentioned in several mosaics throughout the Holy Land in the appendix.²⁸ Baumann focuses on churches in Umm er-Rases and provides detailed analyses of the architecture and mosaic decoration of these buildings in connection to donation activity. His emphasis is mostly on the architectural aspects of the buildings and the iconographic analysis of depictions of donors, and less on the epigraphic aspects. Although some of the inscriptions analysed

²³ Piccirillo 1993A.

²⁴ Piccirillo 1981, 1989, 1993a+b, 1994. Piccirillo and Alliata 1998. Gatier 1986. Di Segni 1990a+b, 1993, 1998, 2006, 2018. Di Segni and Ashkenazi 2020.

²⁵ Welles 1938: 355-497, in: Kraeling 1938, Gerasa, City of the Decapolis.

²⁶ See Gawlikowski/Musa 1986.

²⁷ See Avi-Yonah 1947. Mittmann 1967. Clark/Bowsher 1986. Baumann 1999. Burdajewicz 2005. Hamarneh 1998; 2014.

²⁸ Baumann 1999: 344-345, Anhang 1. Frauennamen.

by Baumann include female names, he suggests that the role of female donors was marginal and subordinated to that of the male, who played the main social role in society.²⁹ Baumann's thesis appears relatively restrictive considering that the appendix lists 56 women compared to 538 men mentioned in inscriptions; however, he neglects the far greater achievement of 10% of the donors who possibly had to overcome several restrictions to be mentioned on a short note.³⁰

Additional research outlined in more recent articles such as Britt (2008) – “Fama et Memoria: Portraits of Female Patrons in Mosaic Pavements of Churches in Byzantine Palestine and Arabia”,³¹ Habas (2008) – “Donations and Donors as Reflected in the Mosaic Pavements of Transjordan's Churches in the Byzantine and Umayyad Periods”,³² Hachlili (2009) – “Ancient Mosaic Pavements – Themes, Issues and Trends”,³³ and others³⁴ confirms the marginalized position of women in the context of donations.

Britt and Habas mostly refer to the same inscriptions on women but have far greater emphasis on the few depictions of benefactresses and benefactors and their iconographical importance. Hachlili's chapter on “Inscriptions”³⁵ mainly observes the forms of donation inscriptions in general and compares inscriptions found in churches and synagogues based on similarities and differences. While the chapter helps with aspects of the definition of donation inscriptions, it does not enter the field of gender in donation inscriptions. Since no specific collection of “women mentioned in donation mosaics in ecclesiastical spaces” has been compiled to date, considerable work was required in the research field of epigraphical culture and mosaics. This led several publications on mosaics as well as inscription corpora concerning the designated research area.

Initial information on inscriptions, their location, transcription and translation, pictures or drawings, commentary on epigraphic analysis and references was found in Ovadiah and Ovadiah's (1986)

²⁹ Baumann 199: 299-300.

³⁰ Baumann 1999: 344-355, Anhang 1.+2. Frauen-Männernamen. Baumann's collection of names includes donation inscriptions from churches, private houses and synagogues. The quoted count above includes all these categories. Miscounts possible.

³¹ Britt 2008: 119-143.

³² Habas 2008: 73-90.

³³ See Hachlili 2009.

³⁴ See Hamarneh 1998 “Ritratti ed immagini dei benefattori nei mosaici della Giordania V-VIII secolo”. Lauxtermann 2020 „Inscribing texts in Byzantium”, Leatherbury 2020 “Inscribing faith in Late Antiquity”, Jacobs 2020 “Village Churches and Donors at the End of Antiquity”.

³⁵ Hachlili 2009: 232-238.

“Mosaic Pavements in Israel”. Meimaris’ (1986) corpus, “Sacred Names, Saints, Martyrs and Church Officials”, did not offer any specific insights into donation activities and covered them only if a reference to the titles was given. Since women were limited in their official ecclesiastical functions, information for this thesis was not found in Meimaris’ work.

More recent corpora on mosaics in the Holy Land allowed for an in-depth analysis on the subject in the most accessible manner. “Christians and Christianity. Vol. I–IV” (2012) offers a detailed and current overview of the church landscape of the Holy Land, including the latest archaeological research and excavation reports.

Madden’s (2014) “Corpus of Byzantine Church mosaic pavements from Israel and the Palestinian Territories” provides information about the location, size and measurements of the complexes, and the mosaics if available, as well as transcriptions, translations, further commentary, and sources on the inscriptions.

The “Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae” (CIIP, 2012–) by Di Segni et al. is not yet complete but provided

the most detailed accounts on inscriptions from this region. Every account includes an elaborate introduction to the history of the site, location of the inscription within the complex, size and measurements, transcription and translation, an extended commentary on the epigraphical research, and further sources. It proved to be an excellent tool for epigraphic research. In a few cases, smaller inscriptions in less known sites, or recently demolished sites where the corpora and books did not provide information on the position of the inscription within the complex, excavation reports and articles provided the necessary data³⁶.

On the digital side, cross-referencing and searching for further sources and information via SEG³⁷ proved to be less efficient than expected, since only a portion of the names and inscriptions collected could be found.

2.2. Gender research in history

As previously mentioned, general historic research, and specific research into the roles and lives of women throughout ancient times and past centuries, has been an important part of historic studies since the 19th century. In the 19th century,

³⁶ for example: Dahari/Zelinger 2014. Delougaz/Haines 1960. Tepper/Di Segni 2006. Sari 1995.

³⁷ <https://inscriptions.packhum.org> accessed in Dec. 2020.

controversial ancient science publications (e.g., Bachofen's "Das Mutterrecht")³⁸ focused the spotlight on a rich complex of themes that had been neglected by scientific researchers: the life, rights, duties and privileges of ordinary women in previous societies. Social and economic changes during the 20th century influenced new questions and brought new points of view and perspectives in handling information and data on female realities in ancient societies and thus shaped current understanding of women's roles and influence on these previous societies.³⁹ The ongoing work on these topics has allowed new insight into social, cultural, religious, and familial structures and the role that women had to fulfil in all aspects of their life and within these societies.

Ongoing progress within the research area of gender and female studies continues to change our perception of female realities and women's lives in ancient times. Regarding the main problems in research on female history, Kalavrezou⁴⁰ states: "regardless of any attempt to highlight and understand the social role of female individuals, the fact will remain, that their status as citizens was inferior" and thus their opportunities and realities have been a creation of a male dominated system.

Nevertheless, today the idealized picture of women who are bound to their households, taking care of the family, mainly cooking and weaving, living a subordinate life inside their homes, is being replaced by diverse realities that allow or condemn women to live outside this idealized grid.⁴¹ Even the daily chores and household activities of "housewives" demanded a certain range of motion within public space, and any actual labour had to be done by women of lower social classes.



Figure 1, Depiction of a woman at work, carrying a fruit basket (Chapel of the Priest John). Piccirillo 1993 A: 175, fig. 229.

Shopping for all sorts of food, including fruit, vegetables, and bread, carrying water home from public fountains and wells, and visits to family members and female friends demanded that women left their homes on a daily basis,⁴² as Kalavrezou points out in

³⁸ Wagner-Hasel 1992: 1-12.

³⁹ Hartmann 2007: 207-207.

⁴⁰ Kalavrezou 2003: 13.

⁴¹ Fulghum-Heintz 2003: 139-151.

⁴² Kalavrezou 2003: 13-15.

her publication, "Byzantine Women and Their World".

Law texts and historic accounts reveal possibilities of relatively free lives for women in several social hierarchical ranks or under certain circumstances, such as widowhood⁴³. In his essay, "The Merry Widows of Late Roman Antiquity: The Evidence of the Theodosian Code", Kuefler points out several changes in Roman law that promoted women, especially widows, and their rights dealing with financial matters and their own inherited fortune.⁴⁴ He also connects these newly gained advantages with benefactions made to churches, charitable causes, and to promote certain priests, monks, and Christian scholars. Using the example of Jerome, Kuefler demonstrates how the view of these scholars was split, especially on widowhood. Although Jerome and others needed the (financial) support of these women, their criticism on the lifestyle of widows and their "freedoms" without husbands did not fall too short.⁴⁵

⁴³ See Foxhall 1989; Wagner-Hasel 1992; Arjava 1996; Garland 1999; Clark 1993; Hartmann 2007; Herrin 2013.

⁴⁴ Kuefler 2015: 28-50.

⁴⁵ Kuefler 2015: 43-44.

⁴⁶ Although there have been special positions in pagan cults for virgins, for example the Vestals at Rome, those were extremely rare and could only be occupied by a small number of women. Whereas in

Analysis of Christian texts and early Christian communities highlights that the rise of Christianity initially came with certain new freedoms and opportunities for women. The new Christian worship of virgins,⁴⁶ such as the mother Mary and several early female martyrs, opened the possibility of an unmarried life, while the enforcement of monogamy meant fewer widows remarried, and the office of deaconesses enabled rising to an official clerical position⁴⁷. In her 1993 book, "Women in Late Antiquity. Pagan and Christian Life-Styles", Clark reveals how the new Christianity interfered with older ways of pagan living. She demonstrates what the religious change meant for women in different spheres of public and private lives. Clark gives insight into aspects such as legal matters, public perception, views on health and private life, in a chapter titled "Being Female".⁴⁸

Another publication that provides deeper insight into the legal changes throughout Late Antiquity is Arjava's work, "Women and Law in Late Antiquity" (1996).⁴⁹

theory Christianity opened that possibility of chastity and "being a virgin of God" for every woman.

⁴⁷ See Clark 1993; Laiou 2003; Alexandre 2006; Constantinou 2014; Grünbart 2014; Whiting 2014; Leatherbury 2020.

⁴⁸ See Clark 1993.

⁴⁹ See Arjava 1996.

Arjava suggests that several changes in legislation throughout Late Antiquity, some connected to the religious change towards Christianity within the Roman empire, seem to create a more equal legal environment for men and women. This opens new opportunities for women in their private and public lives, as well as financial and social matters.⁵⁰

One of the major questions of concern regarding the historic review and research on female realities is the “female perception” of the historic time in question. Although there is sometimes enough material to determine how the legal framework worked, the general religious or cultic perception and standpoint about women, or even how educated men wanted readers and listeners to think about women, one rarely gets on the other side of these standpoints to catch a glimpse of what women themselves thought about their lives – about being female.⁵¹ Furthermore, due to diverse settings of female realities, there is no certainty as to how far official legislation and laws concerned women of different social backgrounds. Therefore, even if late ancient legislation gave women certain economic freedoms, whether women from

the lower social levels knew about their rights is unclear. For example, it is not known if middle class women knew about divorce rights or their economic possibilities. This uncertainty can be connected to information about social backgrounds given in donation inscriptions.

2.3. The research area

The geographical area of this thesis, *Arabia, southern Phoenicia* and the three *Palaestinae*, was one of constant unrest and transformation during the Roman occupation of the Near East. Due to its geographical position on the eastern border of the Roman Empire, the region was constantly threatened with outside invasions by the neighbouring Arab tribes, and therefore required permanent military attention and restructuring⁵² to allow immediate intervention to secure the border. Conversely, due to its religious role and its importance for Judaism, Christianity, and later for Islam, control over this specific region and access to many important sites located in this area was of great political and religious interest. Meimaris also writes about internal struggles concerning the inner structure of Christian dioceses, and the minor position of Jerusalem/Nea

⁵⁰ Arjava 1996: for example on the rights of mothers and children 77-108, on rights of husbands and wives and economic freedoms 123-153, on Christian asceticism, widowhood and remarriage 157-176 and on divorce 177-187.

⁵¹ Clark 1993: 120.

⁵² Di Segni 2018: 247-267. Outlines the displacements and shifts of military legions throughout the region.

Capitolina under the jurisdiction of Caesarea Maritima.⁵³

The borders and limits chosen here reflect the political and administrative situation of the 5th century.

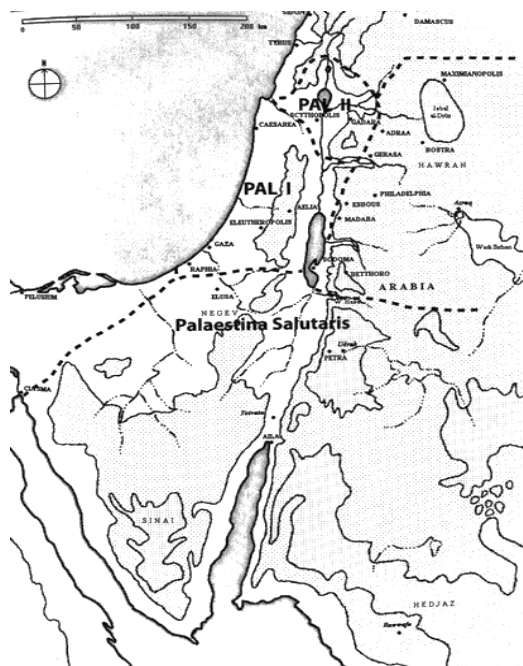


Figure 2, Reorganization of the 4th century, Arabia and three Palaestinae, Sipilä 2009:315, Map 7.

After the reformations of Diocletian in the 4th century,⁵⁴ as well as some administrative

reformations under his successors,⁵⁵ this final border of *Arabia* and the three Palaestinae were in place from the 5th century⁵⁶ until the Persian invasion and the Arab conquests of the 7th century.

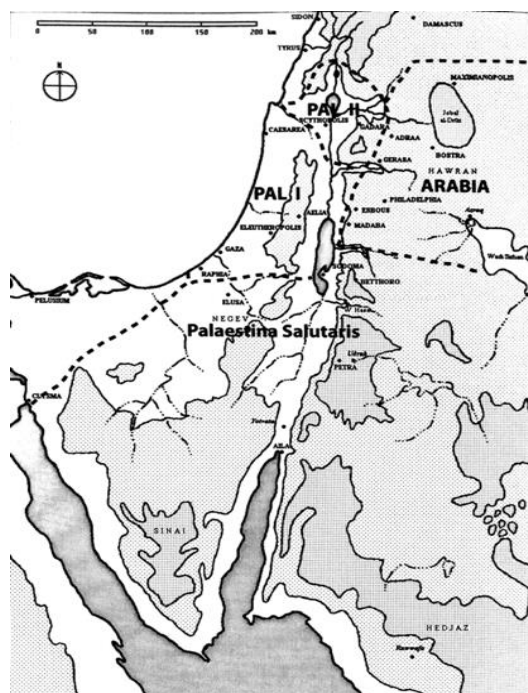


Figure 3, Boarder adjustment between Arabia and Palaestina Tertia (5th century), Sipilä 2009:316, Map 8.

⁵³ Meimaris 1986: 5-13.

⁵⁴ Abel 1938: 170-191; Sipilä 2009: 149-150. In the course of which *dioceses* formed the administrative and military bodies. One of which – the *diocese of Oriens* – included the provinces of *Arabia* and *Palaestina*.

⁵⁵ Sipilä 2009: 166-171. Di Segni 2018: 247-267. Meimaris 1986: 5-13. There is a lot of discussion and controversy about the exact procedure and timeline when it comes to the creation and split up of this provinces, as well as with the displacement of borders along and within this provinces. What can be stated is, that the *province of Palaestinae* was during the course of the 4th century split into three

different regions – *Palaestina Prima*, *Secunda* and *Salutaris*, now *Tertia*. As stated before, the exact date of the emergence of each region has still to be reconstructed and is under discussion. It is clear, that at the end of the 4th century three Palaestinae must have existed as they are referred to in the *Notitia Dignitatum* and the later *Codex of Theodosianus*.

⁵⁶ There is a slight change of borders during the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 5th century between *Arabia* and *Palaestina Tertia*. Although scholars still reason about the exact procedure and timeline of these shift/shifts. Sipilä 2009: 191-193; Di Segni 2018: 247-267.

3. Women of Late Antiquity

Like many societies throughout history, the assumption in roman society was that marriage and motherhood was the sole purpose of women, and this was the way in which they would find fulfilment in life.⁵⁷ Roman law texts regarding women and their rights and duties mainly focused on these elements of life. Matters such as marriage, divorce, or widowhood were connected to some sort of transfer of either monetary or stationary goods, such as land, buildings, or other riches like jewellery. This monetary exchange also came with a certain social and possibly political status, which had to be carefully considered in acts of marriage or remarriage. Thus, these seemingly private matters had a significant impact on social and economic factors and were especially important for the higher ranks of ancient society⁵⁸.

A new set of rules regulating women's social life came with religious Christian texts, including the writings of the Church Fathers,⁵⁹ and were highlighted in several church councils at the time. These theological religious requirements broadly dealt with the same topics as secular law,

but also added new facets and possible ways of life for women by promoting asceticism and virginity⁶⁰.

3.1 Women in Roman law

Under Roman law, marriage, the birth of rightful heirs, and thus a legitimate transfer of inheritance, social status (and power),⁶¹ were important aspects in a functioning society. The regulations and rules on financial matters and personal financial liberties pertaining to women are of particular interest. Most information about financial matters can be found in connection to marriage law. Several social and economic restraints made it necessary for marriages to be well planned and mostly arranged by the father. Betrothals could be arranged for girls as young as seven years old, and the age expected for marriage was between 12 and 16.⁶² These aspects did not see significant changes under the rule of Christian emperors, but laws regarding divorce underwent several changes from Constantine onward.⁶³ Most notably, it became harder for women to find any reason to divorce from Constantine's reign

⁵⁷ Clark 1993: 13. Justinian, CJ 6.40.2, AD 531.

⁵⁸ Arjava 1996: 2-5. He describes that most legal rules focused on the movement of property and by thus where in fact more important for upper society and often irrelevant for the poor.

⁵⁹ Clark 1993: xi-xiii.

⁶⁰ Miller 2005: 8-14.

⁶¹ Clark 1993: 6-8; Arjava 1996: 2-5

⁶² Clark 1993: 13-15.

⁶³ Clark 1993: 18-27.

onward.⁶⁴ However, Justinian changed some rules in favour of women; for example, he reintroduced some reasons for divorce and set the same penalties for men and women if they did not follow the laws.⁶⁵ The main reason for the interest in the matter of marriage lies in the bride's dowry. Depending on the economic and social status of the bride, the dowry could be substantial. It was given to the shared household after the wedding. Legally, the dowry was the property of the woman, and if divorced or misappropriated it had to be repaid/given back, but the husband could dispose of it as he pleased for the duration of the marriage.⁶⁶ In addition, women were also allowed to inherit from their parents under Roman law.

The liberties of women to dispose of their own and shared properties and deal with financial matters inside and outside of marital structures have long been neglected. Although there are laws addressing financial regulations for women, some studies reveal that many women were well-informed as to the financial matters of their

household (and their husband), and many took part in daily financial business transactions as well as in administering their own wealth and property.⁶⁷

3.2. Women in Christian literature

Early Christian literature dealt with the same issues as secular law texts – they tried to define the moral religious code for Christian women. In addition, Christian literature also dealt with hagiographic texts and narratives that described heavenly interventions to prove the values of the Christian lifestyle. Some of these stories even provide information concerning early Christian benefactresses.

For example, three miracle stories, including that of the shrine of Abu Mina (St Menas) in Egypt, deal with female benefactresses on their way to donate money to the church.⁶⁸ Two of these women heard of the wonders that could be achieved by St Menas and took some of their belongings and travelled to his church and sanctuary. While one came to seek help for

⁶⁴ CT 3.16.1, AD 331. Clark 1993: 21.

⁶⁵ Nov. J. 134.II, AD 556. Clark 1993: 23-26. Also divorce by consent, which was previously forbidden, was reintroduced. Repudiation without grounds or a divorce without grounds were/was punished by an equal sentence for both parties in a Monastery or a Covent.

⁶⁶ Hartmann 2007:136-139. The dowry (dos) was an important part of a marriage agreement, most wealth

of the roman upper society, was bound in land ownership, slaves, and other material investments. The dowry, consisting of a large amount of cash money, that mainly was paid in three instalments, allowed many grooms to pay off some of their debts.

⁶⁷ Hartmann 2007: 74-75; Foxhall 1989: 22-44.

⁶⁸ Jaritz 1993: 164-165; 168-169; 188-189; 298-308.

a pregnancy, the second story does not provide any specific motivation for the donation. The important information outlined in the texts is that both were “chaste and virtuous” women⁶⁹ who were treacherously attacked on their way to the church and were saved by St Menas, who appeared in the moment of their need and punished the assailants.

The third story concerns the wife of a lying but rich husband who commits perjury in the church of St Menas and is petrified for his lies. After the death of her husband, the woman collects most of his and her belongings and riches and donates to them to the church.⁷⁰

Not only do the narratives depict these women as more faithful than the men, but they also partly mention the donated belongings as their own. Furthermore, Christian literature provides information not only on women who gave up their fortune but also women who dedicated their lives at the same time by becoming foundresses/abbesses of monastic complexes. This task not only came with renunciation but also with great responsibility for the convent and the nuns living there, as well as for personal actions in being an example for others.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Jaritz 1993: 307-308.

⁷⁰ Jaritz 1993: 198-202.

⁷¹ Constantinou 2014: 46-48.

4. Donation inscriptions mentioning women – the catalogue

The analysis in this study is based on the attached catalogue, see Appendix A, which includes 68 mosaics mentioning 101 female names as donors and benefactresses.

The women within the inscriptions appear in different settings, along other members of their community, within ecclesiastical ranks or in the circle of their families. They are represented as donors and benefactress, in matronymic form alongside their children, rarely with depictions, and in some cases only as an individual name. There are inscriptions that state that the offering or donation has been made by a male together with his wife and/or children but the name of the woman is not mentioned. Such inscriptions might acknowledge the existence of a female within the household, but they do not give these women the necessary degree of visibility within ecclesiastical, and thus male dominated, spaces, as the selected inscriptions do.

According to Grünbart, in Byzantine times „The church was a place where seeing and

being seen played a role that should not be underestimated.”⁷² Taking this statement as a leading principle, the aspect of visualization, even if only through a written word or name, must be seen as an important part of donation activities within early Christian communities. Both the devotional intent and “the advertising and enhancing of status” were principal aims of such donations and inscriptions.⁷³

The structure of the catalogue entries follows a simple scheme. Each inscription mentioning a female name has its own entry⁷⁴ and the entries are chronological, beginning in the 3rd century and continuing to the 8th century. The catalogue concludes with mosaics that have not been, or could not be, dated. Within the chronological frame, the entries are sorted geographically from north to south, starting in Phoenicia, then moving to Palaestina Secunda, Palaestina Prima, Arabia and Palaestina Tertia.

⁷² Grünbart 2014: 27-28. “Der Kirchenraum war ein Ort, an dem das Sehen und gesehen werden eine nicht zu unterschätzende Rolle spielte.“

⁷³ Di Segni 2016 A: 66.

⁷⁴ different mosaic inscriptions from the same place, mentioning the same women are sorted with the same entry number and an additional letter, for example 8A-C.



No: 1	Name: Ακεπτους – Akeptous	Date: 3 rd century	Size: 67 x 80 cm
Site: Megiddo - Legio, prayer hall – domus ecclesiae Palestina II		Description and location: The inscription is made with Black and white tesserae framed by a black rectangle. Each short side has two double framed semi-circuits attached. Located in the southern mosaic panel of the prayer hall.	
Transcription: Προσηνικεν Ακεπτους η φιλο θεος την τραπε- ζαν ΘΩ ΙΥ ΧΩ μνημοψυνον			
Translation: The God loving Akeptous has offered this altar to the God Jesus Christ as Memorial			
Sources: Tepper/Di Segni 2006, pp. 31-42. http://cojs.org/akeptous_inscription-3-4th_century_ce/			

Figure 4, Entry No. 1 – Akeptous

As illustrated in Figure 4, all entries provide the same information. A graphic drawing or photograph of the mosaic inscription is at the top of the table. The first line of text provides the entry number in the catalogue – in this case No. 1; the female name or names mentioned in the mosaic – Akeptous; the date (if the mosaic is dated); and the size of the mosaic (if stated). The second line offers information on the site where the mosaic was found and in which ecclesiastical context (e.g., a domus ecclesia, a prayer hall, a church, or a

chapel). The table also provides a description of the mosaic and of its exact position within the location.

Another visual aspect apart from the written name of the women is the framing of the inscription. Most inscriptions discussed throughout this thesis are written in black letters on a white or light ground and framed by a tabula ansata. Some inscriptions are positioned within a round medallion or along the border of a round medallion, and

some do not have any framing.⁷⁵ In some cases, there are leaves such as ivy, palm or other stylized forms; crosses are also popular, possibly for their apotropaic value, and usually placed at the beginning, end or even within the inscribed texts. There are black lines dividing the rows within 11 inscriptions. These are followed by a Greek transcription and an English translation. The last row of the entry provides further information on different sources for each mosaic.

4.1 Dedication form

As numerous dedication inscriptions from several periods were discovered in various parts of the Roman Empire, epigraphical research provides evidence that a few typical forms were continuously used for dedication purposes.⁷⁶ As can be seen in the collection in the catalogue, although there are some standard requirements concerning donation inscriptions, their execution varies widely. At a minimum, the standard form of donation inscription demands inclusion of

references of a donation or offering, the purpose of the donation – often in form of a short, easy invocation⁷⁷ – and the name/names of the donor/donors. The length of donation inscriptions can vary from a few words in one line to elaborate inscriptions stretching over multiple lines.⁷⁸ Not only the length but also the content and testimony of the inscriptions are diverse. They can be as simple as the sole name of a person through to long prayers reciting phrases from the holy scripture.⁷⁹ For this reason, the main parts of donation inscriptions are deconstructed and analysed in the following sections.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Leatherbury 2020: 82-91.

⁷⁶ Baumann 1999: 289-301. Di Segni 2016A: 56-88.

⁷⁷ Di Segni 2016A: 63-64, 66, mentioning the easiest forms of inscribed invocation as “Lord help”, “Lord remember” or “Lord have mercy”. Due to its connection with a donation, she simply calls this inscriptions prayer-cum-contract, and points to their longstanding pagan tradition. Leatherbury 2020: 256-261.

⁷⁸ The longest inscription featured in the catalogue is no. 13. B of Kyria Maria/ Lady Mary. The

inscription found in Beisan – Beth She’an, dated to the second half of the 6th century runs over 15 lines.

⁷⁹ Di Segni 2016A: 63-64.

⁸⁰ This first part of analysis, will be dealing with chronological and geographical questions of distributions, followed by the discussion on matters of formula. All matters of socially important content, relations of donors and placement will be discussed in later chapters.

5. Development and change in distribution of mosaic inscriptions

The terms “donation, alms, benefaction, and contribution” are synonyms for the act of gifting something (e.g., money, goods, time) to a charitable or good cause.⁸¹ This principle has its roots in the Roman period and was practiced by the rich elites of society.⁸² The recognition of Christianity and its affirmation, together with the establishment of imperial capital in the East and the rise of worship centres in the Holy Land provided a new and important focus for piety⁸³ and personal agendas.

Many churches and sacred places were built due to the attention of ecclesiastical or civil authorities and private donors. These foundations are reflected in many written inscriptions that are of high value in terms of analysis of economic, political, social, and religious development throughout the region. For example, in 2017 Di Segni postulated⁸⁴ that, according to her thorough analysis of inscriptions in the region of the

Holy Land, the chronological distribution of ecclesiastical building activity is far from homogenous throughout Late Antiquity. This is also the case for the distribution of building activity between cities and villages.

Regarding inscriptions found within this region – Arabia, south Phoenicia and the three Palaestinae – Di Segni also noticed that the epigraphic habit steadily expanded in Late Antiquity, from the mid-4th century onward, and outranked the earlier inscriptions of the Roman period from 50 B.C. to 350 A.D.⁸⁵ This fact is the reason for the large number of intact mosaic inscriptions from this time and region.

Specifically focusing on donation inscriptions, Jacobs observed that the epigraphical material on inscriptions, especially those recording donors and donations, mostly appears in rural areas of the provinces of Arabia, south Phoenicia and the three Palaestinae.⁸⁶ This leads to another development, observed by Di

⁸¹Merriam Webster Dictionary;
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/donation#synonyms>,
accessed in Nov. 2020.

⁸² Baumann 1999: 13-16. In ancient Roman cities for example donations were used to fund public building activities, such as temples, theatres, baths, marketplaces triumphal arches. Leatherbury 2020: 8-13.

⁸³ By definition: the quality or state of being pious, such as dutifulness in religion and/or fidelity to natural obligations (as to parents). Merriam Webster Dictionary;
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/piety#note-1>, accessed in Dec. 2020.

⁸⁴ Di Segni 2017: 287-319.

⁸⁵ Di Segni 2017: 290-292.

⁸⁶ Jacobs 2020: 35-36.

Segni,⁸⁷ that there was a general shift of epigraphic culture from urban environments to villages that took place around the middle of the 6th century, midway through the reign of Justinian and after the Justinian plague of 541/542. Di Segni concludes that the displacement from city to village can be seen in less public building activity on the one hand, and an increase in building activity for religious and cultic buildings on the other hand, which indicates “a shift of mentality, possibly partly as a result of the great epidemic of 541/542 and of other natural disasters ...”.⁸⁸ This suggests a mental shift that was used by religious communities to offer answers and a foothold for their members. In return they gave their members the opportunity to show their piety and devotion through donations.

Other reasons for this significant rural expansion in ecclesiastical buildings, with its high peak in the 6th century, can be seen in a slower than assumed Christianization of the rural areas of the southern Levante, as

assumed by Bar,⁸⁹ and in the high settlement activity of nomadic tribes, as described by Hamarneh.⁹⁰

According to Bar, the need for churches in rural areas gradually rose and reached its highpoint in the 6th century when the transformation towards Christianity in countrified areas was settled.⁹¹ A further factor that points towards a greater need for ecclesiastical structures in rural areas is noted by Hamarneh in her article “Continuity or Change?” concerning the provinces of Arabia and Palaestina Tertia. Hamarneh argues that the reasons for the expansions into the countryside of the provinces are manifold and even supported by imperial legislation. These factors encouraged nomadic tribes to settle down, revive older, abandoned structures, or build new villages in rural areas.⁹² This trend led to enormous growth in rural population and a rising need for ecclesiastical buildings.

The objects and gifts donated in favour of such religious efforts were not only meant to build, restore, and decorate ecclesiastical

Period	West		East	
	Cities	Villages	Cities	Villages
Roman	962 = 59%	668 = 41%	847 = 82,8%	174 = 17%
Byzantine	847 = 37,5%	1411 = 62,5 %	829 = 56,8%	631 = 43,2%

Figure 5, Di Segni 2017: 292, Table 3.

⁸⁷ Di Segni 2017: 292-299.

⁸⁸ Di Segni 2017: 298-299.

⁸⁹ See Bar 2003 “The Christianization of rural Palestine during Late Antiquity”.

⁹⁰ See Hamarneh 2015 “Continuity or Change? Rural Settlement in Provincia Arabia and Palaestina Tertia in the Seventh to Ninth Centuries”.

⁹¹ Bar 2003: 401-421.

⁹² Hamarneh 2015: 61-62.

spaces but also included liturgical objects, icons and even tablecloths for the altar.⁹³

Paradoxically, although theological Christian teaching contradicts the possession of great richness, the early Church did not obstruct elite circles from entering the Christian community. In this sense, at the end of the 2nd century Clemens of Alexandria acknowledged that the faithful could possess money and riches as long as they put it into service of what was righteous⁹⁴. This statement opened the opportunity for wealthy members of the Christian communities to show their piety and devotion and also take precautions for their salvation and remembrance through different sorts of donations made to churches, many of them combined with inscriptions.

The two major trends that are apparent in development of the region of the three Palestines and Arabia in Late Antiquity are a significant peak in building and inscription activity in the 6th century, and a distributional shift of epigraphic material from urban centres to rural villages.⁹⁵ These visible general trends can partially be explained by an significant influx of monetary means into the region until the 6th century, combined with an economic boost

that democratically favoured rural areas as well as urban centres⁹⁶.

Focusing on only one marginalized group of donors, the following analysis examines whether the same economic and social factors that shaped general trends of epigraphic culture and distribution in the region also impacted the group of female donors in the same way.

⁹³ Grünbart 2014: 26-28.

⁹⁴ Baumann 1999: 16-28.

⁹⁵ DiSegni 2017: 287-299; Hamarneh 2014: 123-125;

⁹⁶ Avi-Yonah 1958: 39-51.

5.1. Development of inscriptions mentioning women

The chronological analysis of epigraphical sources mentioning offerings made by women in mosaic inscriptions offers several interesting results.

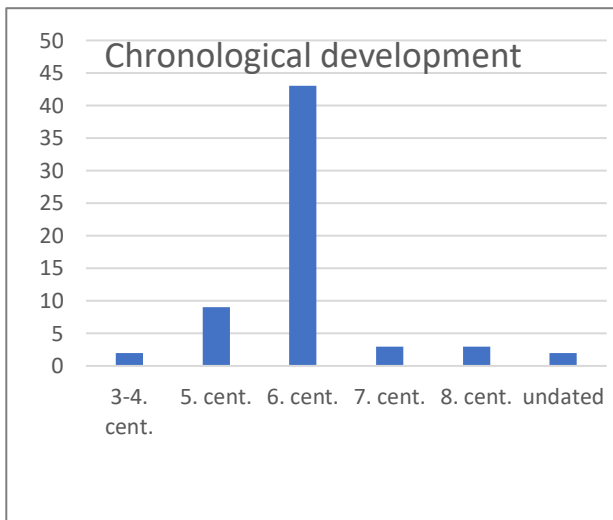


Figure 6, *Chronological development of mosaic inscriptions mentioning female agency.*

Figure 6 illustrates, in a small scale, how the general evolution (Fig. 7) of epigraphical material observed by Di Segni⁹⁷ also affects the chronological development of material focusing on the marginalized group of inscriptions including female names. For the 3rd and 4th centuries, the impact of women on the early Christian communities, their services, and possibly their offerings do not manifest in visualized form on mosaic pavements, perhaps due to the limited number of churches built at this time. However, there are several mentions of women's patronage in texts and written

sources. Although generally following Di Segni's table (Figure 7) on all types of inscriptions from these centuries, there are approximately 200 dated inscriptions from this time.

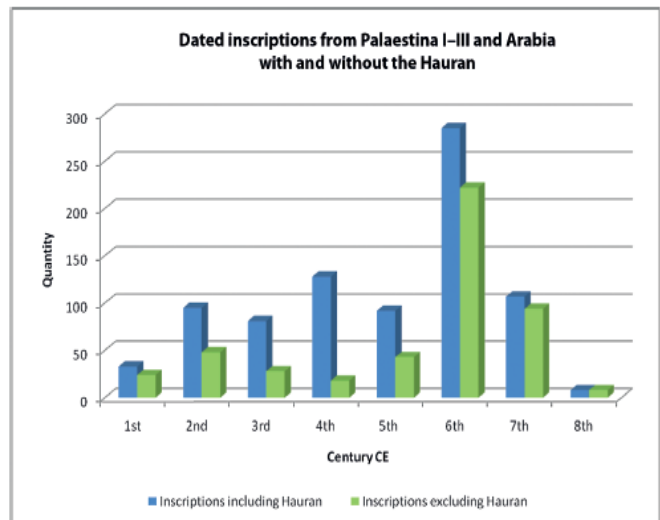


Figure 7, Di Segni 2017: 609, fig. 1.

Di Segni's analysis depicts an initial high peak in epigraphic culture in the 4th century, a time when not a single mosaic donation inscription meeting the requirements of this research was found.

A closer examination of dated inscriptions from churches and synagogues (Figure 8) highlights the lack of inscriptions for the 3rd and 4th centuries, since ecclesiastical building activity has not fully been initiated in the region. At the end of the 5th century, this began to turn as more building activity occurred for ecclesiastical spaces than public buildings⁹⁸.

⁹⁷ Di Segni 2017: 287-319.

⁹⁸ Di Segni 2017: 613, fig. 6.

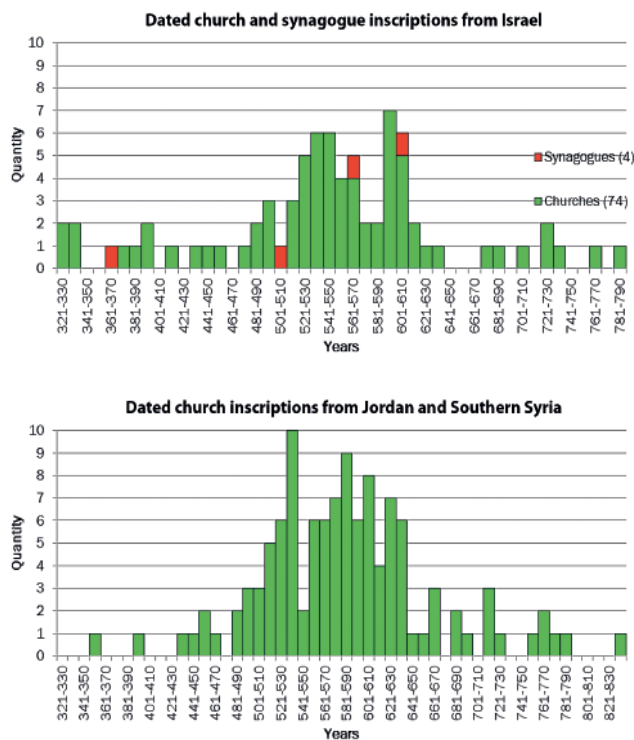


Figure 8, Di Segni 2017: 612, fig. 5.

The number of mosaic inscriptions displaying the donation activity of women began to rise from the 5th century. However, in a broader perspective the number of inscriptions for this time falls below the count of the preceding century. Higher building activity still indicates there was more money in the hands of the churches and eventually more benefactors and benefactresses who gave it, hence more opportunities for women to make visible contributions to their communities.

The highpoint of inscriptions in the three Palestines and Arabia, particularly in terms of female donation and benefaction activity, can be seen in the 6th century (Figure 9).

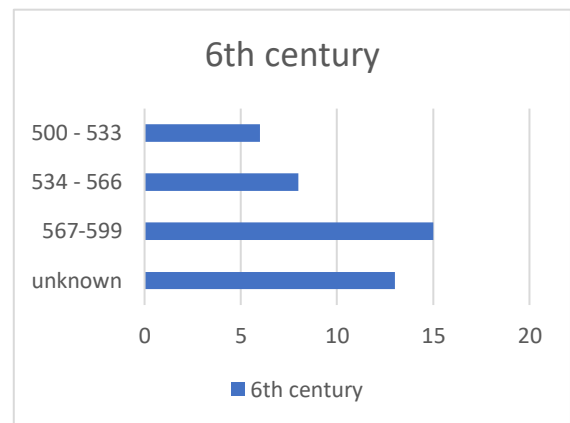


Figure 9, Chronological distribution of inscriptions with female names in the 6th century

Figure 9 clearly indicates a continuous rise of dated mosaic inscriptions mentioning women, which began in the 5th century reached its height at the end of the 6th century. There is a minor discrepancy compared to the overall development in building activity and development of epigraphic material in the mid-6th century when numbers of mosaic inscriptions in combination with women gradually rose while the overall numbers showcase a small collapse.

There is a slight fluctuation in the overall numbers of dated inscriptions from churches and synagogues throughout the 6th century (Figure 10), which could indicate some effects of the Justinian plague or the economic downturns and effects of the pressure of taxation.⁹⁹ Although building activity continued until the late 7th century, a steady decline announced the end of the economic boom in the region of the Holy

⁹⁹ Avi-Yonah 1958: 46-48.

Land.¹⁰⁰ In this situation of declining prosperity, the visibility of women in mosaic inscriptions also diminished.

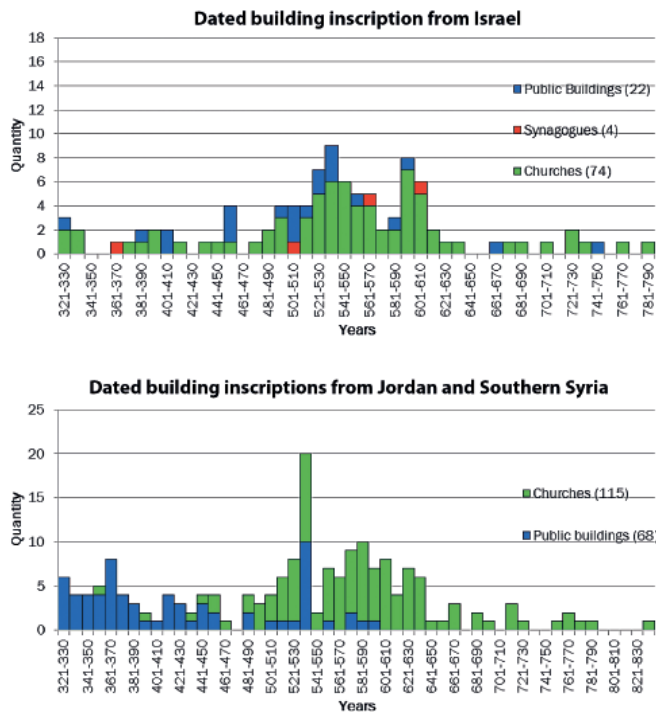


Figure 10, Di Segni 2017: 613, fig. 6.

Considering geographical aspects (Figure 11), the analysis of mosaic inscriptions regarding offerings by female members of the community supports Di Segni's findings on a wider level of epigraphical sources. The majority of late antique sites including inscriptions mentioning female donors and benefactresses occur in the rural areas of the research region. While the highest number of women mentioned in their role of exercising piety through donation to the church appears in urban contexts in Jerusalem and Jerash, there is a clear difference between rural female

benefactresses who were widespread and urban female donors who found themselves as members of donation parties with several other females.

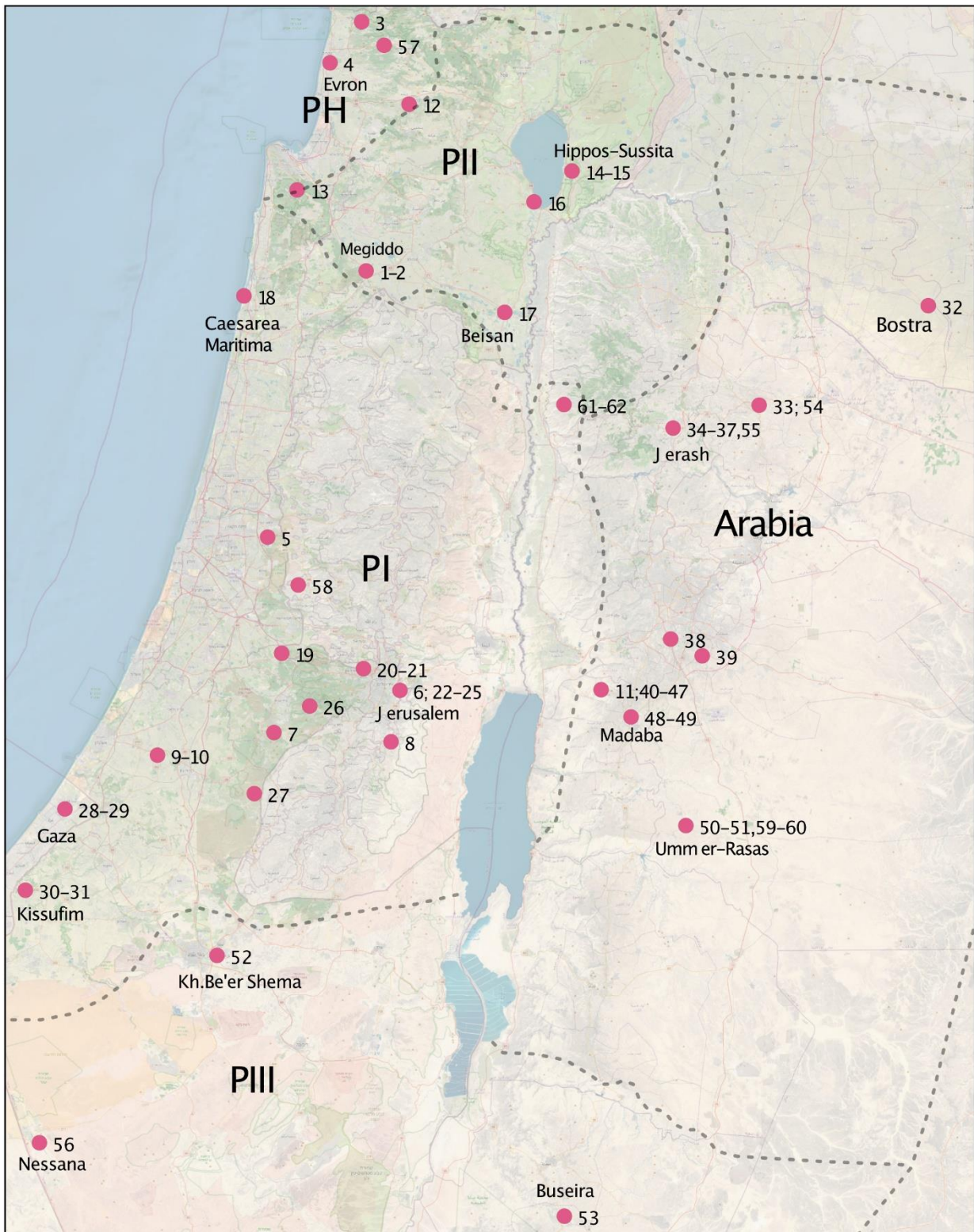
This shift to rural spaces throughout the region of the tree Palestines and Arabia, as noted by Di Segni, can be broadly pinned to the middle of the 6th century¹⁰¹ and most likely can be correlated with the high building activity in the ecclesiastical sector. Public buildings, shown as blue columns in Figure 10, are mainly needed in urban centres, but these begin to be outnumbered by churches, represented by the green columns, from the mid-6th century.

The enormous and outstanding building activity in villages throughout the region also attests to the favourable economic situation that allowed community members to invest in building activity.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Avi-Yonah 1958: 50-51, Di Segni 2017: 612-614, fig. 5, 6, 7.

¹⁰¹ Di Segni 2017: 293-296.

¹⁰² Avi-Yonah 1958: 50-51.



0 10 20 30 40 50 km



legend:

--- 6th-century-borders*

● mosaic-inscriptions with female individuals

PI – Palaestina I

PII – Palaestina II

PIII – Palaestina III

PH – Phoenicia

Figure 11, Geographical distribution of mosaic inscriptions mentioning women

6. Changes in epigraphical culture

The following analysis not only attends to quantitative aspects but also to visual aspects and forms. Although donation forms follow a general scheme, the appearance of women within these inscriptions is not comparable to those of men. Therefore, the subsequent statements also concern the chronological visibility of women mentioned by name and show how they became increasingly integrated in all forms of donation inscriptions.

6.1 3rd and 4th century inscriptions

There is only one known 3rd and 4th century site displaying donation inscriptions mentioning women. This is a 3rd century domus ecclesiae, found within a building complex at Kafar Othany (Megiddo – Legio).¹⁰³ The room identified as prayer hall was located at the south-western part, of the Roman army officers' quarters. The floor of the room displays several mosaics with depictions of flowers, animals, and geometric motifs, as well as three well-preserved Greek inscriptions. All three inscriptions provide different information

about the Early Christian community and the donors who prayed in this hall.

Two of the inscriptions mention Gaianus, who donated the pavement floor “as an act of liberality”,¹⁰⁴ and also inform the reader about his military status as centurion, that he for paid the work from his own money, and that a certain Brutius has carried out the work.



Figure 12, Aerial picture of the domus ecclesiae. Tepper/Di Segni 2006: 25.

¹⁰³ Tepper/DiSegni 2006: 19-26; Tepper 2007: 57-71.

¹⁰⁴ Tepper/DiSegni 2006: 34. The full inscription reads:” Gaianus, also called Porphyrius, centurion, our brother, has made the pavement at

his own expense as an act of liberality. Brutius has carried out the work.”

The second donation was made by Akeptous (No. 1) and reads:

Προσηνικεν Ακεπτους η φιλο θεος
την τραπεζαν ΘΩ ΙΥ ΧΩ μνημοψυνον
(The God loving Akeptous has offered
this altar to the God Jesus Christ as a
memorial)¹⁰⁵

A comparison of these two donation inscriptions shows different approaches to epigraphical documents. For instance, Gaianus attaches importance to his profane military status and that he donated “ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων” (at his own expense) to show how generous he is¹⁰⁶. Conversely, Akeptous gives humbly, as God-loving member, she offers a memorial to Jesus, a table where the community can break bread and feast together.

Although the forms of donations repeat themselves, inscriptions mentioning specific quantities of a donation or gift are rare throughout the research area.

The third inscription found within this domus ecclesia is the first example of a category of inscriptions mentioning personal names that can be seen in the context of donations but do not necessarily have to be in the context of a personal donation made by the inscribed individuals.

Inscription No. 2 in the catalogue from the 3rd century domus ecclesiae in Megiddo reads:

Μνημονευσατε Πριμιλλης Και Κυριακης
Και Δωροθεας επιδε Και Χρηστην
(Remember Primilla and Kyriaka and
Dorothea and moreover Chreste)¹⁰⁷

Scholars have pointed out that the term “μνημονευσατε” – a call for the community or general reader, not specifically for God – to remember the mentioned women is an unusual request.¹⁰⁸ As for the women themselves, it is difficult to distinguish if they were named because of an unspecific donation they offered to the community or if they had a familiar relationship to either Gaianus or Akeptous. In the chapter “Inscriptions” in Tepper and DiSegni’s “A Christian Prayer Hall of the Third Century CE at Kefar Othnay (Megiddo – Legio)” the authors mention the possibility of the four women eventually being martyrs,¹⁰⁹ again pointing to the fact that these sorts of unspecific inscriptions mentioning individuals could have different reasons. Seeing them in light of some sort of donation for the ecclesiastical space they were found in would arguably be the most reasonable explanation since eventually the

¹⁰⁵ Tepper/DiSegni 2006: 36, for further information see Appendix A: Catalogue – No. 1.

¹⁰⁶ Tepper/DiSegni 2006: 34, Gaianus Inscription, image, transcription and translation.

¹⁰⁷ Tepper/DiSegni 2006: 41, see Catalogue – No. 2.

¹⁰⁸ Tepper/DiSegni 2006: 41-42.

¹⁰⁹ Tepper/DiSegni 2006: 41-42.

inscription and the mosaic had to be paid for.

6.2 Inscriptions of the 5th century

There are 11 mosaic inscriptions mentioning women in the context of a donation that can be attested for the 5th century (Nos. 3–11). Several different expressions, phrasings, and information on the woman are provided to the reader of these inscriptions.

Regarding forms, inscription No. 6, from the Church complex of St. Peter in Gallicantu, Jerusalem, is an example of the most frequently used short, direct, and single sentence phrase common in donation inscriptions throughout the region.¹¹⁰ Inscription No. 6 reads:

Υπέρ σωτ[ηρίας Μα]ρίας. –
(For the salvation of Maria)¹¹¹

Together, this group of inscriptions only consisting of one short, simply phrased sentence in combination with the name of one or more donors, represents almost one third of the mosaic inscriptions collected in the catalogue.

The most common form, as seen in No. 6, to exhibit the dedicatory intention in an

inscription is usually the phrase “*υπέρ σωτηρίας ...*” (for the salvation of ...). Other short, simple, and less common inscriptions from the the 5th century include “*Κύριε μνήσθηθαι ...*” (Lord remember ...) (Nos. 3, 4, 8A) and “*Χρι[σ]τέ, βοήθι ...*” (Christ help ...) (Nos. 5, 10).

These simple phrases either stand individually or as part of more elaborate inscriptions, seen for example in No. 8A¹¹² from the northern Church at Herodion, where the bidding for remembrance is combined with a psalm,¹¹³ which reads:

+ Αὕτη ἡ πύλη τοῦ Κ(θρί)ου εἰσελευσόντε
ἐν αὐτῇ δίκαιοι +
Κ(ύρι)ε Ὑ(οί)σ Χ(ριστό)σ μνήσθητι
τόν δούλον σου Ἀναήλ και Σαπρίκα
(+ This is the gate of the Lord; the
righteous shall enter it. +
O Lord the son Christ, remember
your servants Anael, and Saprica)¹¹⁴

This combination defines the status of the righteous, integrated with the pious gesture of donation. The chosen psalm also acts in an apotropaic manner to protect the sacred

¹¹⁰ Baumann 1999: 273-276, 292-294. In his reference 115 he refers to several examples of inscriptions of Amman, Dhiban, Jerash and other sites where the phrase “*Υπέρ σωτηρίας...*” is used in context of a donation. Di Segni 2016 A: 63-65.

¹¹¹ Di Segni, CIIP I.2, 2012: No. 803.

¹¹² Di Segni 1990: 177-184. Di Segni 2016 A: 66-67. Madden 2014: 74-76. Magen/Kagan 2012: 136-140. Ameling, CIIP IV.2, no. 3325 and no. 3327, fig. 3327.

¹¹³ Bible, Psalm 117:20. Di Segni 2016A: 66-67.

¹¹⁴ CIIP IV.2, Ameling 2018: No. 3325.

space.¹¹⁵ Although this church offers a rare example of a private church built by an extended family, as illustrated by further inscriptions (No. 8 B+C), in this case, not only the factors of devotion but also the display of status and wealth might have influenced the rather explicit form.¹¹⁶

Another example, as seen in No. 3, found at Horvath Karkara and dated 478 A.D., was published by Di Segni and Ashkenazi, reads:

[Κ(ύρ)ιε μν]ήσθηθαι τῆς δούλης σου
Σωσάνν(α)
([Oh Lord], remember your servant
Sosann[a])¹¹⁷

Consideration of these short forms of donation inscriptions showcases that the phrases need to be seen in their context, since phrases like “for the memory of”, “for the rest of” and “for the salvation of” can also occur within different contexts (e.g., in funerary inscriptions).¹¹⁸

For example, Di Segni and Ashkenazi argue, that for Sosanna’s inscription (No. 3), “...it is reasonable to assume that the inscription was set up to commemorate a donation to the church by the woman named on it ...”¹¹⁹

Although the possibilities of interpretation for such short and simple phrases are diverse, as already discussed for inscription No. 2, the plain and pragmatic argument for such inscriptions to be reasonably classified as donation inscriptions, or at least in the context of a donation, is the assumption that at some point someone contributed something for this inscription to be set up. The category of arguable inscriptions must also include examples like Alexandra and Paula (No. 7), and Anastasia and Sabina (No. 11), where the inscriptions only state individual names. The first mentioned inscription, No. 7, from the Byzantine remains of a possible monastery at Tell Shocho, lists four names (one deacon, one monk and two nuns), Anastasios, Paulos, Paula and Alexandr(a), set in tabula ansata¹²⁰.

+ ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΣ ΔΙΑΚ +
+ ΠΑΥΛΟΣ ΜΟΝΑΖ +
+ ΠΑΥΛΗ ΜΟΝΑΖ +
+ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡ ΜΟΝΑΖ +¹²¹

No. 11, from the Monastery of Kaianos in Ayun Musa, only lists the names “ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΑ ΣΑΒΙΝΑ” (Anastasia

¹¹⁵ Di Segni 2016 A: 69-82.

¹¹⁶ Di Segni 2016 A: 66.

¹¹⁷ Di Segni/Ashkenazi 2020: 306.

¹¹⁸ Baumann 1999: 287-288, 292-295.

¹¹⁹ Di Segni/Ashkenazi 2020: 306.

¹²⁰ Meimarīs 1986: nr. 882/1167. Magen/Kagan 2012: 121-122. Ameling, CIIP IV.1, no. 3312, fig. 3312.

¹²¹ CIIP IV.1, Ameling 2018: No. 3312.

Sabina)¹²² with no further indication of their role within the community. This form of inscription follows the pagan tradition of proskynesis/proskynemata, where the names themselves represent the person and their prayers.¹²³

The inscriptions of the 5th century not only display a wider range of forms, but also a more selective, seemingly uniform set of phrases and wording that was standardized to emphasize the spiritual and religious character of the act of the donations. For example, the inscriptions listed as Nos. 8B and 8C from the northern church at Herodion are donation inscriptions mentioning an offering made by several people. The inscriptions 8A–8C show that while the families of Saprīca/Saphrica and her brother or husband¹²⁴ Anael were the

main benefactors of this church, a larger group of several families of the community, including a family mentioned by three generations of woman, made offerings (No. 8C). Compared to the first inscriptions from the 3rd century mentioning Akeptous and Gaianus, several changes and developments are evident. The inscriptions from Herodion read as follows:

+Ἄγιε Μιχαήλ πρόσδεξε τήν καρποφορίαν
τοῦ δούλου σου Ἀναήλ +
κ(αί) τ(ών) διαφερόντων αὐτοῦ
Σαπρικαν καί Μάμαν ἀμήν
(+Saint Michael, receive the offerings of
your servant Anael+
and his *household* Saprīca and Mamas,
Amen.) (No. 8B) ¹²⁵

and

¹²² Piccirillo 1989: 205-210; and 1993A: 190-191, fig. 278. Gatier 1986: nr. 96. Di Segni 1998: 455, nr. 66.

¹²³ Di Segni 2016 A: 64. Proskynesis as defined in pagan tradition by the Oxford Companion to Classical Literature, Howatson 2011 - <https://www-oxfordreference-com.uaccess.univie.ac.at/view/10.1093/acref/9780199548545.001.0001/acref-9780199548545-e-2537?rskey=cGxPJU&result=2484>

¹²⁴ Di Segni 2016 A: 66-67, argues that even if Anel is addressed as “brother” in inscription No. 8 C, the formula of inscription No. 8 B “his household” followed by Saphrica and Mamas, shows that they were husband and wife, with Mamas being their son. Although, in my opinion, counting in the broad use

of the terms “brothers and sisters” within the Christian community would allow to not take the term too literal, it would also mean that all examples where these phrases occur needed to be reexamined. In our case there are other examples as No. 28 A and 56, where the inscriptions mention donors to be siblings and I find it hard to argue against these terms, since it is not possible to be for certain that all the “sisters” in discussion could be seen as wives. As for the accounts of Saphrica and Anel, since more than one inscription mentions them in the type a “husband and wife” would appear, I tend to follow Di Segni’s argumentation in this case.

¹²⁵ Di Segni 1990: 177-184. Madden 2014: 74-76. Magen/Kagan 2012: 136-140. CIIP IV.2, Ameling 2018: No. 3327.

Κ(ύρι)ε Ὑ(ιό)σ Χ(ριστό)σ κ(αί) ἄγιε
Μηχαήλ πρόσδεξε τήν καρποφωρίαν τό
δούλον σου τό τέκνον Ἰουλέσα Σαφρίκα
καί Ἀναήλ ἀδελφών κ(αί) τ(ο)ύς αὐτών
κ(αί) Σαλαέου κ(αί) τό τέκνον αὐτοῦ κ(αί)
Ἀβραάμ κ(αί) τό τέκνον αὐτοῦ κ(αί) Ζανα
κ(αί) Νώνας κ(αί) Ζάνα θυγατήρ Νόνας
(O Lord, the son holy Christ and holy
Michael; receive the offering of your
servant, the child of Ioulesas, Saphrica and
Anael (her) brother and their household,
and of Salaeos and his child; and of
Abraham and his child, and of Zana and
Nonna, and Nonna's daughter Zana) (No.
8C).¹²⁶

In comparison to the offering inscriptions of the 3rd century *domus ecclesiae* in Megiddo, these inscriptions from Herodion highlight the recipient of the offerings in the first position, God, and Saint Michael. In addition, the specific mention of a concrete offering such as the pavement or the altar, do not occur in No. 8B or 8C. The multiple donors in those two inscriptions, as well as in four others from the 5th century (Nos. 3, 5, 8A, 10), address themselves as “servants of God/Christ”, leaving out most profane information on status or having offered from their own money. Comparing the first inscriptions connected to women from the

3rd century with those of the 5th century, it appears that the emphasis of the later inscriptions is directed more towards spiritual and religious spheres, mainly showing the humbleness and piety of the donors.

6.3 6th century inscriptions

Di Segni¹²⁷ suggests that most dated inscriptions within the region of this research belong to the 6th century. This peak of dated epigraphic material is also reflected in a significantly high number (47 – Nos. 12–52) of female donation inscriptions from this period. Not only is the quantity of inscriptions featuring women at its highest attestation but also a variety of phrasings and combinations of different standard forms, as well as an increase in length and complexity, is apparent. Nevertheless, there are several one- to two-lined, short donation inscriptions as seen earlier, such as Matrona's inscription from the Basilica Church at the monastery of Kaianus in Ayoun Musa (No. 46), which reads:

Ὑπερ σωτηρίας [καί] προσφοράς
Ματρῶνας
(For the salvation and the offering of
Matrona)¹²⁸

¹²⁶ SEG 37:1489. Di Segni 1990: 177-184. Madden 2014: 74-76. Ovidah 1987: 69-70, pl. LXXXII. Magen/Kagan 2012: 136-140. CIIP IV.2, Ameling 2018: No. 3326.

¹²⁷ Di Segni 2017: 287-319.

¹²⁸ SEG 34:1511/IGLSyr 21,2 96. Piccirillo 1989: 205-210 and 1993A: 190-191. Di Segni 1998: 456,

As discussed in example 8A from Herodion, there also are further inscriptions with more unique phrasings, including various psalms. An example for the 6th century is No. 43, found in the Church of Sts Lot and Procopius at Kh. el-Mukhayyat, referencing bible psalm 51:19:

Τώτῃ ἀνοισουσιν ἡπί τῷ θυσιαστήριῳ
σου μόσχους. Κύ[ριε] ἡλήεισον Ἐπιφανία
εἰ ταπιν[ή]

(Then they shall offer bulls on thy altar.

Lord, have mercy upon the humble
Epiphania)¹²⁹

The reference to this specific psalm could be seen as an indication that Epiphania offered an altar to the church. It is notable that instead of “τραπεζαν” (table), as used in inscription No. 1 from 3rd century Megiddo, the 6th century inscription uses the word “θυσιαστηριον” (altar), which is more frequently used in bible texts.¹³⁰

The first inscription in connection with a woman (No. 1) discusses an offering, that of

a table/altar, and there are several other inscriptions that mention specific offerings, such as parts of mosaic pavement that have been given – like No. 27:

Ἐπαναγία ὑπὲρ ἀναπαύσεως καὶ μνήμης
Ἀετίου τὴν ψήφωσιν ἀνέθηκα
(Epanagia, dedicated the mosaic

for the repose and memory of Aethios)¹³¹

However, most inscriptions are vague and only mention general offerings.

In comparison to these imprecise formulations in the region of research, new findings from other locations (e.g., from Syria at the Church of Uqerbat) reveal a specific and detailed form of donation inscriptions. The inscriptions found at the Syrian Church of Uqerbat complex give an accurate definition of the parts of the church that were paved by mosaics and/or the amount given to the church by a group of wealthy local benefactors, with one female benefactress recorded.¹³²

nr. 68. Gatier 1986: nr. 96. Buschhausen 1986: 224, Katalog nr. 11.

¹²⁹ SEG 8:338/IGLSyr 21,2 99. Piccirillo 1989: 187-188; and 1993A: 164-165. Gatier 1986: 103-104. Di Segni 1998: 143-144, nr. 43.

¹³⁰ for example: Bible, 1. Mose 33:20; 2. Mose 29:16; 2. Mose 40:26; Psalm 26:6.

¹³¹ SEG 35:1539. Madden 2014: 26-27. Patrich/Tsafir 1985: 106-111. Patrich/Tsafir 1993: 265-272. CIIP IV.2, Ameling 2018: No. 3748, fig. 3748.

¹³² Jaghnoon 2019: 8-15. The other published inscriptions from Uqerbat, mention men as the main benefactors together with their wife's, children, and sometimes the household. One inscription mentions two different families, of which one gives money three times and the other gives money to the church five times. All other inscriptions mention parts and areas of mosaic that have been donated. Fabian/Ustinova 2020: 231-233.

Η εὐγενέστατη Δομνίλλα ἡ καὶ
 κυραγαμετη τοῦ μακαρίου Θεοδότου
 Ακτουαρίου (?)
 [εὐγού]μένη εψηφωσεν τὸν [θρ]όνον καὶ
 τό εἰσοδὶν μετὰ καὶ τῆς κόνχης τοῦ ΘΜΨΕ
 τους.

([It was] the most noble Domnilla who is
 also the lord's [esteemed] wife of the most
 blessed Theodotos the account bookkeeper
 who laid the mosaic of the throne and the
 entrance behind the niche in the year 749.

[437 AD)]¹³³



Figure 13, Inscription from Uqerbat, central Syria,
 Jaghnoon 2019¹³⁴

Compared to the already known wordings,
 which make up most of the inscriptions
 dated to the 6th century, there are some
 contexts in which women are named and
 visualized for the first time. A donation in
 fulfilment of a vow is first mentioned in the
 6th century. One discovered in Jerusalem, at
 a church ruin at the Mount of Olives (No.
 24), reads:

[Υπὲρ εὐχῆς καὶ ἀναπαύσεως Θεοδο]-σίας
 τῆς ἔνδο | ξοτάτ(η)σ κουβικουλα- | ρίας
 (For the fulfilment of the vow and the
 repose of Theodosia, the most illustrious
 cubicularia)¹³⁵

This example is of great interest for several
 reasons. First, it demonstrates how
 efficiently epigraphical scholars can
 reconstruct inscriptions if the original lost
 space can be calculated, which is possible in
 this case. The inscription shown here was
 set in a round medallion, so by
 reconstructing the lost part of the circle the
 number of missing letters can be calculated.
 The space indicates a certain number of
 missing letters and this information,
 combined with the comparison of different
 inscription forms, allows for reconstruction
 of lost content.

Secondly, the inscription showcases
 another development or difference
 compared to the earlier inscriptions of the
 3rd–5th centuries as more details about the
 social status of the benefactress are
 available. Inscriptions in connection with
 women from earlier centuries provide little
 information on social status and most
 donors simply title themselves as “servants
 of God”. However, the group of inscriptions

¹³³ Jaghnoon 2019: 8-9.

¹³⁴ The picture of the mosaic was published on the Facebook page of “Saving Syria’s cultural heritage” on 5th July 2019.

¹³⁵ SEG 8:175. Avi-Yonah 1932: 167, nr. 116. Schultze 1881: 9-17, fig. 2. CIIP I.2, Di Segni 2012: No. 836.

from the 6th century provide information on social, political, and/or ecclesiastical status. In the case of example No. 24, there is not only information on the purpose of the donation but also on the high social rank of the benefactress, identified as “illustrious cubicularia”, an honorary title closely connected to the imperial court.¹³⁶ Other examples include the noblewoman Theodosia (No. 26), Eulampia (No. 35 A–B), and the Lady of Sylto (No. 30), as well as the deaconesses Antonia (No. 14) and Zoe (No. 33 A–B).

Most social, political, and ecclesiastical information can be found in connection with men and is provided in both dedication and founding inscriptions. Within this group of inscriptions, women are mainly mentioned as “wives” or are included as part of “the household”.¹³⁷ The first founding inscriptions in which women become visualized by their names and attached titles emerged during the 6th century.

Although these inscriptions do not follow any strict rules and there are a number of variations, Baumann constructed an “*ideal form*” containing seven elements:

1. *construction permit via officiating bishop/metropolitan*

2. *construction and patronage*

3. *construction oversight*

4. *names of benefactors and prayers*

5. *date*

6. *remembrance of deceased*

7. *mosaicists*¹³⁸

Some of these components can be seen in inscription No. 32B, from the St Basileos Church in Rihab, which reads:

προνοία θεοῦ ἐθεμ[ελιώ]θη καὶ
ἐτελιώθη ὁ ναὸς τοῦ ἐνδοξ(οτάτου)
μάρτυρ[(ος) τοῦ] ἁγ(ίου) Βασιλ[ίου ἐπ]ὶ
τοῦ ἁγιωτ(άτου) καὶ ὁσιωτ(άτου)
Πολυεύκτ[ου ἀ]ρχιεπισκό(που) [ἐξ
ἐπιμ]ελ(είας) Ζώης διακο(νίσσης) καὶ
Στεφάνου καὶ Γεωργίου καὶ Βάσσ[ου
καὶ] Θεοδώρου καὶ Βαδ[αγίου ὑπὲρ]
ἀναπαύσ(εως) Προκοπίου καὶ γ(ο)νέων.
ἐγράφ(η) τοῦ ἔτ(ους) υπ(ὲρ) χρό(νοις) ιβ´
ἐν(δικτιῶνος)

(By the providence of God was laid the foundation and was completed the church of the most glorious martyr, Saint Basilus in the time of the most holy and most pious Polyeuktos, archbishop, from the offering of Zoe the deaconess and Stephanos and Georgios and Bassos and Theodoros and Badagios as a vow for the repose of Prokopios and parents. [This] was written

¹³⁶ Definition by Brill online, Encyclopedia of Early Christianity (2018) – Cubicularius. The definition refers to the male pendant but can be transmitted to

the female counterpart and the development and role of “cubicularia” for the Empresses.

¹³⁷ for example, see inscription No. 35

¹³⁸ Baumann 1999: 277.

in the year 489, in the times of the 12th indiction.¹³⁹

The inscription mentions the patron of the church, St Basileos (2), the officiating archbishop, Polyuktos (1), a group of donors (4), a vow for deceased members of the community (6) and a date of the foundation (5). The sequence and quantity of elements can easily be changed and arranged to fit each requirement. Inscriptions like this, which are complete in their entire length and detail, are considered treasure troves for social and religious research on early Christian hierarchic structures. There are 10 such detailed dedication and founding inscriptions naming women for the 6th century. As a step towards broader recognition of the contribution of women for ecclesiastical spaces, female donors also began to appear in mosaic depictions.

6.3.1 Depictions of benefactresses

As discussed above, most female donors are referred to in texts with no additional visual element. However, a few cases from the 6th century and one dating to the early 7th century demonstrate that a visual representation was added. Some of these depictions are prominently positioned and

detailed, even if the textual part belonging to the depictions is quite short, in some cases only mentioning the name with no further information or context.

One example of only a short description is located in the central nave mosaic of Sts Cosmas and Damian Church in Jerash, near the step leading to the bema. The main inscription, set in tabula ansata, mentions the founders, Bishop Paul and Theodoros, who supervised the works but not the names of other possible benefactors.¹⁴⁰ Two rectangular spaces on the sides of the tabula ansata include the standing figures of Theodoros “the paramonarios” (left), and his wife Georgia (right. No. 34). The prominent position of the two depictions and the inclusion of their names suggests that not only Theodoros but also his wife Georgia were the main benefactors of this church.



Figure 14, The main mosaic of Sts Cosmas and Damian in Jerash. Piccirillo 1993A: 286-287, fig. 535.

The depiction of Georgia displays different sets of attributes, including her modesty and

¹³⁹ Piccirillo 1981: 70-73, fig. 6, 7; and 1993A: 311, fig. 626. Avi-Yonah 1947: 69-70. Oxford Dictionary. The cult of Saints in late Antiquity, online catalogue.

<http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E02045>

¹⁴⁰ Piccirillo 1981: 40-41; and 1993A: 288-289. Habas 2008: 77-79.

piety, given by her standing in the orans posture with opened arms between two stylized trees, possibly cypresses,¹⁴¹ as well as being dressed in an unbelted, narrow-sleeved, white tunica.¹⁴² Conversely, her seemingly modest dress also displays a certain wealth through its decoration. There are two coloured woven bands on the edges of each sleeve, dark on the right arm and light on the left arm. In addition, there are some decorative elements in the form of light-coloured bands along the edges of the lower part of the tunic, as well as two patches of geometric patterns. Georgia is wearing a long red cloak over her tunic that is fixed in the middle of her chest with a large oval brooch.¹⁴³ In this case, it was not necessary to mention Georgia within the dedication inscription as her depictions as benefactress speak for her involvement, while the prominent position allows the two images to be seen by all church attendees.¹⁴⁴ Another example is the depiction of Theodosia and Georgia (No. 25), found in a funerary chapel in Jerusalem. The two women are seen in frontal pose, standing beside a column. They are both wearing long, narrow-sleeved, and colourfully decorated tunics with geometric patterns

along the lower edges, and some decorated vertical stripes or bands, possibly broad clavi, again with geometric patterns in case of Theodosia, and possibly some other form of decorative elements in the case of Georgia. They are both wearing long mantles, which seem to be wrapped around their shoulders, over their colourful, rich tunics.¹⁴⁵ In addition to their costly dresses, they are both wearing jewellery, including earrings and possibly some sort of pearls or tiara in their hair. There are halos depicted around their heads and offerings held in front of them. A close similarity within the depiction suggests familial ties.

The depiction of Theodosia and Georgia is part of a larger program of decoration on the floor of the chapel, the main topic of which is a scene with Orpheus, Charon and Pan. Although this is a pagan motif, it also appears in early Christian art.¹⁴⁶ Based on the limited information, it is possible that the funerary chapel was built for these women, but whether it was commissioned by them in their lifetime or afterwards by their families is unclear.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹ Habas 2008: 77.

¹⁴² Morgan 2018: 16-17. On several forms of dress in late Antiquity in general.

¹⁴³ Morgan 2018: 14-17.

¹⁴⁴ Hamarneh 1998: 411-422.

¹⁴⁵ Morgan 2018: 15-17.

¹⁴⁶ Friedmann 1969: 1-36.

¹⁴⁷ Olszewski 2011: 655-664, fig. 7. Vincent 1901: 436-444 and 1902: 100-103.

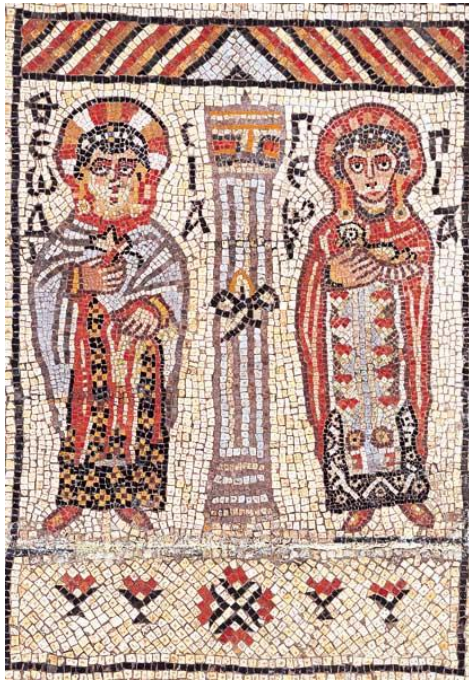


Figure 15, Theodosia and Georgia – funerary chapel at Jerusalem (No. 25)

The depiction presented in No. 30 (Figure 16) also leaves some aspects open to interpretation and discussion. The writing above and around the two women, depicted in frontal pose, reads:

ΚΑΛΗΩΡΑ – Η ΚΥΡΙΑ ΣΙΛΘΟΥΣ

(Beautiful hour – the Lady of

Silthous/Sylto)¹⁴⁸

There are several possibilities regarding what the women represent and their role: whether they can be connected to personifications, whether they are depictions of benefactresses, or whether it is a combination.¹⁴⁹ Compared to previously discussed depictions, it is clear that these two are depicted in simpler clothing,

although still with rich ornaments and jewellery. They are not crowned by a halo; rather, their heads are covered by veils. Overall, these depictions seem more realistic or natural, and are elegant in their presentation.



Figure 16, Beautiful hour and Lady of Silthous/Sylto, Kissufim (No. 30)

A further controversial case on depictions that possibly show benefactors can be found in the 6th century Chapel of Priest John at Wadi Afrit. The chapel has a richly decorated mosaic pavement and includes a dedication inscription mentioning the benefactors Stephan, Procopius, Rome, Mary, and the monk Julian (No. 45). The mosaic has geometric and floral patterns and different depictions of animals and humans during their daily labour. The external frame consists of a geometric motif of meandering interlacing bands forming small squares.

The squares are mostly filled by birds; only the middle panel of the east side and the third on the north side¹⁵⁰ depict human

¹⁴⁸ Madden 2014: 99. Cohen 1993: 277-282. CIIP III, Ameling 2014: No. 2544, fig. 2544.

¹⁴⁹ Jacobs 2020: 36-38, Ashkenazi 2018: 716-719.

¹⁵⁰ The third one on the north side, counted down from the east side of the mosaic.

portraits – the east is a woman and the north is a man. The counterpart of the mosaic on the west and south sides are lost.



Figure 17, Portraits of the donors from the Chapel of St. John. Piccirillo 1993, pp. 166-167, fig. 216, 217.

Due to the missing sections, there is speculation about the identity of these two donors. Some scholars suggest¹⁵¹ that the depicted man can be identified as the monk Julian named in the inscription and

therefore the woman is either Mary or Rome,¹⁵² one of the benefactresses.

I suggest another possible interpretation, which follows Britt's argument that "a symmetrical arrangement of this sort would be consistent with the prevailing compositional principles followed by mosaicists in the sixth century"¹⁵³. The complete mosaic must have included four portraits, one on each side. In this case, I propose that these depict, in symmetrical order, the four "secular" donors. It is possible that the monk Julian, as member of the monastic community, was not included to avoid bias or superbia. In this case, the missing parts of the mosaic would have shown another man and woman in the south and west. In this interpretation, all "secular" donors would have had the same status and representation, and the Priest John¹⁵⁴ would have been left out.

A final example of the depiction of benefactresses with only a name inscription is dated to the 7th century and located in the chapel of Elias, Maria and Soreg, also in Jerash (No. 55). The two women and one

¹⁵¹ Piccirillo 1981: 190-192; and 1993A: 174-175. Habas 2008: 79-81. Britt 2008: 122-123.

¹⁵² other than Habas 2008: 80, I would suggest that it can either be one of those women, excluding Porphyria – although she is mentioned as benefactress in another mosaic in the Church of St. Lot and Procopius (No. 44), here she only occurs in a matronymic form to her son Procopius.

¹⁵³ Britt 2008: 123.

¹⁵⁴ Neither one of the sources mentioning the mosaic depictions and identifying the male figure as Priest John gives any solid argumentation for their suggestion. The figure is clearly missing clerical or ecclesiastical attributes, and a halo alone can also be connected to donors, as seen with the female depiction in the exact same mosaic.

Piccirillo 1981: 190-192; and 1993A: 174-175. Habas 2008: 79-81. Britt 2008: 122-123.

man are depicted in medallions. Each is in full body frontal view, but in different poses, and surrounded by stylized fruits and trees. Both women are wearing long, narrow-sleeved tunics, this time with less elaborate decorations than seen in the previous examples. They only seem to have some slightly coloured vertical clavi attached to their tunics, with Soreg also having some round patches added at the lower end of her clavi. Maria is wearing a long red mantle, which is wrapped around her shoulders and veils her head. Soreg is wearing a long red cloak fixed with a small brooch at the middle of her chest.¹⁵⁵ Her curly hair is worn open, and she is also wearing large earrings. Both women are depicted holding religious attributes in their hands, Maria with a cross in her left hand in front of her chest, and Soreg with a stylized branch, possibly of a palm tree, in her left hand. Soreg is also opening up her right hand underneath the mantle in a type of orans gesture. No other inscriptions were found in the chapel, except the names of those three figures. The possible explanation here is that the three persons were depicted as benefactors of this chapel.¹⁵⁶



Figure 18, Maria and Soreg, Chapel of Priest John (No. 55)

6.4 7th century inscriptions

The 7th century marks a great decline in epigraphical culture. Following a large number of preserved mosaic inscriptions from the previous century, only three donation inscriptions mentioning women can be dated to this century. As seen in the example of Maria and Soreg, these inscriptions align with previously mentioned material.

The two remaining donation inscriptions contribute to family offerings, one of them a founding inscription (No. 54) for the building of the St Menas Church in Rihab, which reads:

Χάριτι Ἰησοῦ [Χ]ριστοῦ θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος
 ἡμῶν ἐκτίσθην κ(αί) εὐηφρόθη καὶ ἐτελιώθην
 ὁ ναὸς τοῦ ἁγίου Μηνά, ἐπὶ Θεοδό-
 ρου τοῦ ἁγιοτάτου καὶ υεροτιμήτου
 μητροπολίτου, ἐκ προσφοράς Προκοπίου
 μαρτυρίου καὶ Κομητίσσης συμβίου καὶ
 τέκνων αὐτῶν, ὑπὲρ ἀφέσεως ἁμαρτιῶν
 καὶ ἀναπαύσεως γ[ον]έων. [Ε]γγραφὴ ἐν

¹⁵⁵ Morgan 2018: 15-16. Description and differences of cloaks and mantles.

¹⁵⁶ Piccirillo 1993A: 296-297. Habas 2008: 75-77.

μηνι Μαρτιώ χρόνον ὀγδόνς ἰν(δικτιώνος)
(έ)του(σ) φκθ'

(By the grace of Jesus Christ, our God and
saviour, this church of Saint Menas has
been built, plastered with mosaic
[pavement] and completed, under
Theodosius, the holiest metropolitan
honoured by God; with the donation of
Prokopios [son] of Martyrius and [his
wife] Kometissa and their children; for the
redemption of their sins and peace for the
ancestors.

Written in the month of March, in the time
of the eighth indiction, in the year of 635
[529])¹⁵⁷

The inscription again follows the main
elements of Baumann's ideal form,¹⁵⁸ but in
an irregular order. It begins with an
invocation to Jesus and then gives
information about the patronage and the
means of construction (2), followed by the
city official's name (1) and the names of the
donors (4), Prokopios and Kometissa,
before mentioning the redemption of the
deceased (6) and the date (5).

The third inscription dated to the 7th century
provides insight into a pious and dedicated
family. It was found in the Valley Church of
Nessana (No. 56):

¹⁵⁷ Mittmann 1967: 42-45. Piccirillo 1981: 76-77,
fig. 11; and 1993A: 313, fig. 632.

¹⁵⁸ Baumann 1999: 277.

[Υ]πέρ σωτηρίας τών καρποφορησάντων
Σεργίου(ου) από συμπόν(ου) κ(αί)
μοναρχ(ού) κ(αί) Παλλ(ού)τος/
ἀδελφ(ής) κ(αί) Πιαν(ού) διακ(όνου) αὐτῆς
υ(ίου) πρωτέοντ(ος) μητροπ(όλεως)
Ἐμμίς(ης) ἐ(τους) νοις' ἰνδ(ικτιώνος)
ε'μη(νός) Γορπ(ιαίου) κ'

(For the salvation of the benefactors
Sergius, assessor and monk, and Pallous/
his sister, and Pianos the deacon, her son,
Primicerius of the metropolis of Emesa,
the 20th of the month Gorpaeus in the year
[496] 601, indiction 5)¹⁵⁹

As seen in the previous examples, the
inscription offers more information on the
mentioned men and their social and clerical
positions than on Pallous. Nevertheless, she
is mentioned by name, and it is clear that
both her brother and her son held high
ranking public offices as well as positions
within the religious system. Therefore, it is
likely that was well known in her
community and at Nessana at the time.

6.5 8th century inscriptions

Like the 7th century, there are only three 8th
century mosaics with female names
documented for the area of research. One
was found in the church of a possible

¹⁵⁹ Meimaris 1992: 278, Insc. 440. Madden 2014:
172. Avi-Yonah 1932: 137-142, nr. 11. Wells 1962:
173-174, pl. XXXII.I.

nunnery at Horvath Hani (No. 58), in Palaestina prima, while the other two come from the church of St Stephanous in Kastron Mefa'a – Umm er-Rasas (Nos. 59, 60).

The first inscription from Horvath Hani, is quite short and laid in the mosaic without borders. It is a simple inscription in two lines, stating:

μνή(σ)τηθη, κύ|ρη, Ἀνασίας
 εὐ(σεβεστιάτη)σ or ἐγ(ουμένη)σ

(Remember, Lord, the most pious Anasia;
 or mother superior Anasia)¹⁶⁰

There are two possible interpretations of result from the rather bad preservation of the inscription, which is located in the nave of the church. Such an unpretentious inscription would possibly underline the piety of a mother superior of the nunnery.

The second inscriptions, from St Stephanus Church at Kastron Mefa'a – Umm er-Rasas, No. 60, is also a remembrance inscription.

Μνίστητι, Κ(ῑ)ριε τοὺς δούλους
 σου Θεωδόρου υἱοῦ Γουμελα
 καὶ Σαμουή λου υἱοῦ

(Remember, Lord, your servants
 Theodoros, son of Goumela
 and Samoue(le) (his son))¹⁶¹

As already discussed regarding the first inscriptions mentioning women, these inscriptions simply praying or asking for

remembrance, also needed to be paid for or commissioned by someone. In cases where only one or two names are mentioned, it is possible that the individuals took precautions to ensure they were perpetuated in mosaic and thus remembered. In its context, this inscription lies together, connected in a meandering pattern, with floral and geometric designs, surrounding a medallion with a destroyed bust. All four inscriptions follow the same scheme, but only No. 60 mentions the mother instead of the father of the donor.

The same church also holds a dedication inscription that is set on three sides around the altar (No. 59). Facing the altar from the nave, looking east, the first part of the inscription about the construction, patronage, and officiating clerics is on the left (northern) side of the altar. The second part about the benefactors and benefactresses, as well as the mosaicists, is on the right (southern) side of the altar. The last part, only reading “ἅμα Μαρία” (with Maria) is behind the altar on the eastern side. Next to Maria, the inscription also mentions Zada, as the mother of Ezbontino, one of two mosaicists. The individually positioned Maria, right in front of the altar, is the only benefactress mentioned in the church. The fact that two other women, in

¹⁶⁰ CIIP IV.1, Ameling 2018: No. 2656, fig. 2656.
 Dahari/Zelinger 2014: 179-203.

¹⁶¹ Piccirillo 1989: 290-291; 1993A: 238-239, fig. 383 and 1994: 241-258.

their position as mothers, were also part of the epigraphic program of the church, again shows their degree of perception throughout the community.

6.6 Undated inscriptions

Two inscriptions from the church at Khirbet el-Wahadnah – near Khirbet Mar Liyas – could not be dated. The first, No. 61, tells of an offering made by Amama, his wife Matrona, and her daughter. It reads:

Προσφορά Ἀμαμα ὑποδιακόνου καί
οἰκονόμου ἄμα Ματρῶνα συν[βί]ωι καί
Μαν - - θίνης θυγ[α-]τρός αὐτό[ν]
(Offering by Amama, subdeacon and
oikomen, and by Matrona his wife, and
Man(ea)thine, her daughter)¹⁶²

The second inscription (No. 62) found at the same site, is more damaged and only parts can be read. The last line reads:

---υ καί Σησηννη--- -
(... and Sesenna/Sesenne ...) ¹⁶³

Before that the words “Christ loving people” and “econom” are preserved, in what seems to be the rest of a donation inscription. Piccirillo¹⁶⁴ mentions that there was a small excavation on the site of Khirbat al-Wahadneh in 1970, but there was no further information available.

The preserved inscription clearly seems to follow forms already shown from the 3rd to the 8th centuries. There is a possible

indication for a dating to the 6th century or later due to the phrasing and the information provided in the inscription. Both the man and the women in No. 61 do not describe themselves as humble servants “τόν δούλον σου” but rather focus on their worldly and clerical status instead, a tendency seen in inscriptions from the 6th century onward.

¹⁶² Piccirillo 1981: 18-20 and 1993: 339.

¹⁶³ Piccirillo 1981: 18-20 and 1993: 339.

¹⁶⁴ Piccirillo 1993: 339.

6.7 Epigraphical development of female donors' inscriptions

With regard to the development of epigraphic forms, the analysis reveals that even if universal donation, dedication, and foundation forms did not fundamentally change from Roman building inscriptions to Christian church inscriptions,¹⁶⁵ the visibility of women within these different kinds of inscriptions clearly does change.

Dating to the 3rd/4th century, a number of inscriptions mentioning benefactresses comprise quite short and simple one-lined phrases mostly only declaring individual women as donors and identifying them as humble servants to be remembered, while leaving out any further social information.

Towards the end of the 5th century, as seen in inscriptions No. 8A–C, from Herodion, more female names appear in connection with their families or with other members of their Christian community. Within the segment of inscriptions from the 6th century, only nine of 47 solely state the name of an individual woman as donor. All other female benefactresses can be found as part of family or religious congregations.

Although the forms of inscriptions did not change overall, the manner of reference regarding women did change. In most earlier formulations, and also partially

throughout the 6th century, women largely tended to be addressed as “wife” or part of the “household”. However, from the end of the 5th century, more foundation and dedication inscriptions of larger donation parties where specific individual woman are addressed by their names can be found.

Such habitual changes can be seen in close correlation to a significant increase in the number of ecclesiastical buildings, and with this, an increase in mosaic inscriptions within these buildings. This interesting progress can be related to an ever-growing number of Christians throughout the rural areas of the tree Palestines and Arabia. As Bar notes in “The Christianization of Rural Palestine During Late Antiquity”, the inscriptions found at local churches themselves lead to the conclusion that, in these areas, contrary to urban areas or holy sites, church constructions were initiated by the local Christian communities.¹⁶⁶

Archaeological evidence suggests the construction of a church not only included the architectural planning and building of the structure but also required provision of all necessary religious utensils as well as decorative equipment. Such elaborate undertakings, if undertaken privately, needed significant financial resources and, in many cases, the inclusion of as many

¹⁶⁵ Baumann 1999: 269-288. Leatherbury 2020: 8-11.

¹⁶⁶ Bar 2003: 208-211.

members of the local community as possible. These aspects were perhaps an equalizing factor that opened more opportunities for women within the early Christian communities to highlight their role and monetary influence.

Based on these developments, it seems that women in the 6th century had more possibilities of finding their way into the mainly male-dominated sphere of ecclesiastical places and to visually perpetuate their contributions, efforts, and religious attachment.

7. Aspects of social status provided within the inscriptions

The value of dedication inscriptions not only lies in qualitative and quantitative measures of development, distribution, and change but, as noted by Habas, they “have proven to be a treasure trove for understanding the life and organization of the community, providing the donors’ names, their civil and church status, the collaboration between the citizens and the religious leaders”¹⁶⁷ and much more information.

Insights that are provided by inscriptions focusing on women are closely analysed in the following sections. As previously mentioned, in the case of forms and phrasings, inscriptions can offer information on the public and clerical status of the donors, data on family structures and relationships, as well as insight into the connected activities of multiple community members regarding donations or founding activities. A closer examination of these data can help in the understanding of the social and possibly economic status of the women mentioned in these mosaic inscriptions.

The data collected from the inscriptions was combined with information on women in Late Antiquity provided by written sources

of the time. Therefore, secular law texts as well as Christian texts regarding women were consulted.

A further question that is examined in this chapter concerns the positioning of dedication and foundation mosaics within ecclesiastical spaces. It circles around the thought of a connection between the positioning of donation inscriptions and the civic or clerical status of the donors. This consideration arose after a lecture delivered by Watta, “Sacred Zones in Early Church Construction in the Middle East”,¹⁶⁸ in which he discussed the possible means of communication through mosaic pavements and their placement in sacral spaces. However, Watta did not find any conclusive concepts regarding the placement of dedication inscriptions during his study. Nevertheless, a study on smaller scale with a certain group of specific mosaic inscriptions could reach a different conclusion and eventually reveal some fixed, accepted patterns of placement.

¹⁶⁷ Habas 2015: 881.

¹⁶⁸ Watta 2018.

7.1 Secular and ecclesiastical status displayed in mosaic inscriptions

The catalogue contains several inscriptions that display social status and position, as well as the relationships of the donors. The simplest way to draw conclusions as to the status of donating women is via their directly attached titles and positions within the secular or ecclesiastical system. The catalogue includes 13 inscriptions mentioning women with attached offices or titles, most of them from the 6th century; only one is from the 5th century and another is from the 8th century.

7.1.1 Ecclesiastical offices and positions

The first inscription from Tell Shocho, belonging to a 5th century Byzantine building complex, mentions the two nuns “μοναζουσα” Paula and Alexandra (No. 7). This represents one of the few offices (or positions) within the clerical structures of the early Christian church that could be held by women. A second position, which is attested three times, once in the north-western church of Hippos-Sussita and twice in St Basileos Church at Rihab, is that of a “διακονίσσης” – deaconess, held by Anton(i)a (No. 10) and Zoe (No. 33 A-B). This is an office that is “indigenous only to the eastern parts of the early Christian

world”¹⁶⁹. Already attested in the 3rd century, the office was significantly regulated at the Council of Chalcedon in the 5th century, and became a functional position to take care of female needs and modesty within certain situations (e.g., during baptism) when women had to be naked.¹⁷⁰ Another position within the religious system, connected to monasteries and nunneries, is that of mother superior “ἐγουμένης”, as attested for Anasia/Anastasia (No. 58) at the nunnery at Horvath Hani, dating to the 8th century. To a certain degree, the role, functions, and tasks of an abbess or mother superior of a nunnery are known since several accounts of foundress–abbesses, such as Macrina, Olympias, and Melania the Younger, as well as later ones from the empress Irene Doukaina Komnene, were recorded in written form.¹⁷¹ As with any source, these accounts must be read with care due to the writers being male and the tendency to characterize these women in a favourable religious light. Even though only a few ecclesiastical offices and positions were held by female members of the communities mentioned in inscriptions, most appear in churches in rural sites. Jacobs states that the development of the size of village churches that can be seen

¹⁶⁹ Miller 2005: 62.

¹⁷⁰ Miller 2005: 62-68.

¹⁷¹ Constantinou 2012: 43-46.

especially in the 6th century, can be viewed in relation to the increased importance of ecclesiastical positions within the villages.¹⁷²

7.1.2 Secular positions

The secular captions to which names were attached are all found within inscriptions from the 6th century and are either titles, positions, or honorific forms of address. Benefactresses using such titles to refer to their social status can possibly be seen as part of the “elite” of wealthy landowners that participated in activities of patronage throughout the region of the three Palaestines and Arabia.¹⁷³

Within inscriptions No. 17 A–B and No. 30, the donating women are addressed as “κυρία” – Lady, an honorary title, possibly aristocratic.¹⁷⁴ The first, Lady Mary, possibly achieved her title through the founding of the church within a monastic complex in Beisan, where two inscriptions mention her and her action “...τόν ναόν κτ(ί)σασα...” (No. 17 B) – as founding the church. This gave her a special status within the community and therefore the right to be

buried within the complex along with her family members.

The second mention of a “κυρία” is found at the church at Kissufim (No. 30). This equivocal inscription has been interpreted in several ways. The most convincing translation of “Η ΚΥΡ(Ι)Α ΣΙΛΘΟΥΣ” is “the Lady (of) Sylthus” being identified as one of the donors of (parts of) the mosaic.¹⁷⁵ A previously mentioned title or position can be seen in inscription No. 26, where Theodosia is referred to as “κουβικουλαρία”, the position of a female chamberlain¹⁷⁶ at the imperial court. However, the title lost its direct link to the bedchambers of the imperial court and became more of an honorary title over time.¹⁷⁷

Other honorific forms of address can be seen in inscriptions No. 26, 28 A and 35 A–B. Here, the donors are either described as “εἰλλουστρίον” or “λαμπροτάτης”, which indicates they are well known or, as described nowadays, “famous”, within their communities. Inscription No. 28 A addresses Maria and Paul as “των

¹⁷² Jacobs 2020: 39-40.

¹⁷³ Jacobs 2020: 40-41.

¹⁷⁴ Lampe 1961 : 785, Jacob 2020: 40. Ashkenaiz 2018 : 217-219.

¹⁷⁵ Ameling 2014 : 248-248

¹⁷⁶ Lampe 1961 : 772.

¹⁷⁷ Definition by Brill online, Encyclopedia of Early Christianity (2018) – Cubicularius.

https://referenceworks-brillonline-com.uaccess.univie.ac.at/entries/brill-encyclopedia-of-early-christianity-online/cubicularius-SIM_00000810?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.brill-encyclopedia-of-early-christianity-online&s.q=cubicularius

προσευκτότων” – the donors¹⁷⁸ of several offerings.

Most of the relevant secular addresses of female donors do not represent an official social status or rank; they are more likely to underline the fact that those individuals had a high standing and a certain degree of notoriety within their communities.

7.2 Relationships

While the inscriptions only provide limited information concerning the social status of the benefactresses and female donors by mentioning relevant titles, they do provide evidence and insight into family structures and relationships.

There are only 16 inscriptions that state one individual name of a female donor.¹⁷⁹ All other inscriptions mention at least one other person from their family or community.

As illustrated in multiple examples, female benefactresses can be mentioned in connection to their husbands (e.g., No. 18 – Nonia and Silvanus, and No. 21 – Maria and Cyricus). Likewise, they are linked to their children (e.g., No. 9 – Iaia and her son Nestabos, or No. 17 A – Lady Mary and her son Maximos). Other inscriptions also mention female donors together with other family members (e.g., No. 28 A – Maria and her brother Paul). Benefactresses coupled with their husbands can be found in 21% of the cases examined for this thesis. Female donors in combination with their broader family are mentioned in 28% of the inscriptions. This category includes references to various family members, (e.g., a husband and a child), comparable to

¹⁷⁸ A phrase that might also be found in inscription No. 22. But due to the state of destruction, it is not for certain, that Mary and John were both donors, respectively if Mary was a donor at all in this case.

¹⁷⁹ Within these group of inscriptions, I gather a number of fifteen obviously individual benefactresses and one inscription under discussion. Inscriptions from individual benefactresses are No. 1, 3, 5, 6, 10, 14, 15, 23, 24, 43, 46, 48 and 58. Inscription No. 53 only mentions Megale as benefactress but devotes one line to the mosaicist who did the work, so technically she is not mentioned alone, but since the mosaicist only did what he was paid for and it can be assumed that there

where no further ties between them, and he possibly wasn't even part of her community since mosaicists traveled far distances, I also counted this inscription in the category of “individual benefactresses”. The inscription to be discussed is No. 30 of “Kaliora and the Lady of Silthous”. Since there are several arguments on the identification of “Kaliora” as personification, symbolic figure, or actual person, as well as on the phrase and its reading itself, a clear statement on whether or not “The Lady of Silthous” donated alone or together with “Kaiora” cannot be made. As for the following analysis I will count “the Lady of Silthous” as individual benefactress, since this seems to be most reasonable so far.

inscriptions No. 54 and 61;¹⁸⁰ as well as a reference to one or more children; or a reference to any other family members,¹⁸¹ such as parents or in-laws of the donors¹⁸² and siblings, as in No. 9 and No. 13 respectively.¹⁸³

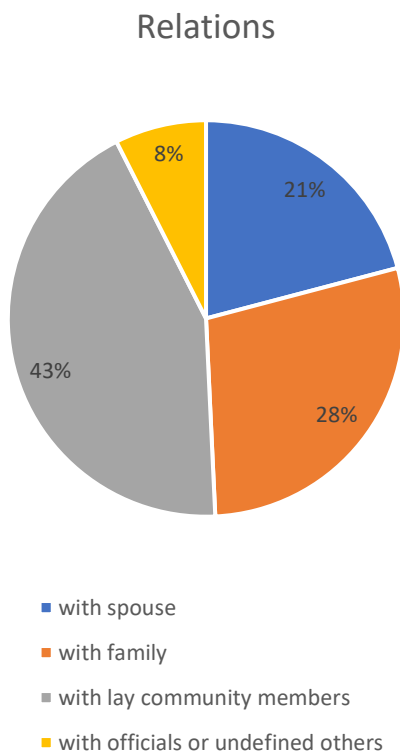


Figure 19 – Relationships of female donors to other donors mentioned in the inscriptions

Almost half the inscriptions (43%) indicate that most donations from females were given together with other community members of their parish. In these cases of

community donations, some category overlaps can occur. For example, in the case of foundation inscriptions, female donors can be attested together with members of their family, alongside other families, or as individual members of the community who donated for the common cause. The last part of inscription No. 42 reads:

“Under the most holy and most venerable bishop Ioannes, was built and completed this holy place of Yours, through its presbyter and guardian Barichas. In the month of November, in the times of the sixth indiction.

Oh God of Saint Lot and of Saint Prokopios, accept the offering and the gift of Stephanos and Elias, brothers, children of Komitissa! O God of the holy martyrs, accept the gift of Sergios and Prokopios, his son!

As a vow for the salvation of Rabatha, daughter of Anastasia, and for the repose of Ioannes, son of Anastatios, and for those who made offerings. The Lord knows their names.”

¹⁸⁰ No. 54 mentions Matrona and Prokopios, together with their “children”. No. 61 speaks of Matrona and Amama together with their daughter Man(ea)thine.

¹⁸¹ Inscription No 28 A refers to Maria and her brother Paul, while No. 56 states Pallous with her brother Sergius and her son Pianos.

¹⁸² In inscription No. 19 Mike is mentioned alongside her mother in-law Sophronica, while the name of her

husband was destroyed. No. 35 B contains the names of Eulampia with her father Ioannos and her son Eugenios, who already passed away before her.

¹⁸³ No. 9 mentions Iaia and her son Nestabos, the reader. No. 13 Mary and her father Stephen as well as her brothers Leontakios and Julian.

In this case, it seems that several donors made offerings to the Church of Saints Lot and Procopius and their names were inscribed in a foundation inscription located at the east end of the central nave in front of the chancel screens. In such cases, inscriptions refer to various male and female donors but the differentiation between family and community is neither noticeable nor clear.

7.2.1 Community and family churches

Regarding the social status of donors, it could be interesting to look more closely at the differentiation between community and family churches. Ashkenazi's 2018 article, "Family Rural Churches in Late Antique Palestine and the Competition in the 'Field of Religious Goods': A Socio-Historical View", views the building of such family

churches as an instrument to demonstrate power and legitimize the rural elites, in some cases even mimicking aristocracy.¹⁸⁴ Following Bourdieu's theories, Ashkenazi sees these elite families and their ecclesiastical buildings in direct competition with the official church and its claims of religious superiority.¹⁸⁵ Although Ashkenazi specifically discusses extramural churches,¹⁸⁶ he also outlines some typical characteristics that can be seen in dedication inscriptions in family churches,¹⁸⁷ and thus helps to define and separate family and community churches. Following the outlined characteristics on foundation inscriptions of family¹⁸⁸ and community¹⁸⁹ churches, several examples within each group that include female donors and benefactresses can be found. Inscription No. 12 is an example of a

¹⁸⁴ Ashkenazi 2018: 717-718, where for example he points out the reminiscence of the depiction of "Kaliora and the Lady of Silthous" in the mosaic at Kissufim (No. 30) compared to a manuscript illustration on the 6th century byzantine Princess Anicia Juliana.

¹⁸⁵ Ashkenazi 2018: 711-727.

¹⁸⁶ Ashkenazi 2018, he still mentions throughout the article, that family churches do not necessarily have to be extramural and that some families founded churches within the village boundaries to provide the space for a common use of the community. On the other hand, building efforts by the community also didn't always have to be within the village limits, as he remarks that there are community churches as well as monasteries build by communities that can

be found outside of villages (713-717). Ashkenazi picks out the extramural private churches for the argument, that he suggests them to be more a private object of prestige for the building family, and by thus a challenge to the "official church", and not so much of a philanthropic act, for the good of the community or the higher good of the donors (723-726).

¹⁸⁷ Ashkenazi 2018: 720-721.

¹⁸⁸ Following inscriptions can be foundation inscriptions of family churches: No. 8 A-C, 12, 13, 17 A-B, 26, 32, 39, 56.

¹⁸⁹ The following examples can be seen as community churches, some of them donated by one family: No. 33 A+B, 34, 35 A+B, 36, 38, 40+41, 42, 47, 52, 54, 59.

founding inscription in a family church. This inscription is mentioned in Ashkenazi's article:

μνησθοῦσιν | ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ τόπῳ
Ζῶσους καὶ Χαλούς |
καὶ Ρουφός καὶ Ἰουλί | ανῆς καὶ Ἀρσακίου υ- |
[ιο]ῦ καὶ Εὐθυμοῦς |
καὶ Ἀρσακίου καὶ | Κύρας καὶ Εὐστόγις κ(αὶ) |
Μάχου διακ(όνου) Δόμνι | Αδουθα Ματρῶ

(Remember in the holy place Zosus and Khalous; and Rufus and Juliana and (their) son Arsakius; and Euthymia and Arsakius; and Kyra and Eustogious; and Machus the deacon; and Domna, Adoutha and Matrona.)

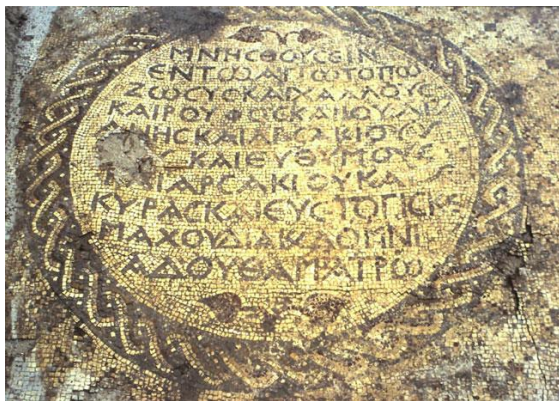


Figure 20 – Inscription No. 12.

This main inscription is set together with others in an extramural church at Horbat Kenes. Combining the information from the inscriptions, it is clear the church was funded by several members of an extended family. Only lower-echelon clergy members, who could also be family members, are mentioned, and the church is dedicated to St Conon.¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ Ashkenazi 2018: 715-716.

The foundation inscription of the Church of Bishop Isaiah (No. 35 A) in Jerash is an example of a community church, even if donated by one family. It reads:

Ἐπὶ τῶν ἁγίω(τάτου) καὶ μακαριω(τάτου)
Θωμᾷ μητροπολ(ίτου) καὶ Ἡσαίου
ἐπισκ(όπου).

⟨Η⟩ γιά[σθη τ]οῦτο /
τὸ ἅγ(ιου) εὐκτῆρ(ιον), οἰκοδομήθη δὲ ἐκ
θεμελίων καὶ ἐψηφώθη καὶ διεκοσμήθη ἐκ
προσφορᾶς /
Βηροίου καὶ Εὐλαμπίας λαμπ(ροτάτων)
ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας αὐτῶν τε καὶ τῶν αὐτῶν
τέκνων καὶ/
αναπαύσεως γονέων αὐτῶν. Ἐν ἔτει α[κχ']
μηνὶ Δαισίου χρ(όνοις) ζ' ἰνδ(ικτιῶνος).

(At the time of the most holy and blessed Thomas, the Metropolitan, and Isaiah the Bishop.

This place of /
prayer was consecrated, and built from the foundations, covered with mosaics, and beautified through the offerings of the most illustrious /
Beroios and Eulampia, salvation to them, and of their children, and /
for the repose of their parents. In the year 621, in the month of Daisios, in the seventh indiction.)



Figure 21 – Inscription No. 35.

The disparity between the two categories, of community and family churches, lies in the appearance of members of high ecclesiastical ranks within community churches, and their absence in family churches. As well as the circumstance that community churches did not necessarily require a dedication to a specific saint or martyr,¹⁹¹ compared to family churches that all had such a dedication. A closer examination of Ashkenazi's argumentation based on Bourdieu's theory on "Fields of Religious Goods" suggests it is reasonable to assume that in some cases of private building activities, the aspects of self-profiling, demonstration of power and legitimization of social placement could have predominated over more pious and humble points of view.

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted that the female donors mentioned in donation inscriptions seem to come from a wide range of social backgrounds. Only a small group of female donors can be attested to belong to a social

upper class or possibly even aristocratic ranks. However, most female donors mentioned in the inscriptions seem to have held a more moderate social status. There are several reasons for such an assumption. The first, as previously mentioned, is that most benefactresses do not hold any social or ecclesiastical positions or titles. Even if the family churches were used as symbols of status, wealth, and social rank by the rural elites, there are only 20 benefactresses who possibly belonged within this higher social ranks.

A further factor suggesting that female donors came from more diverse social backgrounds can be seen in the high number of inscriptions that attest the founding, building, or renovation of several churches to be a community act. In these cases, the total costs could have been split between several members and households, so more community members could be included and the expenses could be shared.

A third aspect, which is discussed by Jacobs, is the fact, that not all donors had to pay for the whole building or the whole floor mosaic. There must have been the

¹⁹¹ Even though most of the community churches where females are mentioned in inscriptions do have

a dedication to Saints or Martyrs. Ashkenazi 2018: 711-727.

possibility of only donating a small section; smaller donations could have been made in this way.¹⁹² Based on this argument, the female donors and benefactresses' social backgrounds could have been quite diverse since ecclesiastical buildings constructed by communities and donations connected to them opened the opportunity to demonstrate humbleness, religious belief, and piety to a broad range of individuals.

¹⁹² Jacobs 2020: 41-42. As one of the examples to argue the point, that donors didn't necessarily have to pay the whole floor mosaic, Jacobs takes the mosaics at the Church of Kissufim. Only small parts of this mosaic pavement are preserved and there are several different scenes, with different names inscribed next to the depictions. Jacob's argument is that each of the donors has his own vignette and by thus only had to pay for this part of the floor mosaic. Since the church structure of Kissufim is found to be outside the village boundaries, Ashkenazi (2018: 717-719) describes it to be a private family church in

his article. Taking in account all of Ashkenazi's arguments for the church to be seen as an act of private building initiative, one must not stress enough that the greatest part of the mosaic pavement, including the space of the main nave, where one would suggest the placement of a foundation inscription, have been destroyed. Due to this and the rather subtle placement of the depictions that are preserved, I tend to follow the argumentation of Jacobs on this set of inscriptions, and count the church at Kissufim more likely to be an example of a community church.

8. Aspects of placement and visuality of donation inscriptions in ecclesiastical spaces

All factors of development in epigraphical culture, analysis of relationships and status of donors, and qualitative and quantitative measures on inscriptions are on display and can be analysed today due to a human need for visibility within these ecclesiastical structures. While donations can be made anonymously and piety can be lived privately, there is a significant number of donation inscriptions that place private services and donations for the churches and communities on public display. These intentional inscriptions have been left for others to see and to acknowledge the donors' offerings and donations. The donors intended that their service, their names, and their actions would be remembered and remain visible for other community members long after their deaths. Before examining the positioning of dedication inscriptions and potential connections to the social and clerical situation of the female donors, two aspects must be mentioned. First, dedication inscriptions can be found everywhere in ecclesiastical complexes; there is not a specific place within the mosaic program

where they had to be placed. Second, since the intention is to consider the positioning of mosaic dedication inscriptions that mention women and this is only a marginal group, the analysis outlined in this chapter only identifies tendencies rather than general statements that can be projected onto all dedication inscriptions.

8.1 Visualizing the layout of an early Christian church

Examination of the available floorplans of the early Christian churches and ecclesiastical complexes that retain inscriptions with female names in them, highlights the fact that all these complexes followed the same fixed architectural design; they only differ in size and additional architectural structures. The early uniform church architecture makes the following comparison of different complexes – described by means of an imaginary walk through a church – broadly achievable and uncomplicated.¹⁹³

8.1.1 The atrium

Placing ourselves in the footsteps of a member of an early Christian community on their way to mass, the first mosaics can be seen in associated structures in front of the church. Three inscriptions, two belonging

¹⁹³ Michel 2001, shows the rather uniformed design range of different types of church structures and

architecture in byzantine times in the area of nowadays Jordan.

to an atrium (No. 4 and No. 14) and one from a transitional building (No. 19), are located outside the actual church. While parts of inscriptions No. 4 and No. 19 are missing, all three seem rather simple and do not include any information on social context or a specific donation. The inscriptions only mention one or two names and set the donors as a family connection.

8.1.2 The narthex

Upon entering the church, the next mosaic inscriptions located in the narthex. Four examples are located in this part: Nos. 8A, 12, 36, and 53. In these cases, the inscriptions are more revealing. Although they do not provide any information on the social or clerical positions of the donors, at least two inform about the donation. Inscription No. 36 from the church of Bishop Marianos in Jerash reads "... this holy temple was built and covered with mosaics ..." and No. 53 from the church in Buseir mentions that "... this mosaic was finished ... for the salvation of Christ-loving Megale ...", while the work was done by a mosaicist from Jerusalem called Andrew. There is also a difference regarding the donors themselves. No. 53 only mentions one woman, while No. 36 lists one woman together with four men from her community, and No. 8A declares two husband and wife combinations as donors¹⁹⁴. Inscription

8A from the northern church at Herodion and further inscriptions from this pavement suggest that Saphrica and Annel and their families were main benefactors of the church.

8.1.3 The main nave

Following on our way inside the church, the next mosaics are located in the central nave. This area features 13 inscriptions citing female names. It is noteworthy that most of these inscriptions date to the 6th century and come from churches in the Province of Arabia. Furthermore, the positioning seems to be quite unilateral, with 10 of the inscriptions positioned right in front of the bema, one set in the middle of the nave, one set on a side, and the last positioned close to the entrance. Most of these inscriptions state the clear purpose of the donation, either the founding and building of the churches themselves, or a specific donation for inventory, as well as mosaic floors. In terms of visibility, it could be argued that these mosaic floors of the main nave, especially the ones in the large open space in front of the bema and the chancel screens, would have been the most prominent and prestigious in the whole complex. Clearly, this is the position for host inscriptions that frequently express exceptional donations. In terms of social information, it is only possible to make assumptions regarding the mentioned benefactresses and female donors. Only one inscription, the one set at the beginning of the nave, near the entrance, was donated by an individual woman. Inscription

¹⁹⁴ note 124 to see the argumentation, why in this case Saphrica and Annel can be seen as husband and

wife, even though the inscription addresses him as "brother".

No. 43, as previously discussed, cites a psalm that describes sacrifices that should be brought to the altar. The connection to the altar, as well as the fact that the inscription is aligned in a way to be read from the direction of the altar, might suggest that Epiphania donated this piece of sacred inventory. Two other inscriptions mention a (married) couple as donors for the founding of the church (No. 34) as well as for the payment of the mosaic floor (No. 37). It is known that Georgia's (No. 34) husband held the office of "paramonius", which evidently also shed some light on her position within the congregation since she is not only mentioned by name but also depicted in the mosaic program. That the largest number of mosaics laid in this prominent position testifies to community donations. Within this group, only two women are clearly identified as the wife of a donor (No. 8 C and No. 32), while all others appear alone or together with children but without husbands (Nos. 33 B, 39, 41, 42 and 59). This is possibly a sign that these other women were well integrated, wealthy widows who could handle their own fortune. For one inscription (No. 38), it is difficult to distinguish if the mentioned woman and possibly one of the men were married. Nevertheless, this exact inscription shows another aspect of donation inscriptions: the case that some women were named while others were vaguely referred to as wives.

The inscription reads:

*Lord, receive the offering of the donor and
the one who has created (this mosaic),*

*[your servant] Mouselios along with his
children.*

*Our Lord Jesus Christ, God of Saint
Sergius protect the megaloprepestatos
Almoundaros, the komes.*

*God of Saint Sergius, bless your servant
Eusebius along with his children.*

*God of Saint Sergius, bless your servant
Ioannes along with his wife and children.*

*God of Saint Sergius, bless your servant
Abdalla and Dionysios and S(...)*

*In the time of the bishop Polyeuktos, the
most beloved by God, the holy Martyrion
of Saint Sergius was decorated with a
mosaic floor by the zeal of Mari, son of
Rabbos the most devout priest, and
Georgios the Deacon, and Sabinus and
Maria in the month of April at the time of
the ..."¹⁹⁵*

It can be assumed that the man (Sabinus) with no clerical position and the following named woman (Maria) were a married couple who donated together. This inscription from the church of St Sergius at Tall al-Umayri could lead to the suggestion that Maria, as the companion of Sabinus and a female donor, was possibly well known and eventually more involved in the Christian community than the unknown wife of Ioannes, who is not mentioned by name. Since this is the only inscription where one woman is mentioned as "wife"

¹⁹⁵ Beven et al. 2015: 54-55.

and another is referred to by name, and no further social information is given, the suggestion of a connection between social position and the statement of a name can only be considered as a possibility.

8.1.4 Main apse – bema

Moving further inside the church, the way leads past the chancel screens into the bema and the main apse. Two shorter inscriptions (No. 33 A and No. 57) and one detailed (No. 35 A) belong to this space. The shorter inscriptions only state the names of the mixed donors, while the third speaks of the “*most illustrious*” couple, Beronios and Eulampia, as well as their children, who “*consecrated, and built*” the church of Bishop Isaías in Jerash “*from the foundations, covered it with mosaics, and beautified it through their offerings*”.¹⁹⁶ Although the term “illustrious” does not describe a certain official position, it highlights their prominent social position within the community as well known or more profanely famous.

8.1.5 Side aisle and side apses

Leaving the main nave, the first inscriptions encountered are located in the spaces between the columns towards the side aisles. One of these, located between the last column and the steps leading to the bema, found at the church of St Menas in Rihab, mentions the founding of the church by the family of Komitissa (No. 54). While the inscription does not mention any

offices or social information, since it is the only inscription found in this church, it can be assumed that Komitissa and her family were quite wealthy and involved members of their Christian community. Two other inscriptions found in intercolumnar spaces inform about the donation of the mosaic floor (No. 15) and an unspecified offering (No. 40), while a third includes the names and depiction of two women (No. 30) – Kaleora and the Lady of Silthous. Although this scene is missing a clear interpretation, taking the Lady of Silthous as a benefactress of the church, her depiction suggests her to be an older noblewoman.

Entering the side aisles and apses, the inscriptions become more personal. Most of the donations declared in these parts of the churches were from single women or small groups (maximum three people), some of them children or husbands, but also other women. Most texts do not talk about specific donations; rather, they provide information about offerings or the fulfilment of vows. For example, No. 44 from the church of Sts Lot and Procopius, reads: “St Lot accept the vow/votive offering (?) of Rhome, and Porphyria, and Maria, your servants!”¹⁹⁷ Since most female donors represented in these areas of the churches appear individually in the inscriptions, it is possible that these spaces were held for smaller donations made by individuals or minor groups.

¹⁹⁶ Piccirillo 1993 A: 311.

¹⁹⁷ Piccirillo 1993 A: 164-165.

8.1.6 Connected ecclesiastical structures (chapels, baptisteries, diaconicon)

Depending on the function and size of the church, there might be several other ecclesiastical structures connected to the main building. Ten inscriptions mentioning female names are placed in such connected ecclesiastical structures. Most of these mention more than one individual donor and can possibly be seen as donations made by several community members.¹⁹⁸

A closer examination of inscription No. 16 suggests that the donation was specifically made for the room where it is placed, the diaconicon, and a communication hall:

+ [.....Θ]εοδώρω Μάγιστρ(ο)σ καί
Θεοφίλας καί Βασσίλ[ω]
Ἐπις[...ἐγέ]νετο ἡ ψ[ή]φωσις τοῦ
μεσαύλου καί τοῦ διακονικοῦ
ἐπί τ[.....]πρε(σβυτέρων) Ἡλίου καί
Βασσίλου ἰνδικτι[ώ]νος Ζ' ἐτους Φρα.

(+ [Christ help] Theodor, the magister, and
Theophilia and Bassilos.

[Glorious] was executed, the paving of the
communication hall and of the diaconicon
under [the pious] presbyters Elias and
Bassilos, in indiction 7, year 591.)¹⁹⁹

Other inscriptions from connected ecclesiastical rooms (e.g., No. 47 and No. 48) provide insight into the meaning of the donation. The text of inscription No. 47

states that the donation was made to rebuild the diaconicon, the room where the inscription was placed.²⁰⁰ Inscription No. 48 is placed in a chapel and states that the mosaic pavement of this holy place has been donated by Aitha.²⁰¹ Although two further inscriptions (No. 8 B and No. 45) only state that an offering was made, and the others give no such information, one could suggest that inscriptions placed in such connected ecclesiastical structures as chapels, diaconicons, and baptisteries commemorate the donors or donations made for these specific places.

8.2 Conclusion

Connecting the given information on possible social standing and “worth” of a donation to the placement of the respective inscription reveals that there are some tendencies towards a more visible placement of certain inscriptions. According to Watta, the mosaics are used as a means of communication, and within that sphere not only the decorative splendours within the mosaics but also an appropriate position are of high value.²⁰²

This preference for clearly visible positions can be observed in the cases of foundation inscriptions. Irrespective of whether the

¹⁹⁸ except from inscription No. 8 B, which can be connected to a family donation, not a community act.

¹⁹⁹ Ovadia 1987: 43, No. 51.

²⁰⁰ Di Segni 1998: 429-430, No. 6.

²⁰¹ Piccirillo 1993 A: 128, fig. 144.

²⁰² Watta 2018: 98-99.

donations for the foundation came from one family or were given by several members of the community, these inscriptions tend to be placed in prominent position, such as at the east end of the central nave, in front of the chancel screens, centrally in the main nave, or close to the entrance at the narthex, so everybody who enters the church immediately sees and reads about the donors. Other inscriptions found in these prominent spaces could be in connection with high value donations, such as inscription No. 43, where Epiphania can possibly be connected to the donation of the altar, which is one of the holiest and most important pieces of inventory.

Inscriptions that are placed in less prominent parts of the churches, such as in the side isles and side apses or in intercolonial spaces can possibly be linked to minor donations, perhaps only representing donations that covered certain parts of the mosaic of the pavement. Inscriptions placed in connected ecclesiastical structures like chapels, baptisteries, and diaconicons, which were not used as regularly as the main church, possibly offered a certain element of prestige for the donating families and community members. Watta states that the written names “could be seen in association to the liturgical attribution during the

intercession”,²⁰³ and thus, even if the names were placed in less crowded areas of the churches or in connected buildings, their presence alone could be seen as a positive effect for the donors.

Inscriptions placed in the area behind the chancel screens, in the main apse, and the bema, can also be seen in connection to this effect of “indirect intercession” since these are the most holy places of a church complex where the general members of the community are rarely seen.

²⁰³ Watta 2018: 99, translated by ML

9. Conclusion

This analysis of mosaic inscriptions mentioning names of female donors and benefactresses has proven to be rewarding. The 68 inscriptions mentioning 101 female names demonstrates that although the women are outnumbered by male donors, their presence within ecclesiastical structures was not a petty or trivial matter. Laws and legislation in favour of women and female heirs allowed late ancient women more personal influence on monetary decisions within their households. This circumstance might also have played a role in the large number of captured donations made by female benefactresses, either on their own or in partnership with family or community members. The focus of the first part of the analysis in this thesis is on the “hard facts” concerning the quantity, development, and geographic distribution of the inscriptions. Evaluations of these aspects reveal that inscriptions commemorating donations by women follow the general distribution pattern examined by Di Segni²⁰⁴ and Avi-Yonah²⁰⁵, among others²⁰⁶. Throughout Late Antiquity there is a shift from urban to rural

areas that manifested in the distribution of epigraphical material, such as in the geographical distribution of mosaic inscriptions in ecclesiastical spaces.

The distribution maps presented in Figure 23 clearly illustrate that the majority of preserved inscriptions mentioning female names dates to the 6th century, which marks the highpoint of epigraphic tradition in this region. A second point that is displayed in the maps is the widespread distribution of all the inscriptions stating female donors and benefactresses. Such inscriptions are not only found in urban contexts (e.g., Jerusalem, Gaza, Madaba, Jerash). Female involvement in donation and foundation activities also occurred in smaller, more rural areas and countryside villages (e.g., Horbat Kenen, Kissufim, Khirbet Beit Loya and Khirbet el-Kerak).

The analysis of quantitative development suggests that not only building activities for ecclesiastical spaces were highest in the 6th century, but also the widespread popularity of donation inscriptions was most

²⁰⁴ Di Segni 2017: 287-322.

²⁰⁵ Avi Johan 1958: 39-51.

²⁰⁶ There are several articles discussing the topic of this shift from urban areas towards rural areas, and the possible reasons for it, to mention only some:

Hamarnah on “Continuity or Change? Rural settlement in Provincia Arabia and Palaestina Tertia in the seventh to the ninth centuries.”, 2015: 61-69 or Bar on “The Christianization of Rural Palestine during Late Antiquity”, 2003: 401-421.

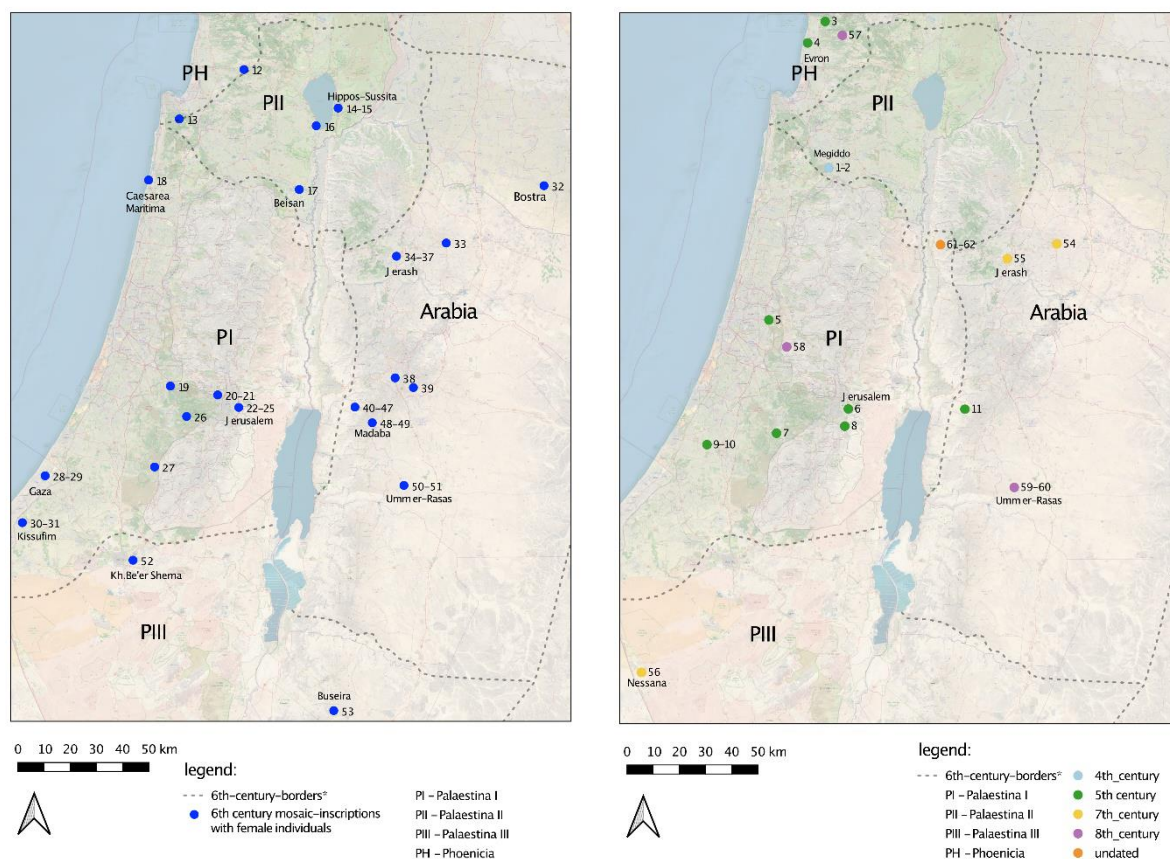


Figure 22 – distribution map of inscriptions mentioning female donors and benefactresses, divided by centuries.

prominent. Donation inscriptions were evidently accessible by a broad group of female and male donors throughout the entire Holy Land.

The second part of this study involved analysis on a more complex and controversial level, pertaining to possible social influences of mentioned female donors in accord with forms, donations, and placement of the inscriptions. The evaluation of the forms in which female donors and benefactresses are named demonstrates that the greater number of inscriptions depict women in many different donation contexts. The broader variation of forms, the use of psalms and

prayers, and declarations of secular and ecclesiastical status provide a sense of the personal involvement of the donors in the decisions concerning the inscriptions. The forms themselves only provide limited immediate information on the social standings of female benefactresses. There are only a few cases where secular titles or special addresses are used. More information on the social aspects of female donors is stated indirectly.

Only a small number of women appear as sole donors. The two largest groups are women who donated together with their families and women who donated together with other members of their Christian

communities. In both cases, the social background of these women could have been quite different. There are cases of foundations of large family churches, but also examples of community churches founded by one family that strongly lead to the suggestion that these families, and the women represented in these few inscriptions, belonged to a social elite or high upper class.

There are also inscriptions that not only mention a core family but also rather extended families or several different members of a community. In some cases, more than one woman appears in the inscription. For example, inscription No. 12 mentions four wives and their husbands and three other women, possibly members of the extended family,²⁰⁷ they all are mentioned as donors of a family church.

In the case of smaller churches or churches where more than one party, or more family members than just the core family, donated for the foundation, the renovation, or the decoration (e.g., the mosaic pavement) of a church, it can be assumed that the shared amount from each donor could have come down to a range that might have been achievable for well-off members of the middle class, merchants, and farmers.²⁰⁸ Further proof that donation inscriptions

were not only made by wealthy elites can be seen in small inscriptions, some of which only state the name of the individual person, or in inscriptions or limited mosaic panels that might lead to the suggestion that the donors only paid for a specific fraction of the mosaic. Jacobs' argument that a small mosaic could have cost about a quarter *solidi* makes a donation accessible to a broad range of society.²⁰⁹ A broad range in inscriptions and social backgrounds can also be seen in connection to female donors. Regarding the search for a link between the social status of the donors and the placement of the inscription within the ecclesiastical space, it can be stated that there is a link between the position of the display and the purpose or amount of the donation. This possibly provides insight into the social status of the donors. Inscriptions for the foundation, larger renovations, or splendid decorations of the whole ecclesiastical complex are found in certain prominent positions along the main aisle, in front of the chancel screens, or in the entrance areas or the narthex of the churches. However, inscriptions commemorating smaller donations or donations of certain panels or portions of the mosaic pavement can be found on the outer edges of the main nave, the side aisles

²⁰⁷ Ashkenazi 2018: 715-716.

²⁰⁸ Jacobs 2020: 40-41.

²⁰⁹ Jacobs 2020: 41.

or intercolumnar spaces. Therefore, a plausible suggestion is that large donations made by wealthier donors or by the community tend to have inscriptions placed in the most prominent position, while inscriptions honouring smaller donations are placed in less visible areas of the ecclesiastical spaces. For this reason, inscriptions mentioning female donors can be found in all these places, (i.e., in the most prominent positions as well as in several hidden corners). They are visible for everyone, and in this way, they are remembered by the communities during church services as well as by visitors.

There is no difference between inscriptions meant as symbols of piety, devotion, and religious belief and those meant to manifest social standing and grant prestige to the named persons: they are a visible, permanent display within an important place of religious and social gatherings, and thus, the meaning of female visibility in these places is of utmost importance, particularly in a time and context of male dominance.

10. Abstract

Antike Stifterinnen und Stifter sind Teil eines philanthropischen Phänomens, das sich nicht erst im frühen Christentum etabliert hat, sondern bereits in der römischen und griechischen Zeit weit verbreitet war. Dennoch ist es gerade die Zeit des frühen Christentums, die durch ihre Vielzahl an erhaltenen Mosaikinschriften, vor allem in den Gebieten der südlichen Levante, einen umfassenden Einblick in die Materie bietet. Im Rahmen dieser Arbeit soll vor allem historischen sowie sozialen Aspekten und Fragen rund um Stifterinnen nachgegangen werden. Hierbei ist zu klären, welche rechtlichen bzw. sozialen Möglichkeiten Frauen hatten, um als Stifterinnen in Kirchen aktiv zu werden, und in welcher Anzahl sie in Mosaikinschriften sowie Darstellungen vorkommen. Zu untersuchen ist darüber hinaus, in welchen Gebieten sich Inschriften von Stifterinnen finden lassen. Dabei wird analysiert, ob sie vorwiegend im urbanen oder im ländlichen Kontext angesiedelt waren. Auch Fragen über mögliche soziale, religiöse und gesellschaftliche Positionen und Stellungen der Stifterinnen sollen anhand von Inschriften und den darin enthaltenen Informationen aufgearbeitet werden.

The philanthropic phenomenon of private donors, founders and benefactors is long established throughout the Greco-Roman antiquity. The continuation of this tradition in early Christianity is especially visible in countless mosaic inscriptions spread all over the region of the southern Levante. In the course of this thesis questions on historic and social aspects will be focused on female donors and benefactresses, mentioned in these mosaic dedication inscriptions. The analysis sheds light on legal and social possibilities of women to become donors in early Christian communities, as well as the numbers in which female donors occur in dedication inscriptions and depictions. Furthermore aspects on geographical distribution and changes in epigraphical culture will be taken into account. Aiding to understand if female donors can be connected to urban or rural contexts of settlement. Additionally the thesis aims to analyse questions on social and religious ranks and positions of female donors and benefactresses based on information given within the dedication inscriptions.

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Abbreviations of Corpora and Online Sources:

CIIP	CORPUS INSCRIPTIONUM IUDAEAE/PALAESTINAE: A multi-lingual corpus of the inscriptions from Alexander to Muhammad. Vol I – IV.2, Berlin 2010 – 2018. Insc. 1- 3978.
CSLA	B. WARD-PERKINS; R. WISNIEWSKI, Cult of Saints in late Antiquity, from its origins to circa 700, across the entire christian World; Onlinedatabase. Oxford – Warsaw (2018 -) HTTP://WWW.CSLA.HISTORY.OX.AC.UK
MET MUSEUM	METROPOLITAN MUSEUM ONLINE COLLECTION: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/477398
COJS	CENTER FOR ONLINE JUDAIC STUDIES; http://www.cojs.org/
OXFORD REFERENCE	THE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF BYZANTIUM ED. A.P. KAZHDAN, Oxford University Press, 2005. http://www.oxfordreference.com
SEG	SUPPLEMENTUM EPIGRAPHICUM GRAECUM ONLINE: A. CHANIOTIS, T. CORSTEN ET AL. (ED.), Amsterdam – Leiden – Boston 1923-2019. https://scholarlyeditions-brill-com.uaccess.univie.ac.at/sego/

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Horbat Kenes – Church of St.

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Αθανασία – Athanasia

Horvath Zikhrin (No. 5)

Αιθα – Aitha

Madaba – Atwal chapel (No. 48)

Ακεπτους – Akeptous

Megiddo (No. 1)

Αλεξάνδρα – Alexandra

Tell Shocho/Tell Shuweihe (No. 7)

Khirbet el Shubeika (No. 57)

Ανασίας – Anasia

Horvath Hani (No. 58)

Αναστασία – Anastasia

Ayun Musa – Monastery of

Kaianos

(No. 11)

Khirbat el-Mukhayyat – St. Lot and

Procopius (No. 42)

Αντώνα – Anton(i)a

Hippos – Sussita (No. 14)

Βασσα – Bassa

Jerusalem (No. 22)

Γεωργία – Georgia

Jerash – St. Cosmas and Damian

(No. 34)

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(No. 25)

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Conon (No. 12)

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Evron – Heborn Church (No. 4)

Δωροθέας – Dorothea

Megiddo (No. 2)

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(No. 39)

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Procopius (No. 43)

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Conon (No. 12)

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(No. 35 A+B)

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Herodion/Khirbet Furaidis (No.8C)

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(No. 23)

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Rihab – St. Basileos (No. 33 A+B)

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Hippos – Sussita (No. 15)

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Ματρώννα – Matrona Horbat Kenes – Church of St. Conon (No. 12) El Quweisme – Church of Kyriakos (No. 39)	Πριμιλλης - Primilla Megiddo (No. 2) Ραβαθα – Rabatha Khirbat el-Mukhayyat – St. Lot and Procopius (No. 42)
Ayoun Musa – Kayanus church (No. 44) Khirbet el-Wahadineh (No. 61)	Ῥώμη – Rome Khirbet el-Mukhayyat – St. Lot and Procopius (No. 44) Khirbet el-Mukhayyat – Church of Amos and Kasiseus (No. 45)
Μεγάλης – Megale El-Rashidiyah / Buseira (No. 53)	Σαβίνα – Sabina Ayun Musa – Monastery of Kaianos (No. 11) Birsama/Khirbet Be'er Shema – St. Stephanus (No. 52)
Μίκη – Mika/Mike Khirbet el-Mukhayyat – St. Goerge (No. 40) Emmaus/Nicopolis (No. 19)	Σαλάμθα – Salamtha Gaza/Jabaliyah – Basilica (No. 29)
Νονας – Nonna Herodion/Khirbet Furaidis (No. 8C)	Σαπρίκα (Σαφρίκα) – Saprika/Saphrika Herodion/Khirbet Furaidis (2x) (No. 8A, B + C)
Νονία – Nonia Caesarea Maritima (No. 18)	Σαφρίκα – Saphrica Herodion/Khirbet Furaidis (No. 8A, B + C)
Παλλους – Pallos Nessana/Auja el-Hafir – Valley Church (No. 56)	Σεργία – Sergia Mount Nebo – Diakonikon/Baptistery (No. 47)
Παυλα – Paula Tell Shochu/Tell Shuweihe (No. 7)	Σησήννη – Sesenna/Sesenne
Πορφυρία – Porfuria/Porfyria	

- Khirbet el-Wahadineh – central
Church (No. 62)
- Σορεγ – Soreg
Jerash – Chappel of Elias, Maria
and Soreg (No. 55)
- Σοφία – Sophia
Umm er-Rasas/Kastron Mefa'a –
Church of Bishop Sergios
(No. 50)
- Σωσανν(α) – Sosanna
Horvath Karkara – northern Church
(No. 3)
- Σωφρονία – Sophronia
Emmaus/Nicopolis (No. 19)
- Ταλιθα – Talitha
Umm er-Rasas/Kastron Mefa'a –
Church of the Lions (No. 51)
- Φλαυία- Flauia
Gaza/Jabaliyah – Basilica
(No. 28 B)
- Χααλους/Χαλλους – Khalous
Horbat Kenes – Church of St.
Conon (No. 12)
- Χρεστην – Chreste
Megiddo (No. 2)

Floorplans and Positions of Inscriptions with female names

Phoenicia:

- Plate 1: Northern Church – Horvath Karkara (Kohn-Tavor et al. 2020: 2, fig. 4)
- Plate 2: Church at Evron – Hebron (Leatherbury 2020: 259, fig. 6.12)
- Plate 3: Church – Khirbet el-Shubeika (Syon 2003: 76, fig. 2)

Palestina I-III:

- Plate 4: Prayer Hall – Megiddo (Adam 2008: 63)
- Plate 5: Church of Area F - Khirbet Zikhrin (Fischer 1989: 1799, fig. 8)
- Plate 6: Monastery (remains, two rooms) – Horvath Sokho/Tell Shocho (Magen/Kagan 2012: 121-122, nr. 235, fig. 235.2)
- Plate 7: Northern Church – Herodion (Netzer 1990: 167, fig. 3)
- Plate 8: Church – Ozem (Habas 2018: 98, fig. 1)
- Plate 9: North-West Church – Hippos/Sussita (Burdajewicz 2005: 40, plan 2)
- Plate 10: Church – Khirbet el-Kerak (Delougas/Heines 1960: plate 15)
- Plate 11: Monastery of Lady Mary - Kuria Maria (Hachlili 2009: 256, fig. XII-5)

- Plate 12: Church/Basilika – Emmaus/Nikolopis
(https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/52/Emmaus_Nicopolis_Sketch.png)
- Plate 13: Church – Khirbet Deiry (Magen/Kagan 2012: 69-70, fig. 200)
- Plate 14: Byzantine Church complex – Khirbet Beit Loya (Patrich/Tsafri 1993: 266)
- Plate 15: Basilica of Jabaliyah – Gaza (Saliou 2000: 393, fig. 1)
- Plate 16: Church – Kissufim
(<https://www.baslibrary.org/biblical-archaeology-review/6/1/4>)
- Plate 17: Church – Buseira/ el-Rashidiyah
(www.csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E02633)
- Plate 18: Church/Nunnery – Horvath Hani (Dahari/Zelinger 2014: fig. 1)

Arabia:

- Plate 19: Monastery of Kaianus, Basilica Church - Ayun Musa (Piccirillo 1986: 205)
- Plate 20: Basilica - Kh. Sa'ad / Bostra
(www.csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E02339)

- | | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|--|
| Plate 21: | Church of Saint Basil – Rihab (Piccirillo 1993 A: 311, fig. 626) | Plate 32: | The chapel of Atwal – Atwal, now Archaeological Museum Madaba (Piccirillo 1986: 130) |
| Plate 22: | Church of Saints Cosmas and Damian – Jerash (Khrisat et al. 2011: 45, fig. 2) | Plate 33: | Church of the holy Apostles – Madaba (Piccirillo 1986: 97) |
| Plate 23: | Church of Bishop Isaiah – Jerash (Piccirillo 1993 A: 295, fig. 566) | Plate 34: | Church of the Lions – Umm er-Rasas (Piccirillo 1993 B: 237, fig. 376) |
| Plate 24: | Church of Bishop Marianos – Jerash (Gawlikowski/Musa 1986: 139, fig.2) | Plate 35: | Church of Saint Menas – Rihab (Piccirillo 1993 A: 313, fig. 635) |
| Plate 25: | Chapel at the Cathedral – Jerash (Piccirillo 1993 A: pp. 284-285, pl. 528.) | Plate 36: | Chapel of Elias, Maria and Soreg – Jerash (Piccirillo 1993 A: 296, fig. 571) |
| Plate 26: | Church of St. Sergius - Tall al-Umayri (Bevan et al. 2015: 51, fig. 2) | Plate 37: | Church of Saint Stephan – Umm er-Rasas (Piccirillo 1986: 283) |
| Plate 27: | Church of Saint Kyriakos – al-Quwaysmah (Piccirillo 1993 A: 268, fig. 489) | | |
| Plate 28: | Church of St. George - Kh. al-Mukhayat (Piccirillo 1986: 177) | | |
| Plate 29: | Church of St. Lot and Porcopius - Kh. al-Mukhayat (Piccirillo 1986: 182) | | |
| Plate 30: | Church of Amos and Kaseius, Chapel of Priest John - Wadi Afrit (Kh. al-Mukhayat, Piccirillo 1986:189) | | |
| Plate 31: | Old Diaconicon, Baptistry – Mount Nebo (Piccirillo 1986: 154) | | |

Northern Church – Horvath Karkara

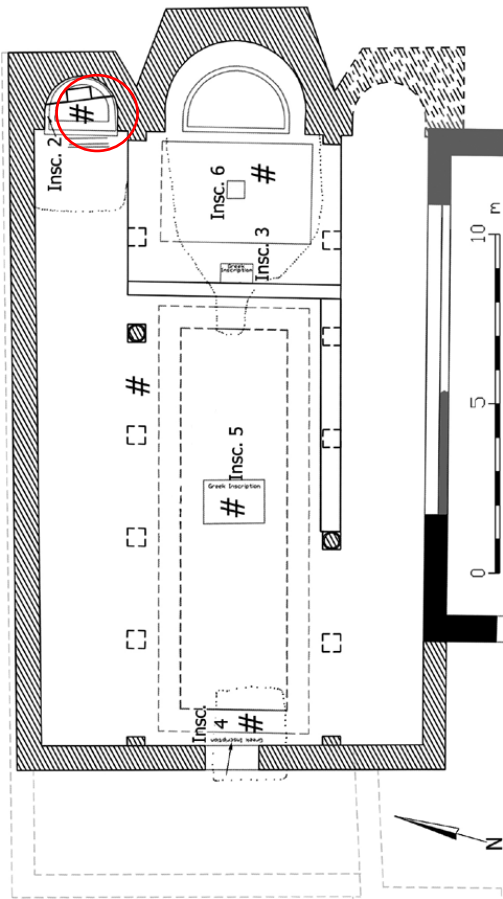


Plate 3 – No. 3 – Sosanna,(northern Apse)

Church – Evron/Hebron

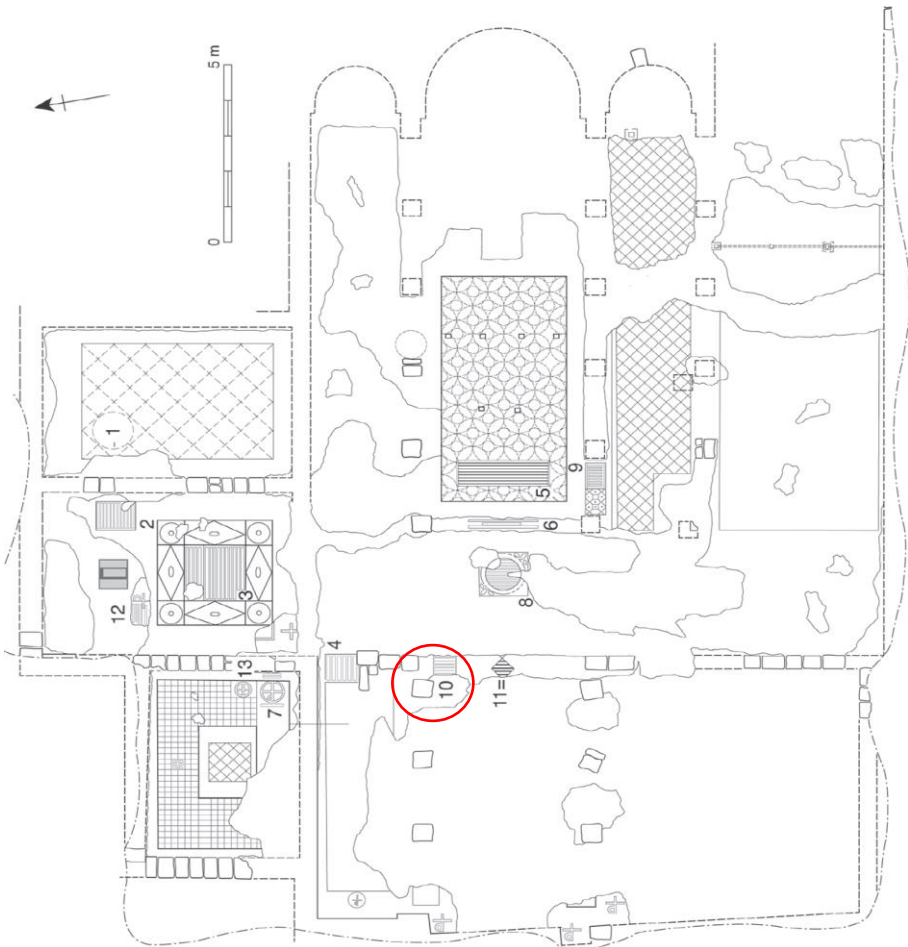


Plate 4 – No. 4 – Dominina (near the entrance to the church)

Church at Khirbet el-Shubeika

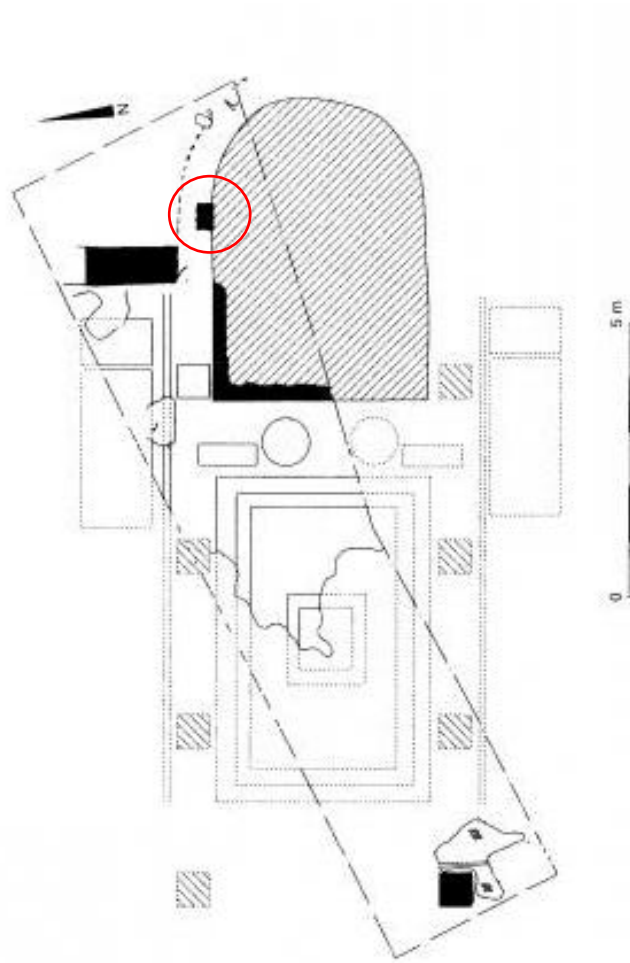


Plate 5 – No. 57 – Alexandra (center of the northern frame of the bema)

Christian Prayer Hall – Megiddo

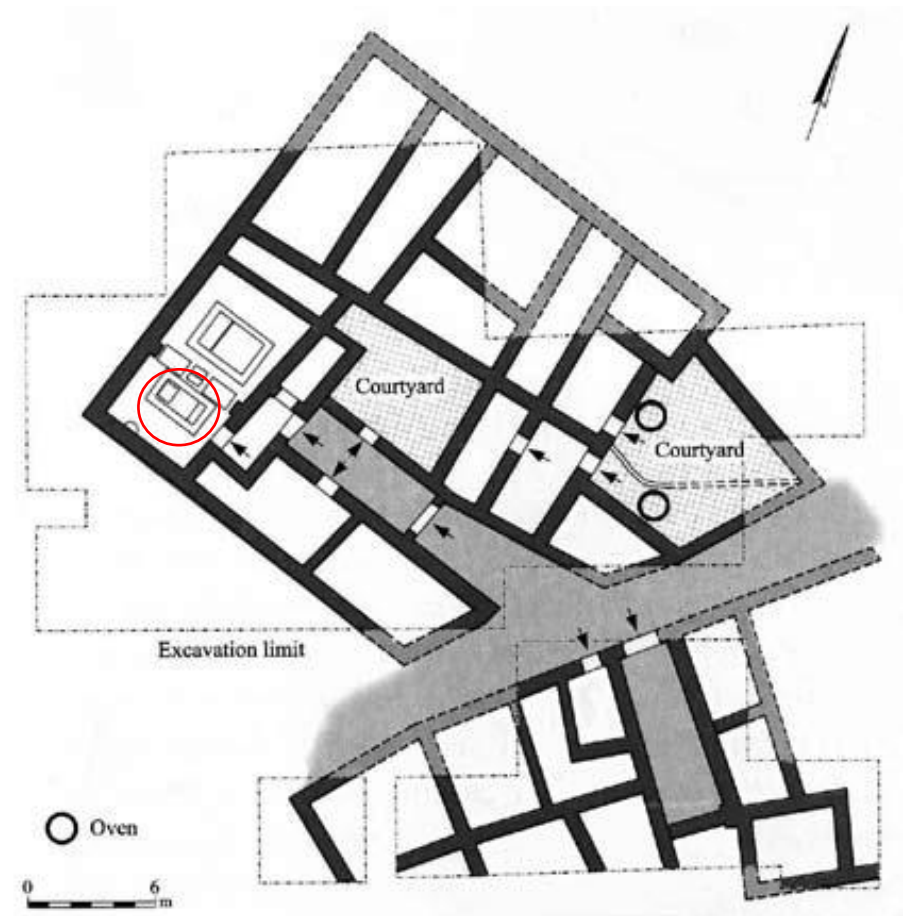


Plate 4 – No. 1 - Akeptous (west side of the southern mosaic panel in the prayer hall), No. 2 - Dorothea, Kyriaka and Primilla (eastern side of the southern mosaic panel)

Byzantine church - Khirbet Zikhrin

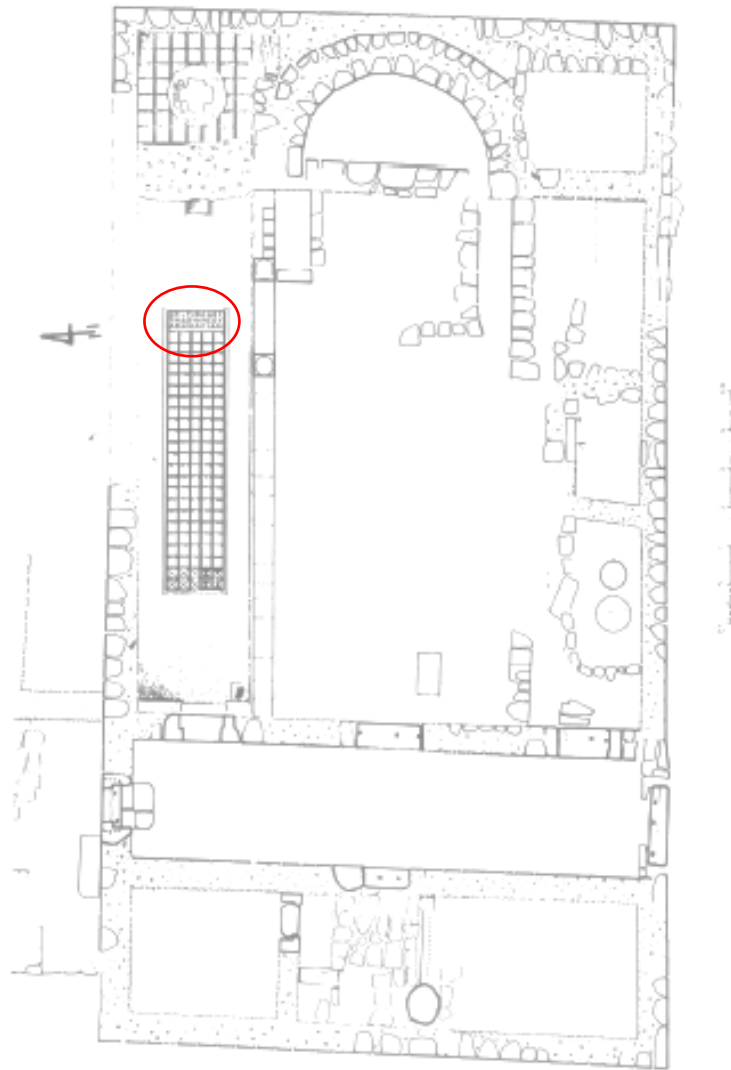


Plate 5 – No. 5 - Athanasia, eastern edge of the northern aisle.

Monastery (remains of two rooms) – Horvat Sokho/ Tell Shocho

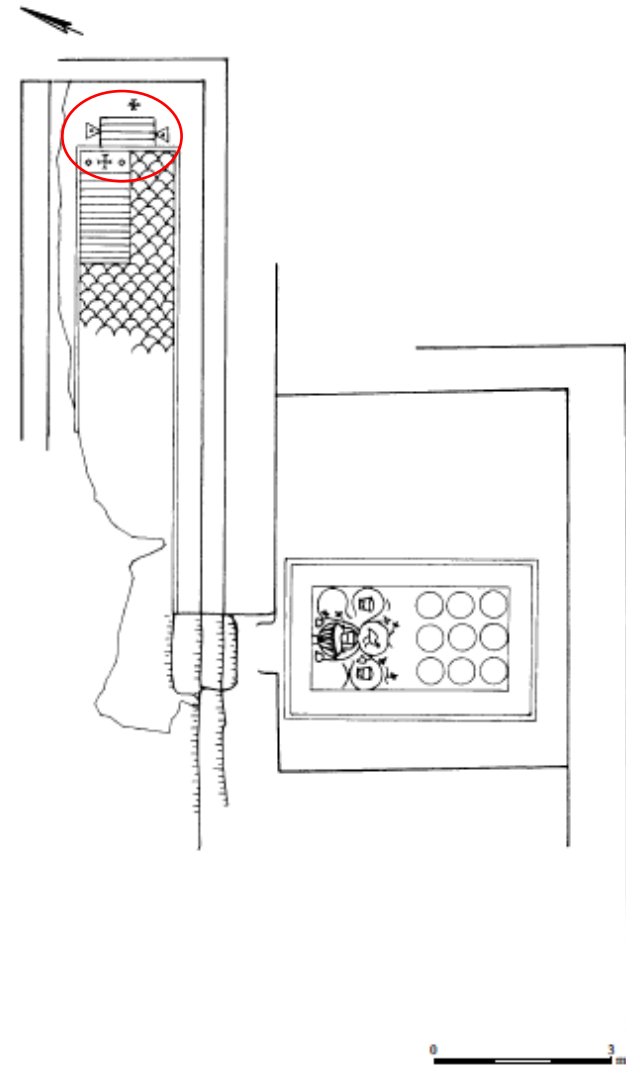


Plate 6 – No. 7. Paula and Alexandra, eastern edge of the northern room.

Northern Church – Herodion

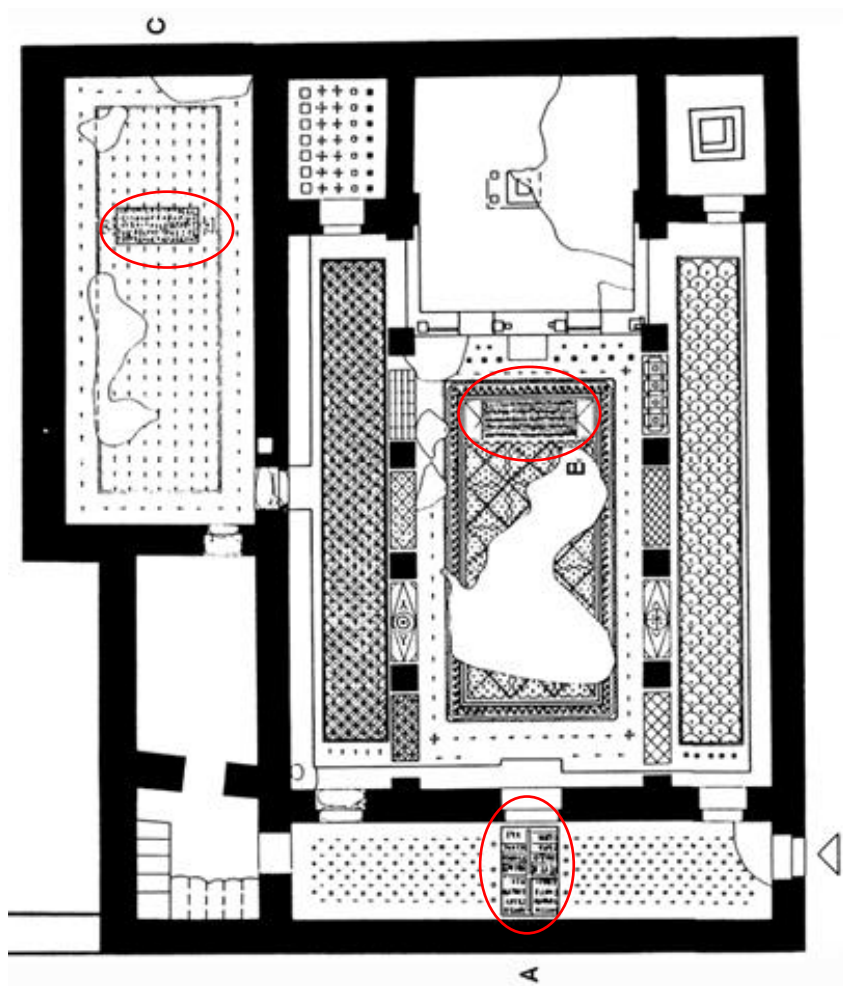


Plate 7 – No. 8C. Zana, Nonna and Saphrica (middle of the nave), 8A+B . Saphrica (A. in the doorway; B. in the northern prayer hall)

Church – Ozem

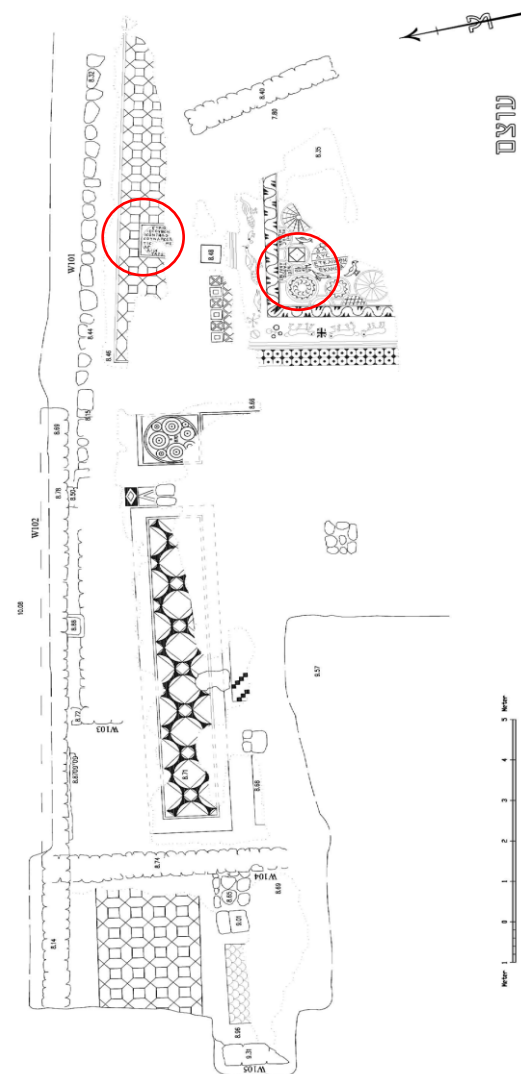


Plate 8 – No. 9, Iaia (middle aisle) and No. 10, Makrella (northern aisle).

North-West Church – Hippos/Sussita

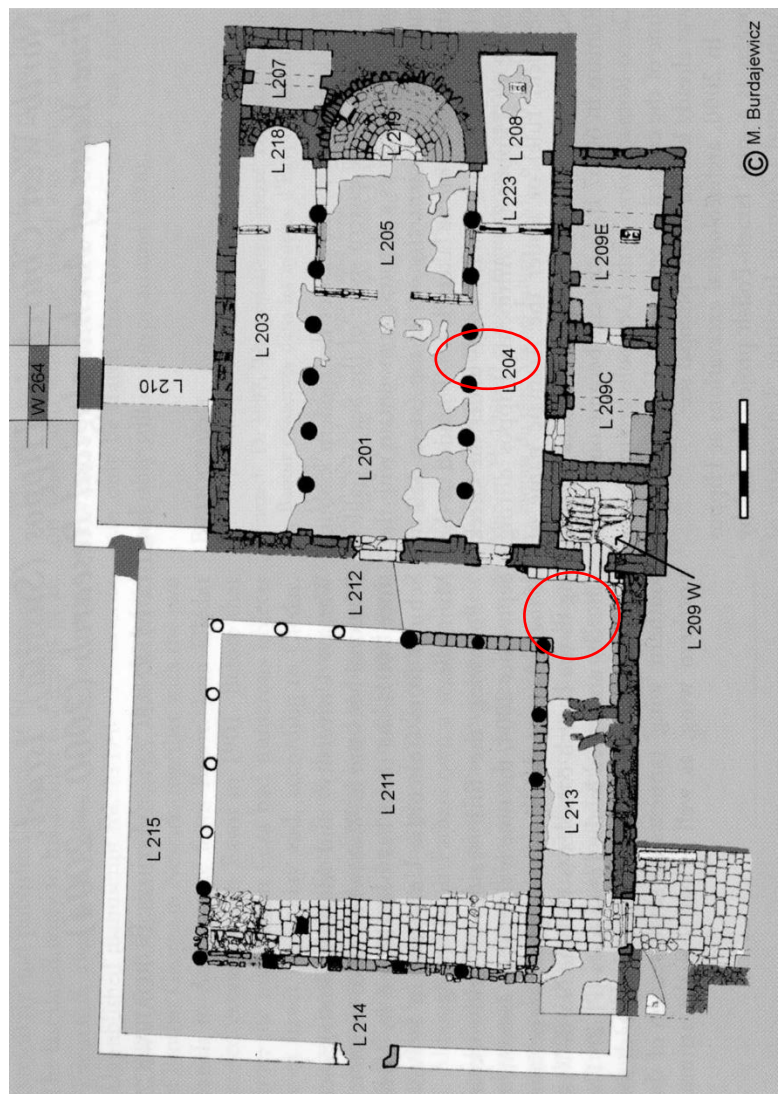


Plate 9 – No. 14 Antona, diaconesse (southern portico, before the entrance of room 209W), No. 15 Heliodora (southern aisle, between third and fourth column, on the edge of the mosaic panel – direction to

Church – Khirbet el-Kerak (latest stage)

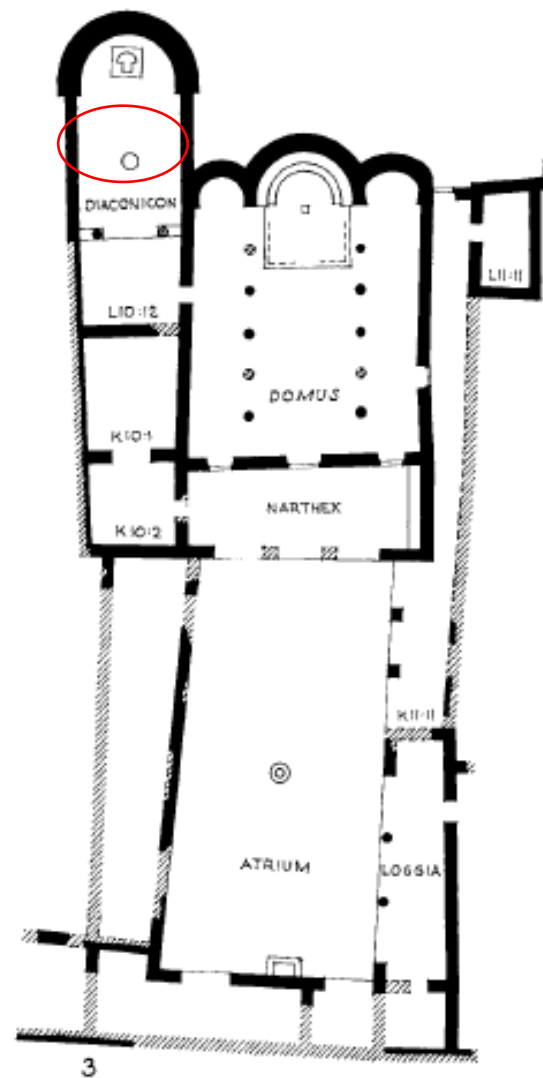


Plate 10 – No. 16 – Theophilia (eastern part of the pavement of the Diaconicon)

Monastery of Lady Mary – Kyria Maria – Beth She'an

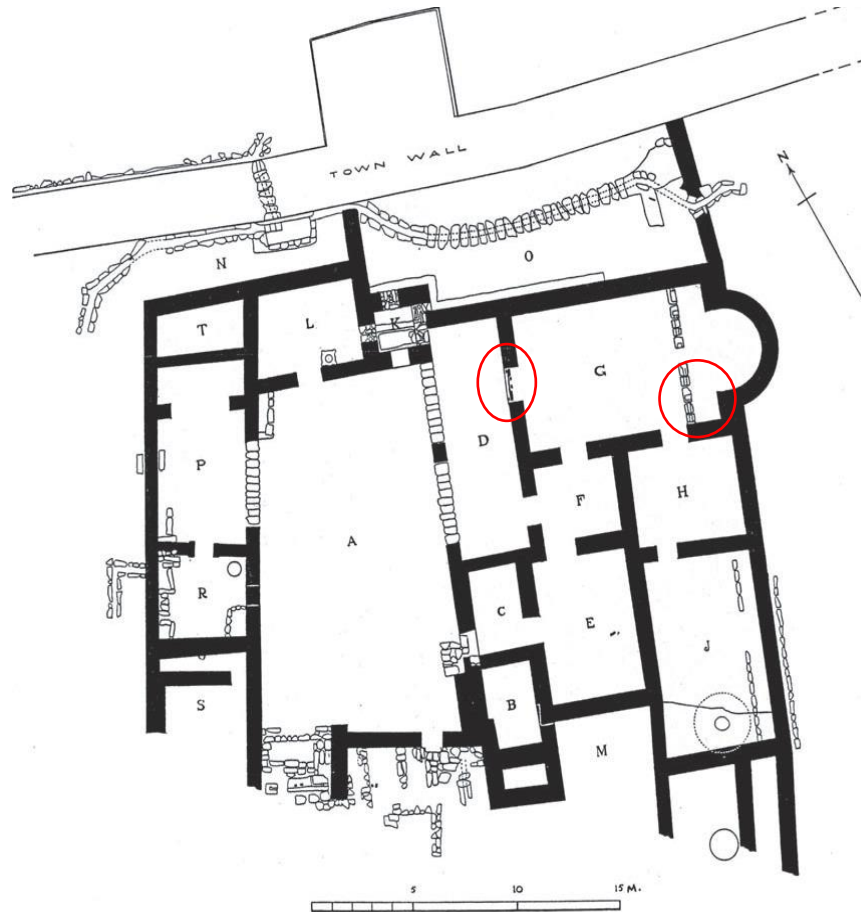


Plate 11 – 17 A. Kyria Maria (room D, doorway to room G), 17 B.
Kyria Maria (Room G, south east corner in front of the nave)

Basilika – Emmaus/Nicopolis

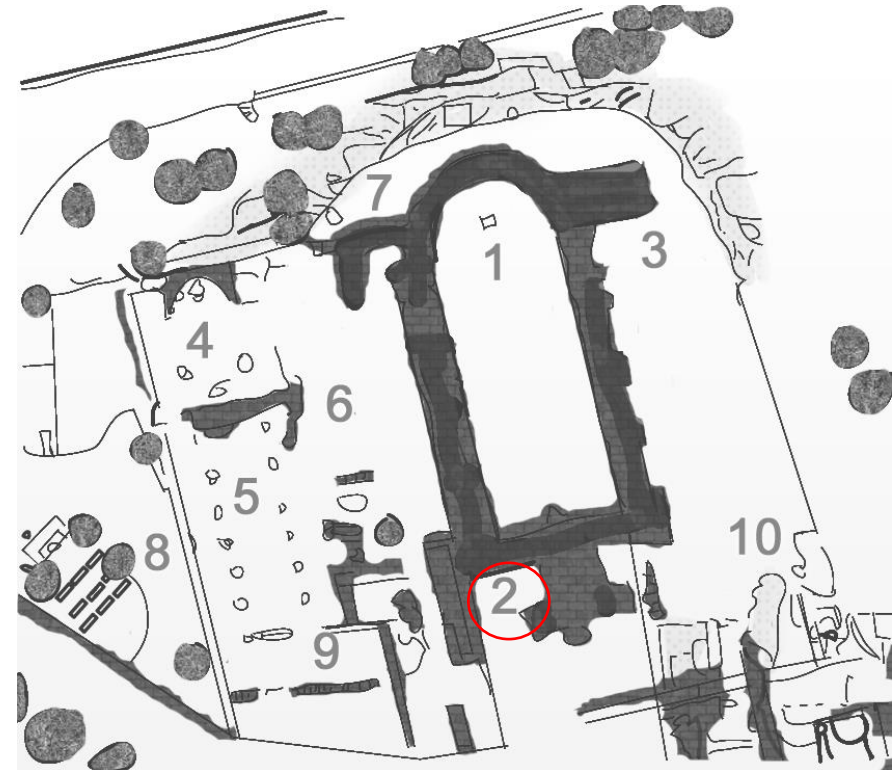


Plate 12 – No. 19 – Mike and Sophronia (in front of the Basilika, close to the entrance)

Church – Khirbet Deiry

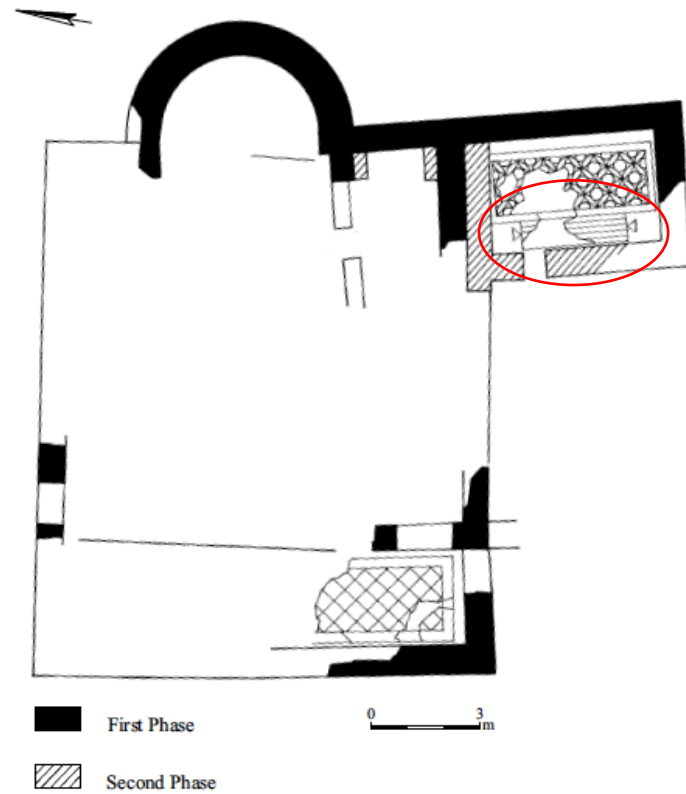


Plate 13 – No. 26 - Theodosia and Maria, southern adjoined room.

Byzantine Church complex – Khirbet Beit Loya

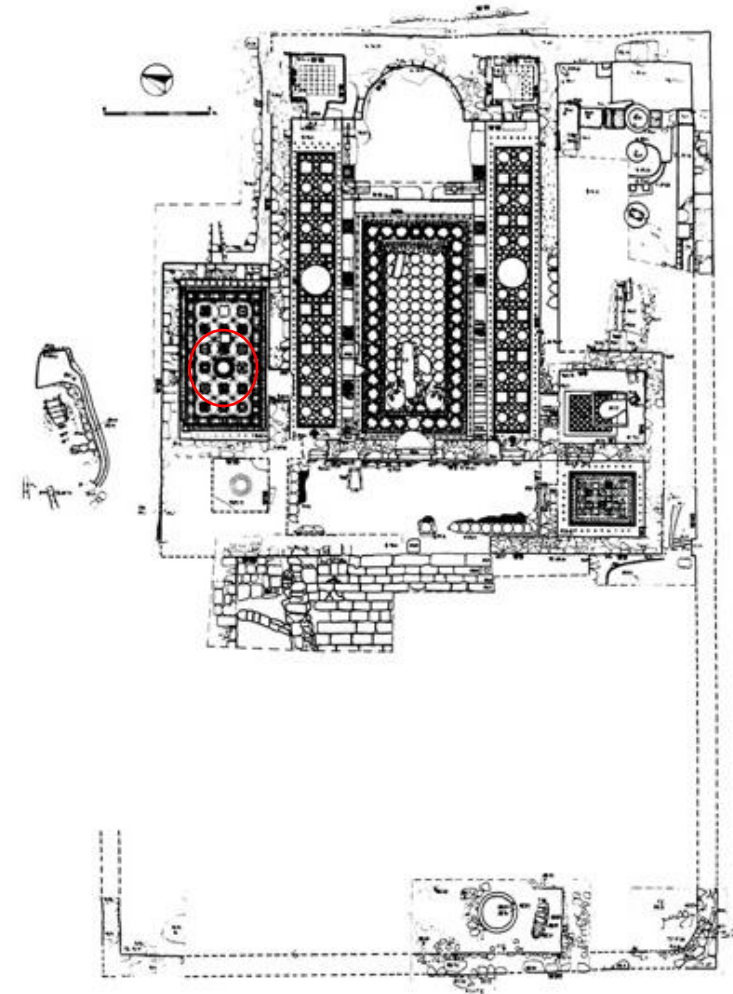


Plate 14 – No. 27. Epanagia (middle of the northern a jointed chapel)

Basilica – Jabaliyah/Gaza

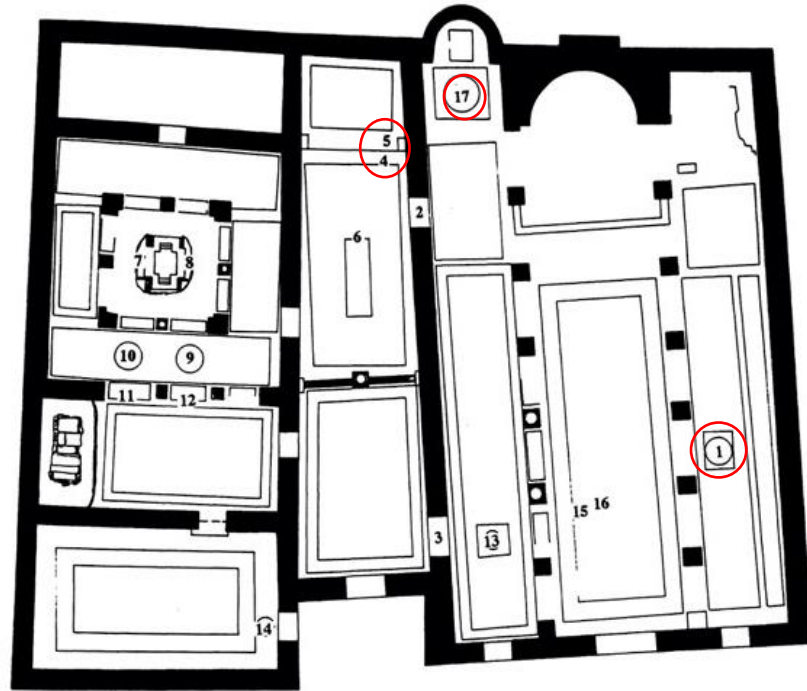


Plate 15 – No. 28 A - Maria (south aisle) and No. 28 B - Maria and Flauia (diaconicon), No. 29 -, Salamatha (north aisle near apse)

Church – Kissufim



Plate 16 – No. 30 Kaleora and Lady of Siltous (on the north side of the main aisle) and No. 31 Maria (over a tomb in the northern aisle)

Monastery of Kaianus, Basilica church - Ayun Musa

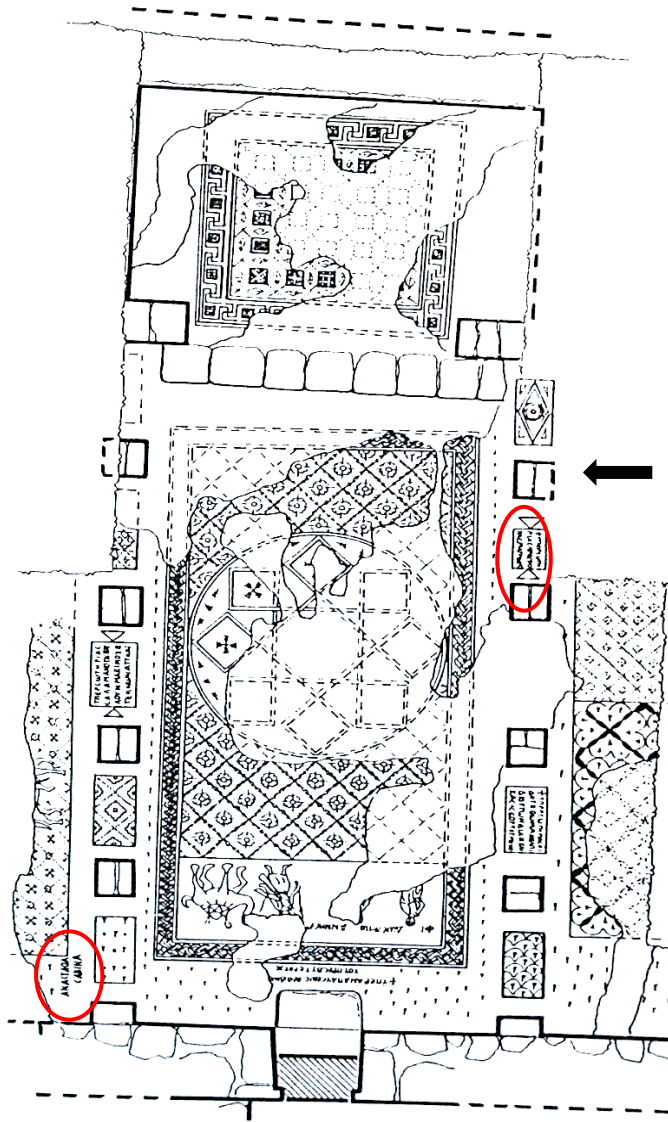


Plate 19 – No. 11 - Anastasia, Sabina (south-western corner in the northern aisle), No. 46 - Matrona (between the columns on the south side)

Basilica - Kh. Sa'ad/Bostra

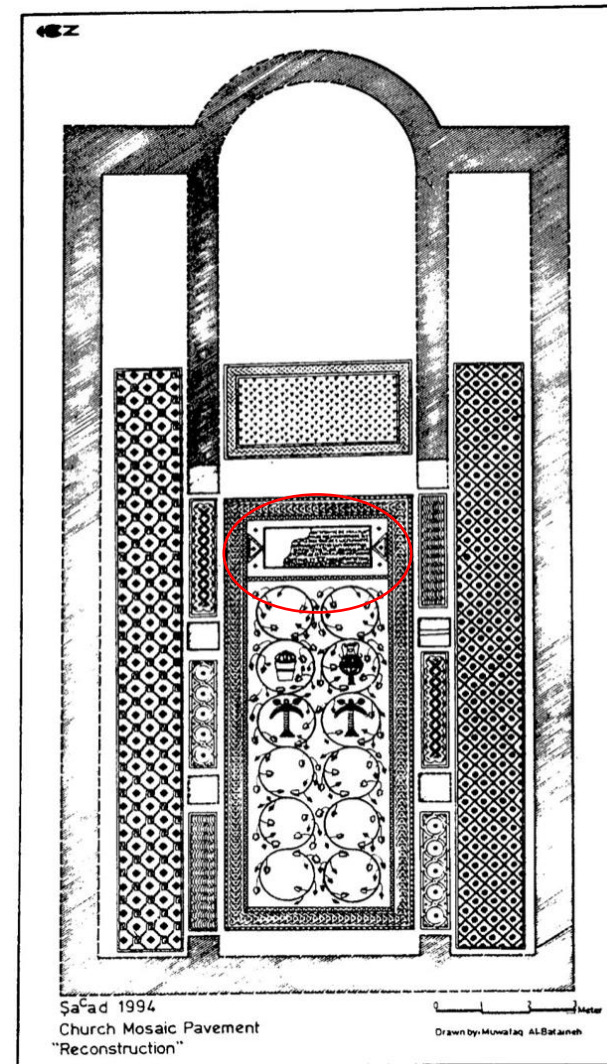


Plate 20 – No. 32 – Porfyria (located in the central nave)

Church of Saint Basil – Rihab

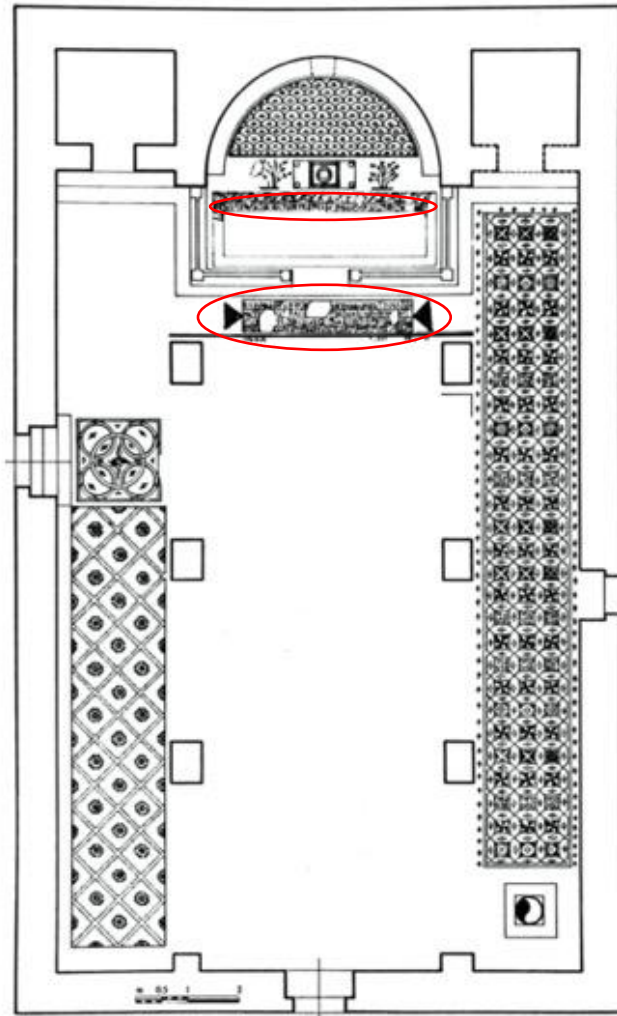


Plate 21 – No. 33 A+B. Zoe, deaconess. A) in front of the altar; B) central I front of the chancel screens, middle nave

Church of Saints Cosmas and Damian – Jerash

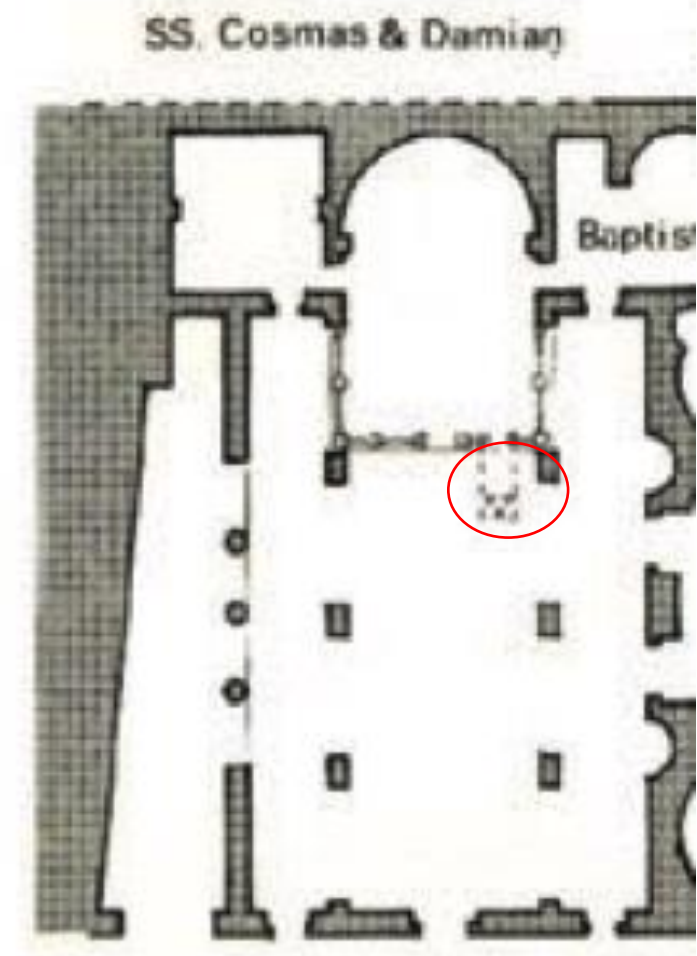


Plate 22 – No. 34 – Georgia (main aisle, in front of the steps leading to the bema and the chancel screen)

Church of Bishop Isaiah – Jerash

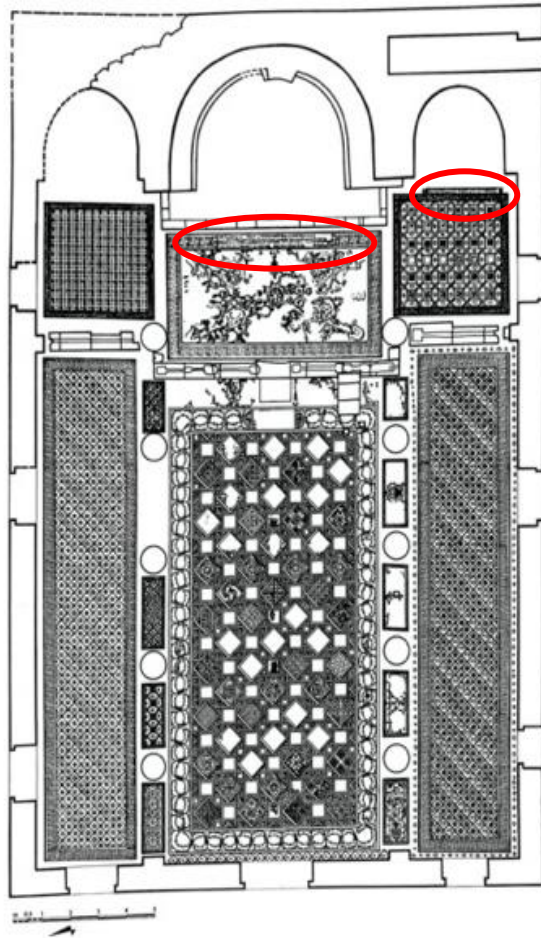


Plate 23 – No. 35 A+B. Eulampia (in front of the central nave
and in the south nave)

Church of Bishop Marianos – Jerash

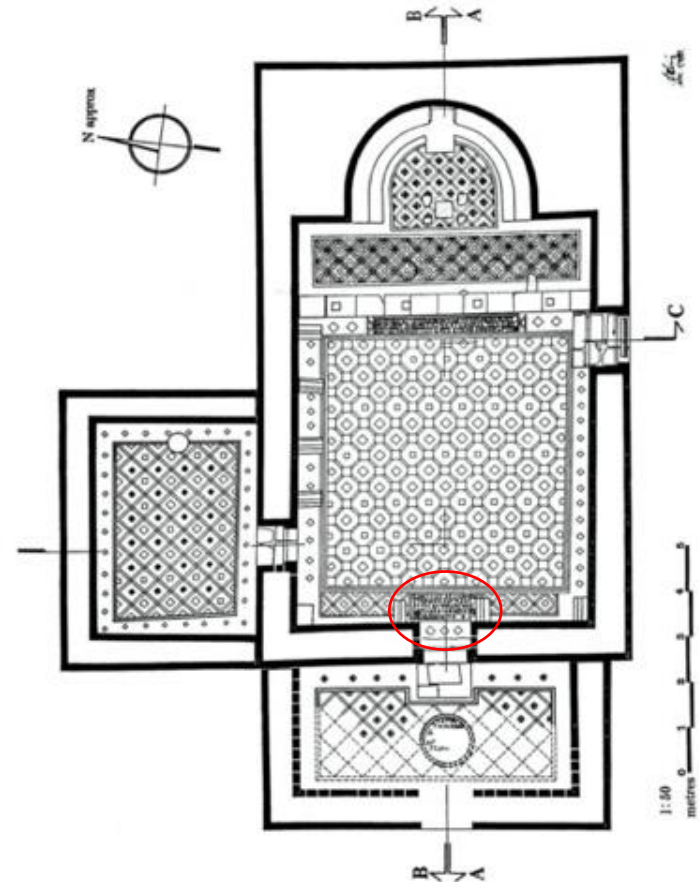


Plate 24 – No. 36 Julia (doorway, entrance to the main nave)

Chapel at the Cathedral – Jerash

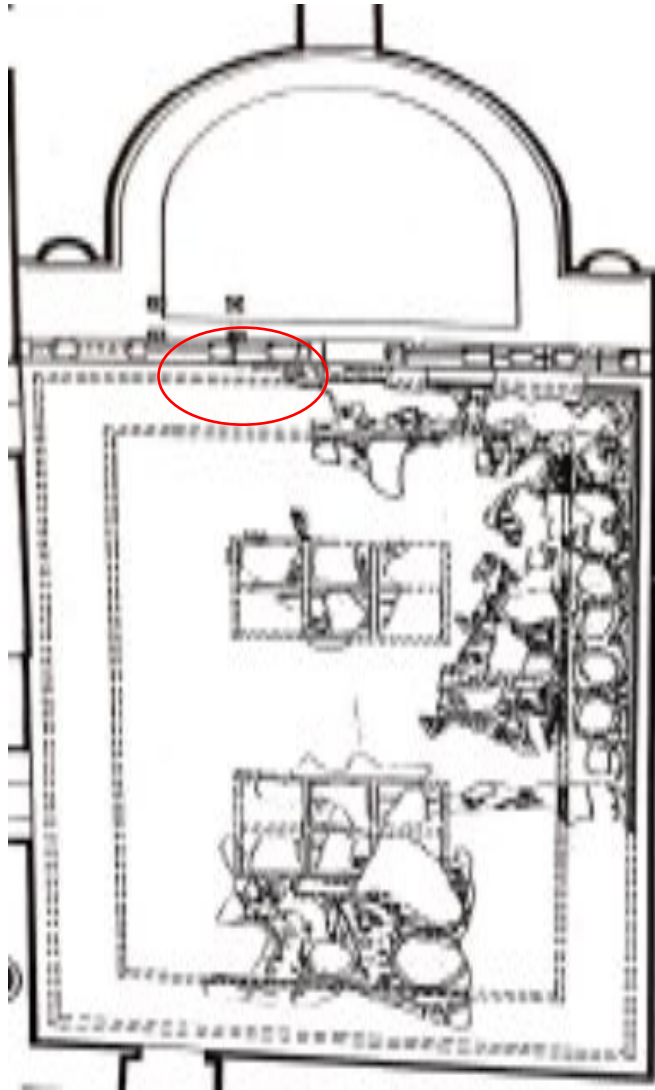


Plate 25 – No. 37 Maria (central nave of the chapel, before the chancel enclosure)

Church of St. Sergius - Tall al-Umayri

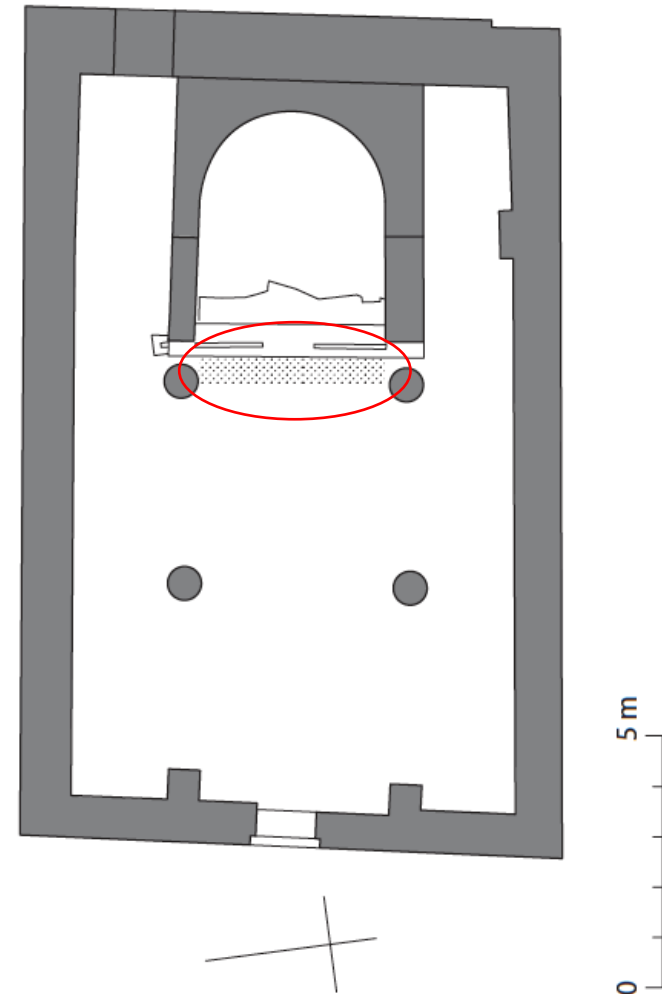


Plate 26 – No. 38 Maria (central nave in front of the chancel screen)

Church of Saint Kyriakos – al-Quwaysmah

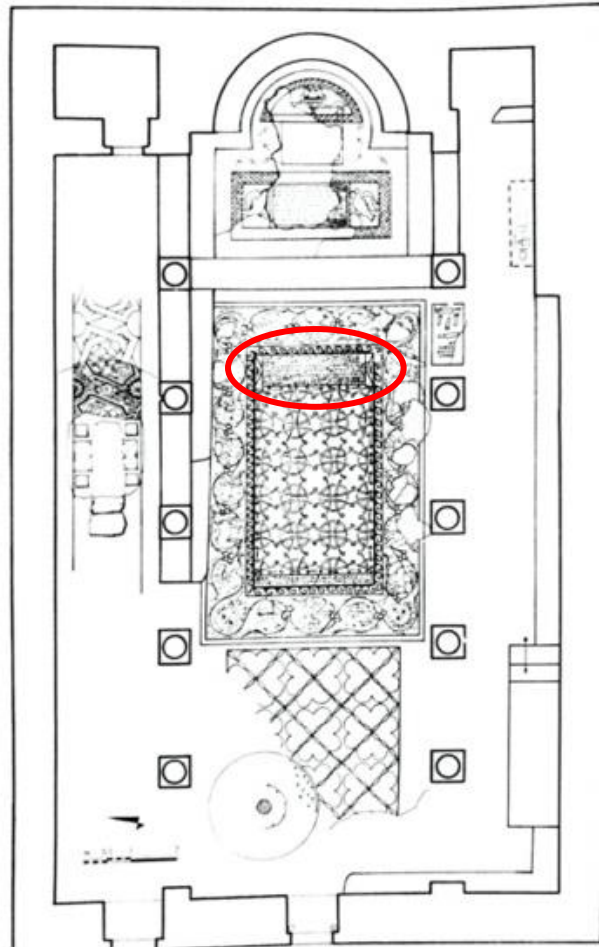


Plate 27 – No. 39. Matrona (middle of the central aisle)

Church of St. George - Kh. Al-Mukhayat

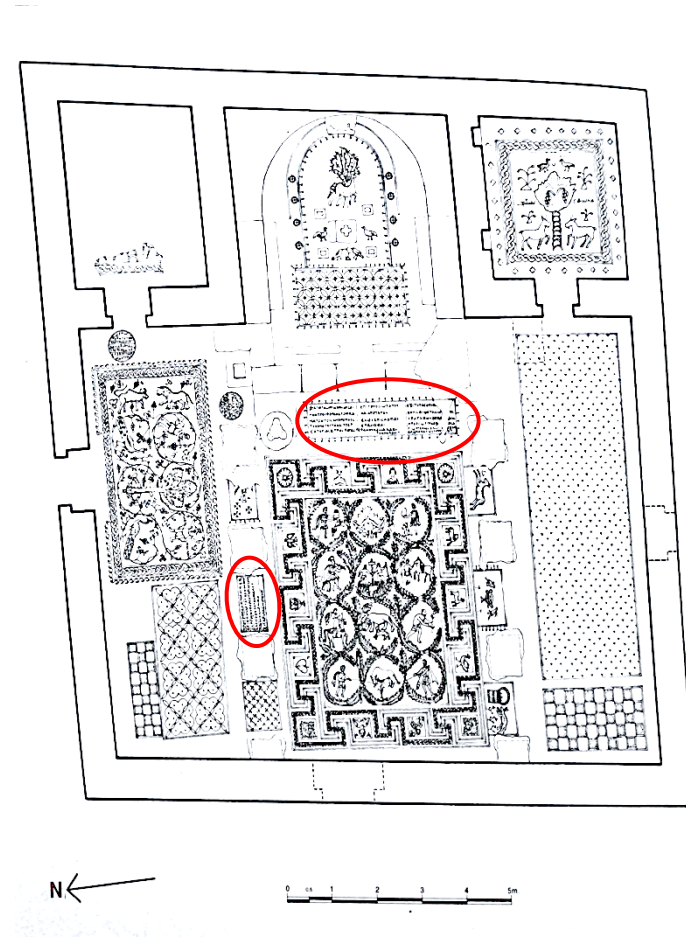


Plate 28 – No. 41. Comitissa (inscription set in the nave, in front of the chancel screen), No. 40 Epiphania, Mike, Mary and Kalonike

Church of St. Lot and Porcopius - Kh. Al-Mukhayat

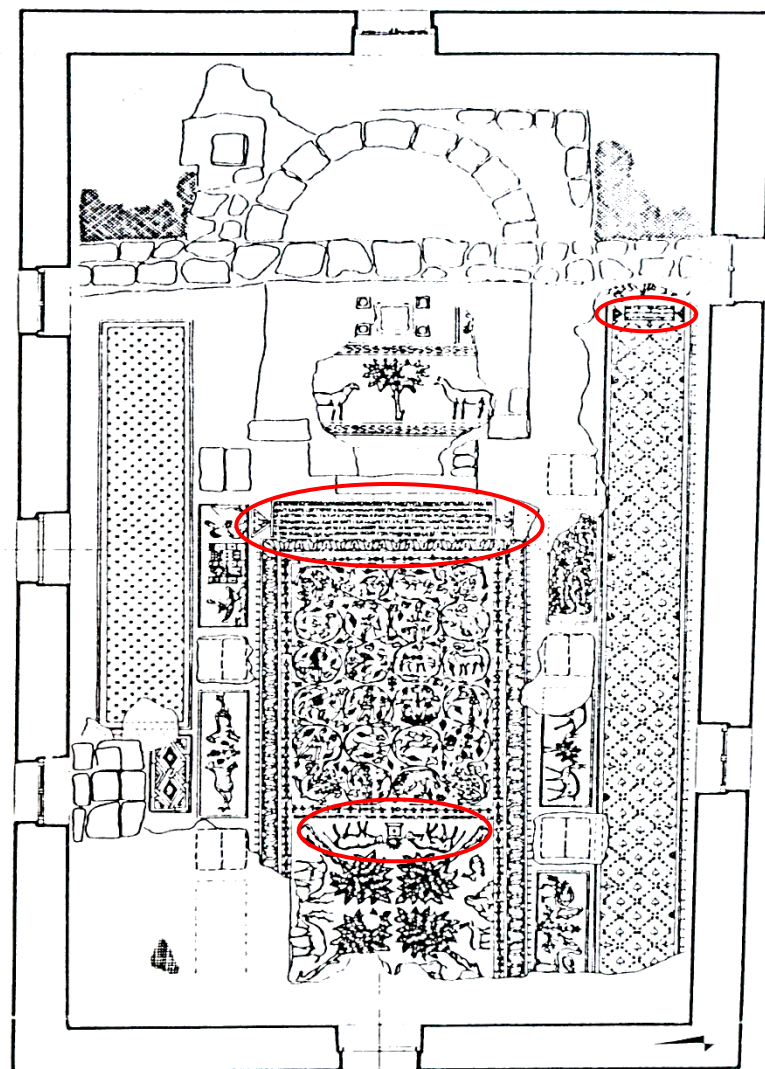


Plate 19 – No. 42. Anastasia, Comitissa and Rabatha (positioned in the nave), No. 44 Rome, Porphyria and Mary (eastern end of the southern aisle mosaic), No. 43 Epiphania (western side of the nave, under two bulls)

Church of Amos and Kaseius, Chapel of Priest John - Wadi Afrit (kh. Al-mukhayat)

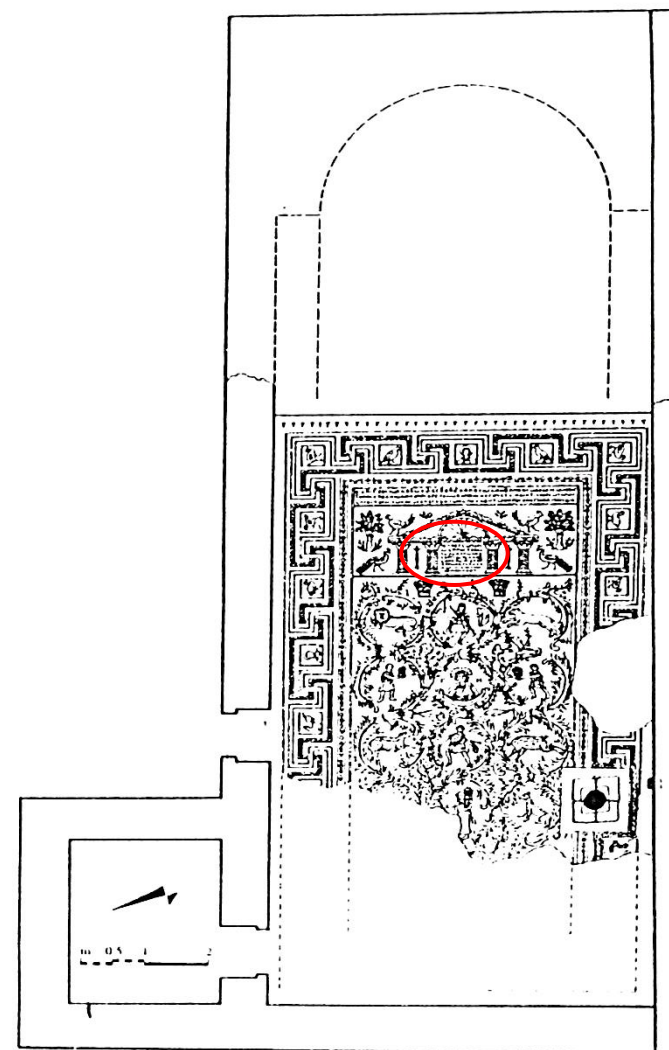


Plate 30- No. 45 - Maria, Porphyria and Rome (central nave)

Old Diaconicon, Baptistry – Mount Nebo

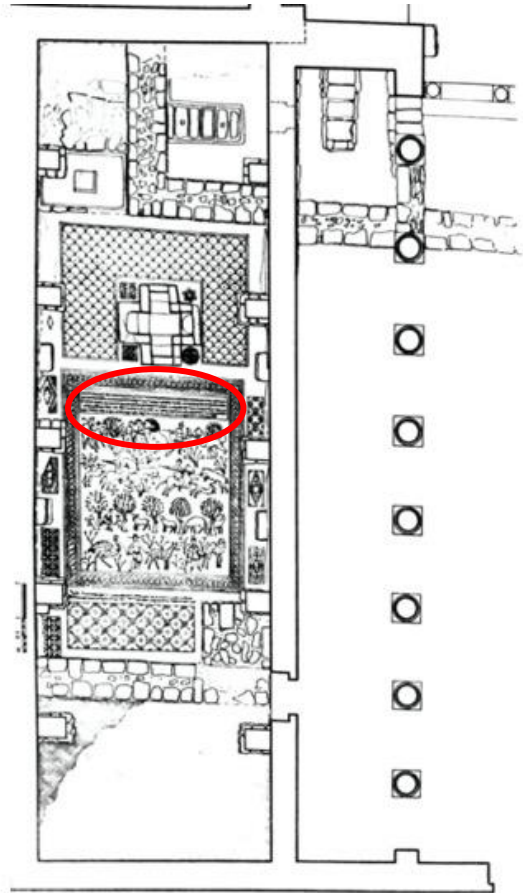


Plate 31 – No. 47 Sergia (middle of the central aisle, in front of the baptistry)

The chapel of Atwal – Atwal, now Archaeological Museum Madaba

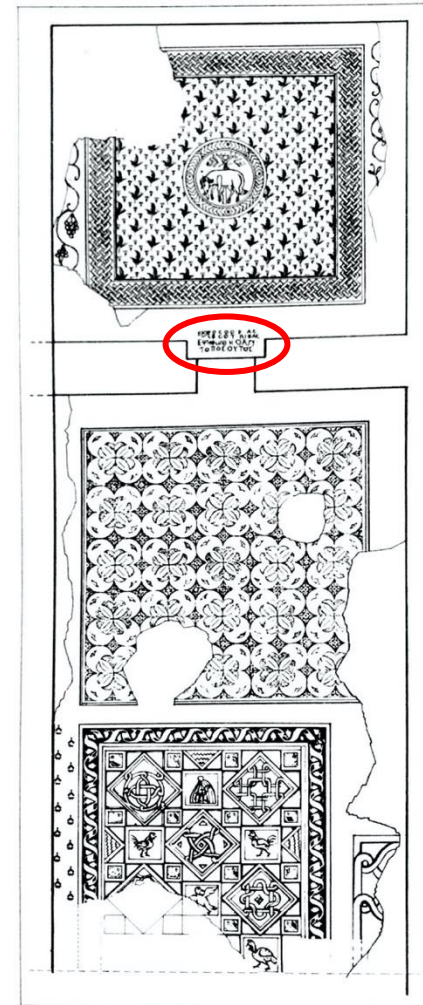


Plate 32 – No. 48 Aitha

Church of the holy Apostles – Madaba

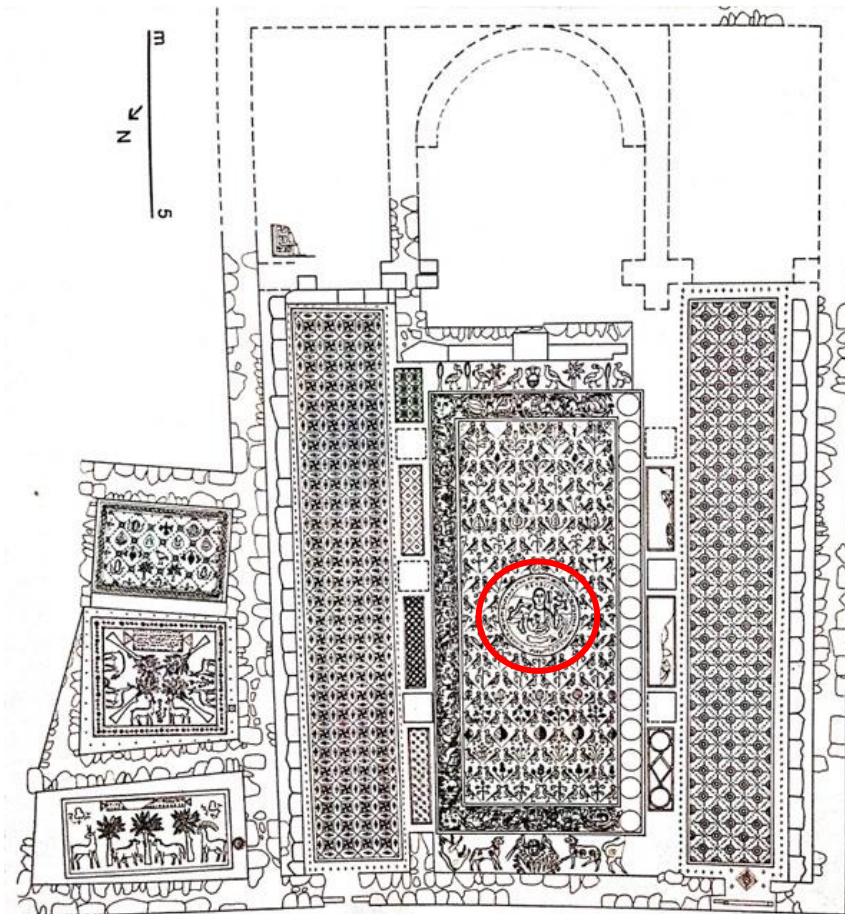


Plate 33 – No. 49 Theodora (middle of the central aisle)

Church of the Lions – Umm er-Rasas

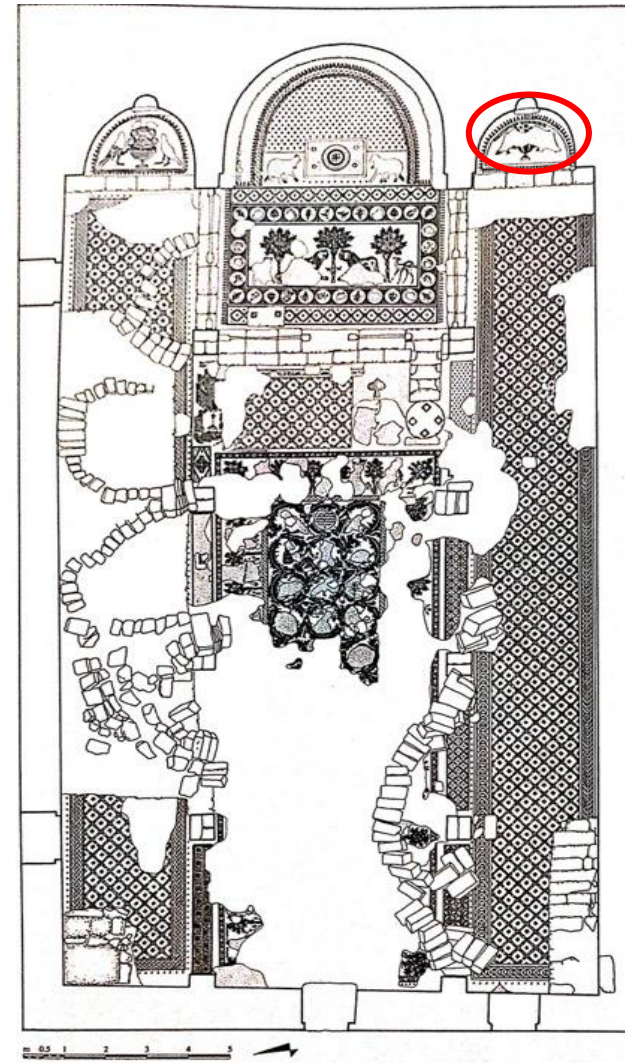


Plate 34 – No. 51 - Talitha (right/southern apse)

Church of Saint Menas – Rihab

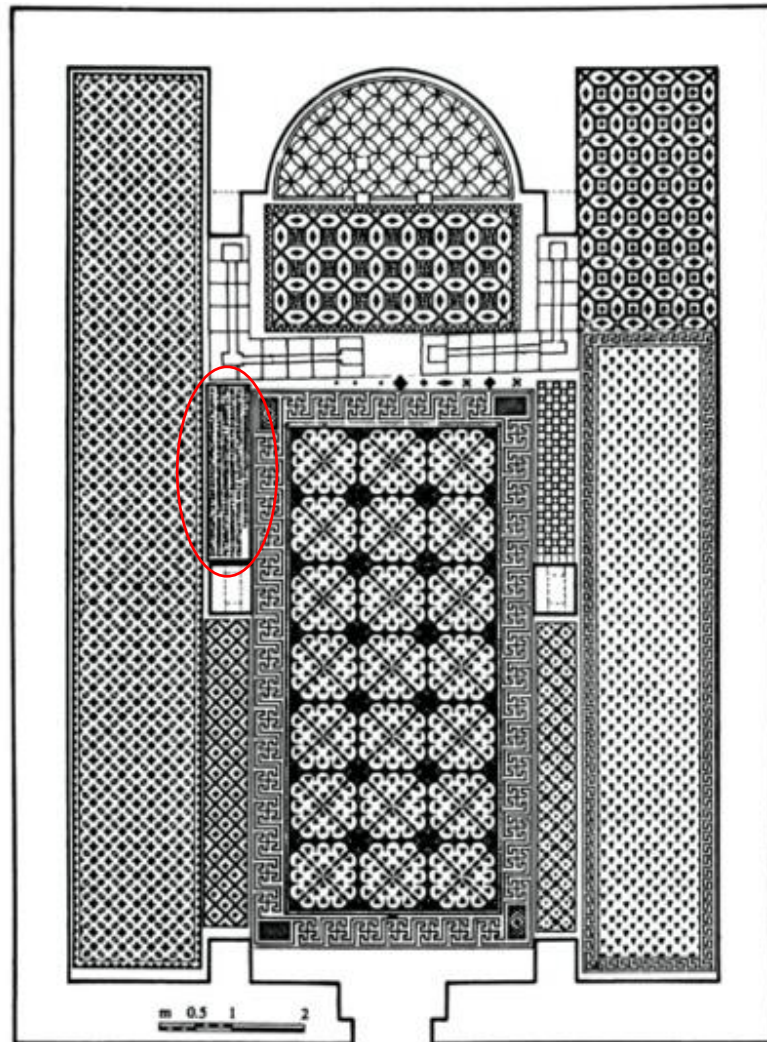


Plate 35 – No. 54 - Comitissa (inter columnar panel in the north)

Chapel of Elias, Maria and Soreg – Jerash

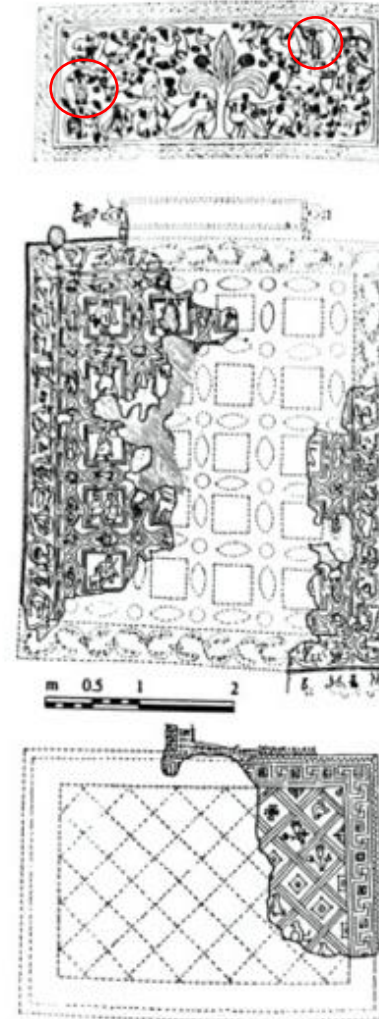


Plate 36 – No. 55 - Maria (northern part of the presbyterium),
Soreg (south-east in the first row)

Church of Saint Stephan – Umm er-Rasas

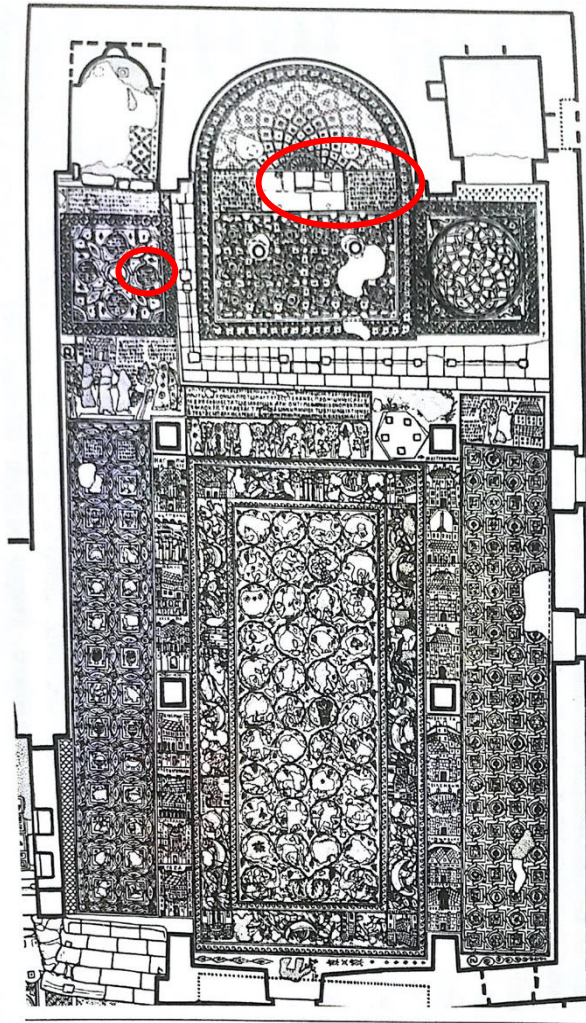
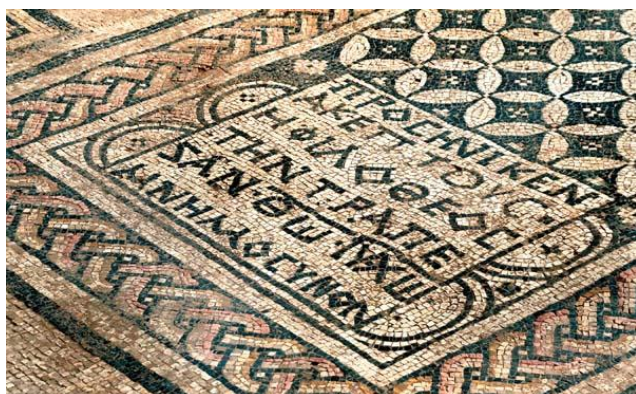


Plate 37 – No. 60 - Goumela (north aisle, next to the bema),
No. 59 - Maria and Zada (central part of the bema, above the

MOSAIC CATALOGUE



No: 1	Name: Ακεπτους – Akeptous	Date: 3 rd century	Size: 67 x 80 cm
Site: Megiddo - Legio, prayer hall – domus ecclesiae Palestina II		Description and location: The inscription is made with Black and white tesserae, framed by a black rectangle. Each short side has two double framed semi-circuits attached. Located in the southern mosaic panel of the prayer hall.	
Transcription: Προσηνικεν Ακεπτους η φιλο θεος την τραπε- ζαν ΘΩ ΙΥ ΧΩ μνημοψυνον			
Translation: The God loving Akeptous has offered this altar to the God Jesus Christ as Memorial			
Sources: Tepper/Di Segni 2006: 31-42. COJS: http://cojs.org/akeptous_inscription-_3-4th_century_ce/			



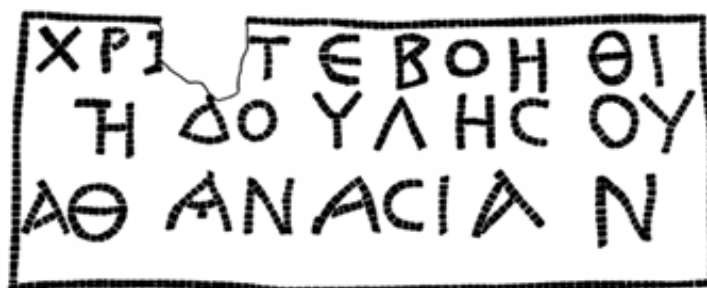
No.:	Δωροθεας – Dorothea	Date:	Size:
2	Κυριακης - Kyriaka Πριμιλλης – Primilla Χρηστην - Chreste	3 rd century	38 x 86 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Megiddo, Christian prayer hall Palestina II		Black and white mosaic framed by a black rectangle. Each short side has two double framed semi-circuits attached. Located in the southern mosaic panel – at the eastern edge.	
Transcription:			
Μνημονευσατε Πριμιλλης Και Κυρι- ακης Και Δωροθεας ετιδε Και Χρηστην			
Translation:			
Remember Primilla and Kyr- iaka and Dorothea and moreover Chreste.			
Sources:			
COJS: http://cojs.org/akeptous_inscription-_3-4th_century_ce/			
Adams 2008: 62-69.			
Tepper/Di Segni 2006: 31-42.			



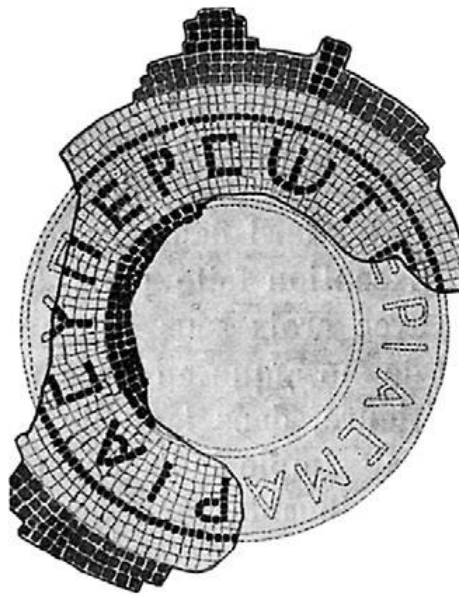
No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
3	Σωσανν(α) - Sosanna	478 A.D. 5 th century	letters 4.5-6.5 cm high
Site:		Description and location:	
Horvath Karkara, canyon near Nahal Bezet. Northern Church Phoenicia		The inscription is set in reddish letters on white ground. Some letters at the beginning are missing. The inscription id famed by two lines above and underneath Located along the semi-circular wall of the northern apse.	
Transcription:			
[...] ΗΣΤΗΘΕΙΤΗΣΔΟΥΛΗΣΣΟΥΣΩΣΑΝΝ [Κ(ύρ)ιε μν]ήστηθαι τής δούλης σου Σωσάνν(α).			
Translation:			
(Oh Lord,) remember your servant Sosann(a).			
Sources:			
Di Segni/Aschkenazi 2020: 305-306, fig. 3.			



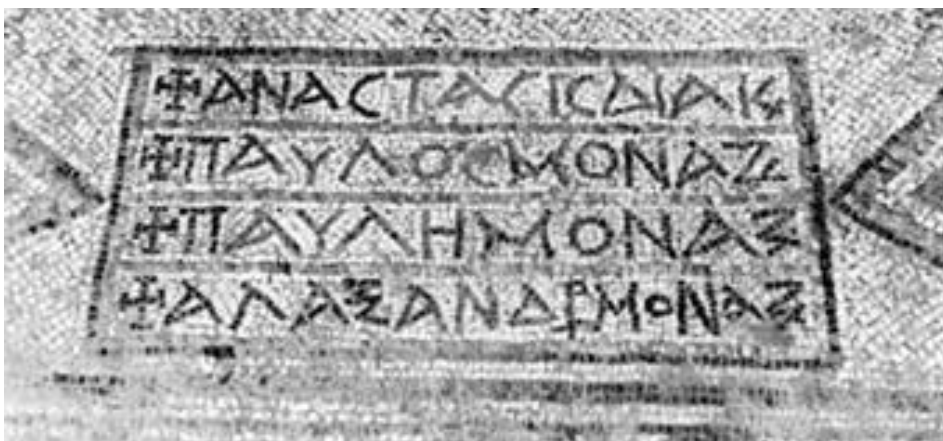
No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
4	Δομνίνα - Domnina	415 A.D. 5 th century	-
Site:		Description and location:	
Evron, Hebron Church, Phoenicia		The inscription in black tesserae is set in a double framed rectangular mosaic. Located at the eastern edge of the atrium.	
Inscription: [.] [.] ΔΟ ΜΝΙΝΑΘ ΥΓΑΤΡΙ ΑΥ ΤΕΚΥΡΙΕ ΜΝΗΣΚΟΥ[.] [.] Transcription:: [.] [.] Δο μνίνα θ υγατρί αυ τες, Κύριε μνήσκου[.] [.]			
Translation: ... Do- mina, her daughter, Lord, remember ...			
Sources: SEG 37:1519 Tzaferis 1987: 36-55. Madden 2014: 176-180, nr. 258. Brown.edu - https://library.brown.edu/cds/projects/iip/viewinscr/evro0010/			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
5	Αθανασία – Athanasia	5 th century	70 x 170 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Horvath Zikhrin, Church in Area F Palestina I, between Caesarea Maritima and Jerusalem		The inscription is made with Black and white tesserae, it is framed by a black rectangular boarder. Located at the eastern end of the northern aisle.	
Transcription:			
Χρι[σ]τέ, βοήθι τη δούλη σου Αθανασίαν			
Translation:			
Christ help your servant Athanasia			
Source:			
SEG 35:1548/ SEG 36:1324 Fischer 1989: 1787-1807. Madden 2014: 137, no. 204. CIIP IV.1, Ameling 2018: No. 2651, fig. 2651.1 and 2651.2.			



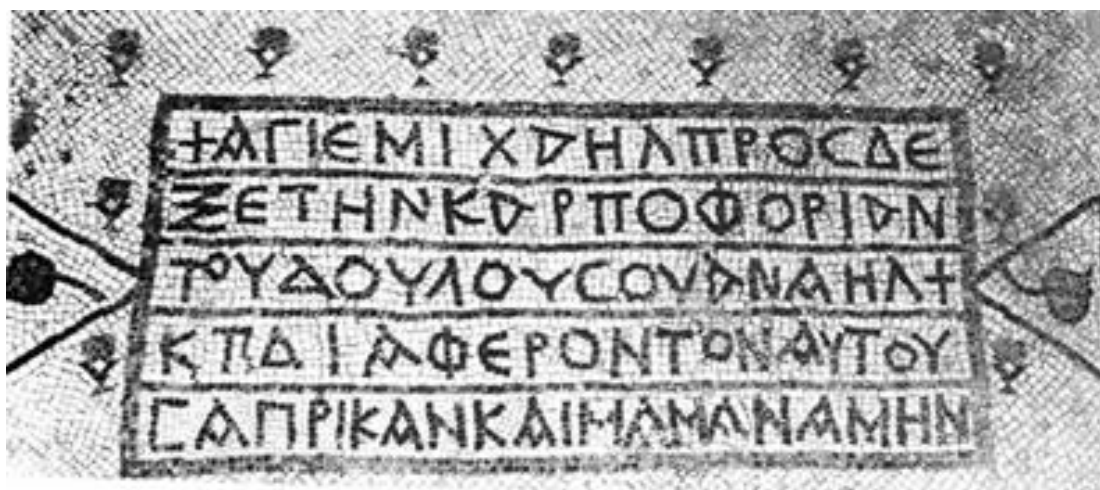
No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
6	Μαρία - Maria	5 th centuy	-
Site:		Description and location:	
Jerusalem, Church complex of St. Peter in Gallicantu Palestina I		The inscription is set in black letters on white ground, in circular form. Surrounded by a single black line. Located in the south-eastern corner of the Byzantine church. The mosaic was partly destroyed by removal.	
Transcription:			
Υπέρ σωτε [ρίας Μα]ρίας			
Translation:			
For the salvation of Maria			
Sources:			
CIIP I.2, Di Segni 2012: No. 803, fig. 803.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
7	Αλεξανδρα – Alexandra Παυλα – Paula	5 ^h century byzantine period	letters 7-8 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Tell Shocho (Sokho) – Tell Shuweihe, byzantine building complex – possible remains of a monastery. Palestina I, south-west of Jerusalem		The inscription is set in a tabula ansata. Set in the eastern edge of the pavement of the northern room.	
Transcription:			
+ ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΣ ΔΙΑΚ + + ΠΑΥΛΟΣ ΜΟΝΑΖ + + ΠΑΥΛΗ ΜΟΝΑΖ + + ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡ ΜΟΝΑΖ + +Αναστάσι(ο)σ διάκ(ονος) +Παύλος μονάζ(ων) +Παύλη μοναζ(ουσα) +Αλεξάνδρ(α) μονάζ(ουσα)			
Translation:			
Anastasis, the deacon, Paulus, the monk, Paula, the nun, Alexandr[...], living a monastic live.			
Sources:			
SEG. 46-2002 Meimaris 1986: nr. 882/1167. Magen/Kagan 2012: 121-122. CIIP IV.1, Ameling 2018: No. 3312, fig. 3312.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
8 A	Σαπρικα (Σαφρικα) – Saprika/Saphrika	End of 5 th /6 th century	140 x 105 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Herodion - Kh. Furaidis, Northern church Palestina I, south of Jerusalem		The inscription is set in black letters on white ground. Framed by a thick black rectangular line. The inscription is internally divided by a cross set in a black and white pattern. Located in the narthex, in front of the entrance to the central nave.	
Transcription 1:			
+ Αύτη ή πύλη τού Κ(θρίο)υ είσελευ- σοντε έν αύτή διάκαιοι + Κ(ύρι)ε Ύ(οί)σ Χ(ριστό)σ μνήσθητι τόν δούλον σο- υ Άναήλ και Σαπρίκα.			
Translation 1:			
+ This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter into it.+ O Lord the son Christ, remember your servants Anael, and Saprica			
Sources:			
Di Segni 1990: 177-184. Di Segni 2016 A: 66-67. Madden 2014: 74-76. Magen/Kagan 2012: 136-140. CIIP IV.2, Ameling 2018: No. 3325, fig. 3327.			



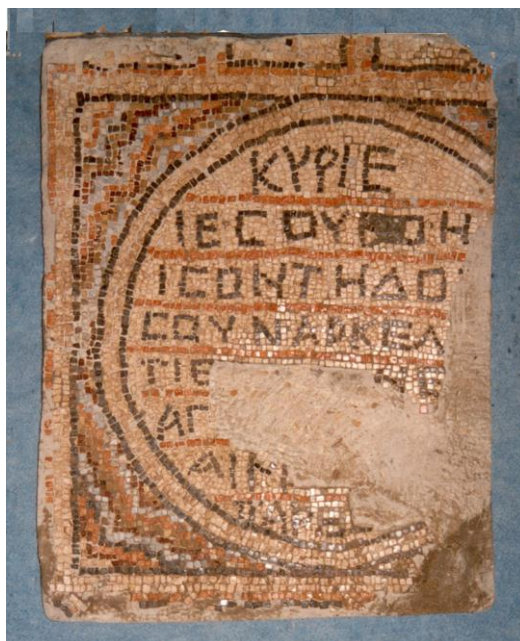
No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
8 B	Σαπρικα (Σαφρικα) – Saprika/Saphrika	End of 5 th /6 th century	65 x 150 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Herodion - Kh. Furaidis, Northern church Palestina I, south of Jerusalem		The inscription is set in a <i>tabula ansata</i> . The black letters are on white ground. The rows are divided by single lines. Located in a small room attached to the northern side of the church.	
Transcription:			
+Αγιε Μιχαήλ πρόσδε- ξε τήν καρποφορίαν τού δούλου σου Αναήλ + κ(αί) τ(ών) διαφερόντων αὐτοῦ Σαπρικαν καί Μάμαν ἀμήν.			
Translation:			
+Saint Michael, receive the offerings of your servant Anael+ and his <i>household</i> * Saprica and Mamas, Amen.			
Sources:			
Di Segni 1990: 177-184. Di Segni 2016 A: 66-67. Madden 2014: 74-76. Magen/Kagan 2012: 136-140. CIIP IV.2, Ameling 2018: No. 3327, fig. 3327. * „tòn diapherontón autou“- Segni 1990, translates with/as household; Madden 2014, translates with/as neighbours. Since Anael and Saprica are mentioned as brother and sister in 8 C a close familiar relation is obvious.			



No.: 8 C	Name: Σαφρίκα – Saphrica Ζανα – Zana (2x) Νονας – Nonna	Date: End of 5 th /6 th century	Size: 175 x 71 cm
Site: Herodion – Kh. Furaidis, Northern church Palestina I, south of Jerusalem		Description and location: The inscription is set in black letters on white ground, framed by a single lined rectangle. The rows are separated by thin black lines. Located at the eastern end of the central nave.	
Transcription: Κ(ύρι)ε Ὑ(ιό)σ Χ(ριστό)σ κ(αί) ἅγιε Μιχαήλ πρόσδεξε τήν καρπο- φωρίαν τό δούλον σου τό τέκνον Ἰουλέσα Σα- φρίκα καί Ἀναήλ ἀδελφών κ(αί) τ(ο)ύς αὐτών κ(αί) Σαλα- έου κ(αί) τό τέκνον αὐτοῦ κ(αί) Ἀβραάμ κ(αί) τό τέκν- ον αὐτοῦ κ(αί) Ζαναs κ(αί) Νώνας κ(αί) Ζάνα θυγατήρ Νόνας.			
Translation: O Lord, the son holy Christ and holy Michael; receive the offering of your servant, the child of Ioulesas, Saphrica and Anael (her) brother and their household, and of Salaeos and his child; and of Abraham and his child, and of Zana and Nonna, and Nonnas daughter Zana.			
Sources: SEG 37:1489. Di Segni 1990: 177-184. Di Segni 2016 A: 6-67. Madden 2014: 74-76. Ovidah 1987: 69-70, pl. LXXXII. Magen/Kagan 2012. 136-140. CIIP IV.2, Ameling 2018: No. 3326.			



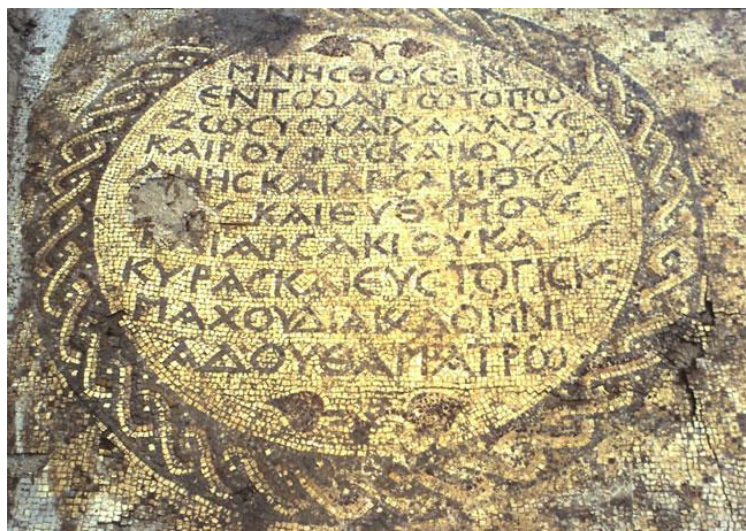
No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
9	Ιαία - Iaia	430 A.D. (Less likely 530 A.D.) 5 th century	-
Site:		Description and location:	
Ozem Church, Palestina I		Set near the north-western corner of the nave mosaic. Divided in two parts, one framed by a half circle, the second inscription set above between two medallions. Black letters on white ground, the letters have an average hight between 3,8 and 6 cm.	
Transcription:			
1. Νεεσταβος ἀναγνώ(στης)			
2. Ιαία μήτηρ αὐτού.			
Translation:			
1. Nestabos the reader.			
2. Iaia his mother.			
Sources:			
Habas 2018 : 97-120, fig. 5.			
DiSegni 2012 : 153-158.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
10	Μαρκελλα – Marcella	430 A.D. (Less likely 530 A.D.) 5 th century	Dm. 84 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Ozem Church, Palestina I		Set in the pavement of the northern aisle. The inscription is framed by a double circle and enclosed by a square.	
Transcription:			
Κύριε Ἰησοῦ βοή[θ]- ισον τη δο[ύλη] σοῦ Μ(Ν)αρκέλ[λα, ό-] τι ἐ[κτισε]ν ? ἐ[κλ(ησίαν) ?] ἀγ[ία - - - - κ] αἱ Μα[ρίας] παρθέ[νου.]			
Translation:			
Lord Jesus, help thy handmaid (servant) Marcella, for she founded (a holy church ? of - -) and of virgin Mary.			
Sources:			
Habas 2018 : 97-120, fig. 5. DiSegni 2012 : 153-158.			



No.: 11	Name: Αναστασία – Anastasia Σαβίνα – Sabina	Date: late 5 th century	Size: letters 10 cm
Site: Ayun Musa, Monastery of Kaianos –church, Arabia		Description and location: Unframed inscription made with black letters on white ground. Located in the southwestern corner of the North aisle.	
Transcription: ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΑ ΣΑΒΙΝΑ			
Translation: Anastasia Sabina			
Sources: Piccirillo 1989: 205-210; and 1993 A: 190-191, fig. 278. Gatier 1986: nr. 96. Di Segni 1998: 455, nr. 66.			



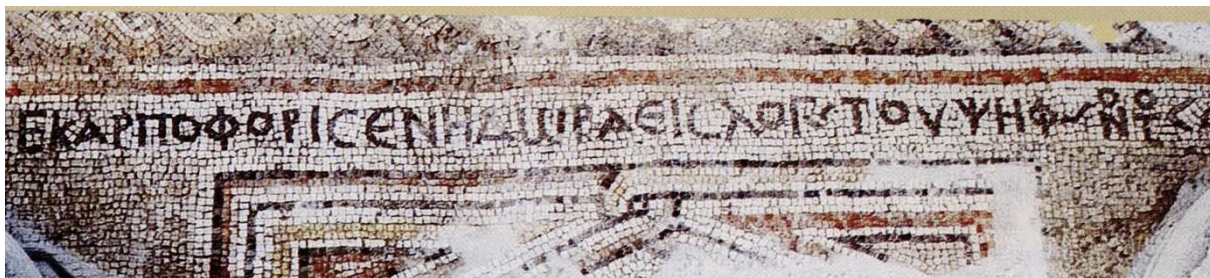
No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
12	Χααλους/Χαλλους - Khalous Ιουλιανης – Juliana Ευθυμους Euthymia Κύρας - Kyra Δομνι/η - Domna Αδουθα - Adoutha Ματρω(να) - Matrona	6 th century	ca. 1 m x 1,30 m
Site: Horbat Kenes - Karmiel Church, Phonicia		Description and location: well preserved inscription, placed in the narthex of the church, black letters set on a yellow and white background. The inscription is set in a round medallion, framed by a twisted bordure, a hederæ is found above and below the text.	
Transcription: μνησθοῦσιν ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ τόπῳ Ζῶσους καὶ Χααλους καὶ Ρουῤῥος καὶ Ἰουλι ανῆς καὶ Ἀρσακίου υ- [ιο]ῦ καὶ Εὐθυμοῦς καὶ Ἀρσακίου καὶ Κύρας καὶ Εὐστόγις κ(αὶ) Μάχου διακ(όνου) Δόμνι Αδουθα Ματρώ			
Translation: Remember in the holy place Zosus and Khalous; and Rufus and Juliana and (their) son Arsakius; and Euthymia and Arsakius; and Kyra and Eustogious; and Machus the deacon; and Domna, Adoutha and Matrona.			
Sources: SEG 63-1566. Ashkenazi 2018: 215-217, 217 fig. 2. Di Segni 2016 B: 190.			



No.: 13	Name: Μαρίας – Maria	Date: 6 th century	Size: ca. 1 m x 1,30 m
Site: Khirbet Damun – Mount Carmel Church, Phonicia		Description and location: badly damaged inscription, location not given.	
Transcription: Πρεσβίες τῆς δεσπ(οίνης) ἡμῶν τῆς θεοτόκο- [υ] κ[υρ(ίας) ? Μαρί]ας σύν Θεῷ +ἐγένετο τό πάν ἐρ- γον τοῦ δεσπότου ἡ- μών τοῦ ἀγίω(τάτου) Ἰωάν νου διὰ Στεφάνου λαμπροτάτου σπα- θαρίου καί τῶν αὐ- τοῦ τέκνων Λε- οντακίου καί Μα- ρίας καί Ἰο[υλ]ιανού+			
Translation: By the intercessions of Our Lady the mother of God, Lady Mary, with (the help of) God, the whole work of (the church of) our lord the most holy John was done, through Stephen the clarissimus spatharius and his children, Leontakios, Mary and Julian.			
Sources: Di Segni 2009: 227-230, fig. 1.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
14	Αντώνα – Anton(i)a	ca. 550-650 A.D. 6 th / 7 th century	-
Site:		Description and location:	
Hippos-Sussita, northwest Church Palestina II		The inscription is inserted in the grid of squares of the floor of the southern portico of the atrium.	
Transcription:			
Προσφορά ὑπέρ ἀναπ- αύσεως Ἀ- ντώνας δια- κονίσσης.			
Translation:			
Offering for the repose of Anton(i)a the diaconesse.			
Sources:			
SEG: 54-1663.			
Madden 2014: 150.			
Burdajewicz 2005: 39-58, pl. 4.			



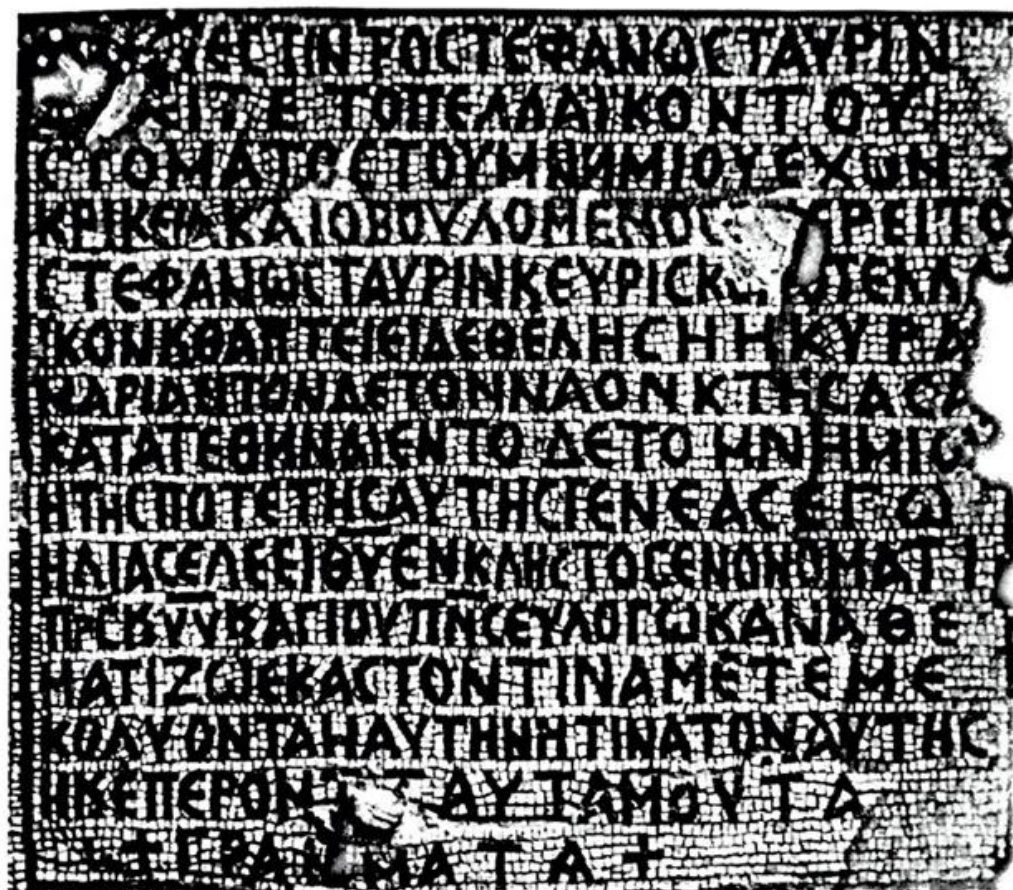
No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
15	Ἡλιοδορα (ΗΔΩΡΑ) – Heliodora	ca. 550-650 A.D. 6 th / 7 th century	-
Site:		Description and location:	
Hippos-Sussita; Qal’at el-Husn, North-west church Palestina II		The inscription is set in black letters on white ground, not framed. Located in the south aisle, on an intercolumnnar panel	
Transcription:			
Ἐκαρποφόρησεν ΗΔΩΡΑ εἰς λόγ(ον) τοῦ ψηφ(ίου) ΝΟ....ΤΟ...			
Translation:			
He[lion]dora donated for the purpose of the mosaic...			
Sources:			
SEG: 54-1661/1662			
Madden 2014: 150-151.			
Burdajewicz 2005: 39-58, pl. 4.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
16	Θεοφιλία – Theophilia	528/29 AD, 6 th century	520 x 970 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Kh. El-Kerak – Beth Yerah, Church Palestina II		The inscription is set in black letters on white ground, surrounded by a single lined rectangular frame. Located at the diaconicon (third stage of construction), in the eastern part of the pavement.	
Transcription:			
+[.....Θ]εοδώρῳ Μάγιστρ(ο)σ καί Θεοφίλας καί Βασσίλ[ω] Ἐπισ[...έγέ]νετο ἡ ψ[ή]φωσις τοῦ μεσαύλου καί τοῦ διακονικοῦ ἐπί τ[.....]πρε(σβυτέρων) Ἡλίου καί Βασσίλου ἰνδικτι[ώ]νος Ζ έτους Φρα			
Translation:			
+(Christ help) Theodor, the magister, and Theophilia and Bassilos. (Glorious) was executed, the paving of the communication hall and of the diaconicon under (the pious) presbyters Elias and Bassilos, in indiction 7, year 591.			
Sources:			
SEG 37:1474 Ovadia 1987: 43, nr. 51. Meimaris 1992: 82, Inscr. 11. Delougaz/Heines 1960: pl. 51 – A.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
17 A	Μαρία – Maria (Kyria)	2 nd half of 6 th century A.D.	-
Site:		Description and location:	
Beisan, (Beth She'an) Monastery of Kyria (Lady) Maria Palestina II		The inscription is set in a <i>tabula ansata</i> . Black letters are set on white ground. Located in the floor of Room D, in front of the doorway to Chapel G (northeast section of the complex).	
Transcription:			
Χ(ριστ)ὲ ὁ θε(εὸς) Σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου, ἐλέησον τὴν φιλόχ(ριστο)ν κυρ(ί)αν Μαρίαν κ(αὶ) τὸν ταύτης υἱὸν Μάξημον, κ(αὶ) ἀνα- παῦσον τοὺς αὐτῶν γ(ο)νεῖς, εὐχαῖς πάντων τῶν ἁγίων· ἀμίν.			
Translation:			
O Christ, God, Saviour of the world, have mercy upon the Christ-loving Lady Maria and her son Maximos, and grant rest to their forefathers, through the prayers of All the Saints. Amen.			
Sources:			
Madden 2014: 162-163. Ovadiah 1987: 26-30, nr. 26. Fitzgerald 1939: 13-14, pl. XX. Oxford dictionary: The Cult of Saints in late Antiquity - Online catalogue. http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E04120			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
17 B	Μαρία – Maria (Kyria)	2 nd half of 6 th century A.D.	-
Site:		Description and location:	
Beisan, (Beth She'an) Monastery of Kyria (Lady) Maria Palestina II		The inscription is set in black letters in white ground and framed by a single lined rectangle. Located in Chapel G, south-east corner of the nave.	
Transcription:			
[+ όπο]ν έστιν τό στεφαν(ο)σταύπί(ο)ν [έκει] κείτ(αι) τό πελλαικόν τού στόματος τού μνημ(ε)ίου έχ(ο)ν κρικεία καί ό βουλόμενος έπ(αι)ρει τό στεφαν(ο)σταύρι(ο)ν κ(αί) εύρίσκει τό πελλα- ικόν κ(αί) θάπτει εί δέ θελήση ή κυρ(ί)α Μαρία (ή) τόνδε τόν ναόν κτ(ί)σασα καταεθήναι έν τ(ώ)δε τ(ώ)ι μνη(ε)μίωι			

ἡ τῆς ποτε τῆς αὐτῆς γενεάς ἐγώ
 Ἦλιας ἐλέει Θεο(εο)ύ ἐ(γ)κλ(ει)στός ἐν ὀνόματι
 Π(ατ)ρ(ό)σ κ(αί) Υ(ίο)ύ κ(αί) Ἀγίου Πν(εύματος) εὐλογώ κ(αί) ἀναθε-
 ματίζω ἕκαστον τινα μετ' ἐμέ
 κ(ω)λύοντα ἢ αὐτήν ἢ τινα τ(ώ)ν αὐτῆς
 ἢ κ(αί) ἐπ(αι)ρον[τα τ]αὐτά μου τά
 +γράμματα+

Translation:

Where the wreath-cross is, there
 lies the ...(pellaikon?)
 of the mouth of the tomb,
 having rings. And he who wishes lifts up
 the wreath-cross and finds the ... (pellaikon?)
 and buries the dead. But if Lady (Kyria)
 Maria, who founded this church,
 desires to be laid in this tomb,
 or any of her family, I,
 Elias, a recluse by the mercy of God, in the name of
 the father and of the Son and the Holy Ghost curse and anathe-
 matise everyone after me
 who hinders her or any of hers,
 or takes up this my
 + inscription+

Sources:

Madden 2014: 163.

Ovadia 1987: 26-30, nr. 26.

Hachlili 2009: 254-264, fig. XII - 7.

Fitzgerald 1939: 13-14, pl. XXI. Avi-Yonah 1933: 143-144, no. 20.

Oxford dictionary: The Cult of Saints in late Antiquity - Online catalogue.
<http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E04120>



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
18	Novia - Nonia	6 th century (or later)	66,5 x 104 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Caesarea Maritima, Church Palestina I		The inscription is set in a <i>tabula ansata</i> . With black letters on white ground. Located at the northern aisle of the church, facing east – to be read by entering the church.	
Transcription:			
Ὑπέρ σωτηρίας Σηλβάνου καί Νονίας			
Translation:			
For the salvation of Silvanus and Nonia.			
Sources:			
Patrich 2011: 207-223. CIIP II, Ameling 2011: No. 1150, fig. 1150.1.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
19	Μίκης – Mike Σωφρονία - Sophronia	6 th century	about 280 cm wide, parts missing
Site:		Description and location:	
Emmaus – Nicopolis, near the basilica Palestina I		The inscription is set in black letters on white ground. Parts of it are missing. The mosaic was found outside of the basilica complex – maybe belonging to a transitional building used while a new church was erected after the Samaritan uprising in 529 A.D.	
Transcription:			
[...]ΩΣΑ ΑΜΑΣΩΦΡΟΝΙΑΜΗΤΡΚΑΙΜΙΚΗΣΣΥΜΒΙΩ (palm)			
[...]ωσα άμα Σωφρονίαι μητρ(ι) καί Μίκης συμβίωι.			
Translation:			
... together with (my) mother Sophronia and (my) wife Mik(k)e.			
Source:			
CIIP IV.1, Ameling 2018: No. 3087, fig. 3087. Suggesting “[ἐνήφ]ωσα“ and translating “I, so-and-so, paid for the mosaic together with my mother Sophronia and my wife Mik(k)e.”			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
20	Θεοδορα – Theodora Μαρια – Maria	6 th century	45 x 338 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Motza - Colonia Chapel near Motza Palestina I		The inscription is set in a <i>tabula ansata</i> . Black letters on white ground, with rows divided by single lines. The mosaic is located in the chapel.	
Transcription:			
Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας καί ἡρίνης διαμόνης καί ἀντιλήμ ψεως Βάσσου ἀρχidiaκόνου καί Πέτρου κόμιτος καί Κυριακού πρεσβυτ(έρου) καί Θεοδόρας κ(αί) Μαρίας τόν φιλογρ(ίστων)			
Translation:			
For the salvation and enduring peace and succour of Bassus archdeacon and of count Petrus and of Kyriacus priest and of Christ-loving Theodora and Maria			
Source:			
Magen/Kagan 2012: 23-24. CIIP I.2, Di Segni 2012: No. 856, fig. 856.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
21	Μαρια - Maria	6 th century	33 x 113 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Motza - Colonia Chapel near Motza Palestina I		The inscription is set in a <i>tabula ansata</i> . Black letters on white ground, with rows divided by single lines. The mosaic is located in the chapel.	
Transcription:			
Ὑπέρ μνήμης καί ἀ ναπαύσεως Κυρικού τοῦ διακόνου καί Μαρί(ας)			
Translation:			
For the memory and rest of Cyricus the deacon and Maria.			
Source:			
Magen/Kagan 2012: 23-24. CIIP I.2, Di Segni 2012: No. 855, fig. 855.			



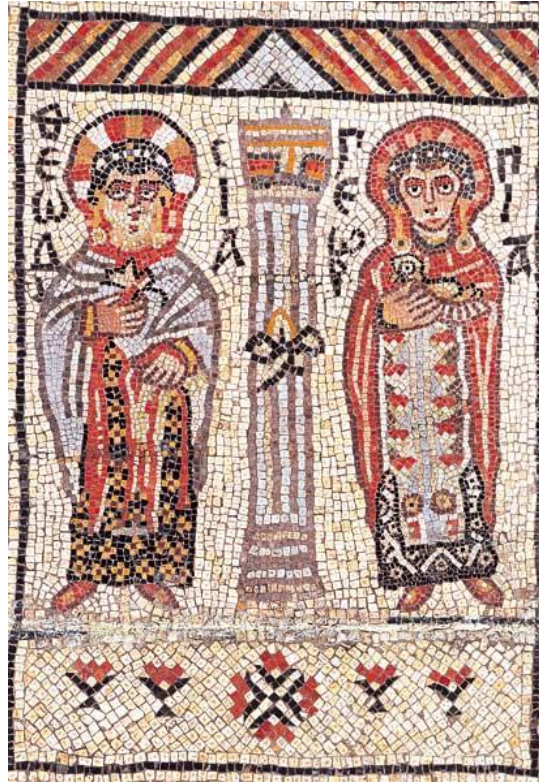
No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
22	Βασσα – Bassa	550-575 A.D. 6 th century	-
Site:		Description and location:	
Jerusalem – Mount Zion, church in the garden of the Armenian Patriarchate Palestina I		The inscription is set in black letters on white ground, set at the eastern end of a panel with the pattern of overlapping scales. Parts of the Inscription are destroyed. Located at the eastern margin/limit of the nave.	
Transcription:			
[Υπ]έρ μνήμες καί καρποφορίας τ[ών φιλ]οχρίστων Βασίλου ἐ[π(άρχ)]ου καί Βα[--] or Βασιλίου[σ - -] καί Βα[--]			
Translation:			
For the remembrance and offering of the Christ-loving Basilos praetorian prefect (?) and Ba(ssa) or Basilò (female name) and Ba...			
Sources:			
SEG 35:1547 Ovadiah 1987: no. 122, pl. XCV. There is controversy on the dating of this mosaic and Ovadiah and others date it already to the 5 th century. CIIP I.2, Di Segni 2012: No. 808, fig. 808.1-3			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
23	Ζαννα – Zanna	6 th century (DiSegni)	32 x 64 cm
Site: Jerusalem, Mount of Olives – Angelismo Chapel (Viri Galilaei) Palestina I		Location in the site: The inscription is set in a tabula ansata. Black letters on white ground. Located in a funerary chapel in the southwestern corner of the mosaic floor.	
Transcription: Χ(ριστ)έ μνήσθητι τής δού λης σου Ζάννας			
Translation: Christ, remember thy maidservant Zanna.			
Source: SEG 8:212, dates the inscription already in the 5 th century. Magen/Kagan 2012: 46. CIIP I.2, Di Segni 2012: no. 828, fig. 828.1/828.2.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
24	Θεοδοσιας – Theodosia	Late 6 th /to 7 th century	diam. 120 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Jerusalem, Mount of Olives; church ruins near the Russian tower (close to the Tur-Bethany road) Palestina I		The excising inscription is set in a double framed circle. The letters are black, on white ground. Two leaves in red, black and yellow flank the end of the inscription. Located in the rooms of Mother Superior.	
Transcription:			
[Υπέρ εύχής καί ἀναπαύς- εως Θεοδο]- σίας τής ένδο ξοτάτ(η)σ κουβικουλα- ρίας			
Translation:			
For the fulfilment of the vow and the repose of Theodosia, the most illustrious cubicularia.			
Sources:			
SEG 8:175 Avi-Yonah 1932 : 167, nr. 116. Schultze 1881: 9-17, fig. 2. CIIP I.2, Di Segni 2012: no. 836.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
25	Θεοδοσίαν – Theodosia Γεωργία– Georgia	6 th century	70 x 67 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Jerusalem, funerary chapel on an extra muros cemetery near the Damascene Gate Palestina I		The inscription is places along the heads of two women in frontal orans pose. The letters consisting of black tesserae are set on white background. The panel is only a small part of a greater composition featuring Orpheus, Charon and Pan in the main panel of the chapel.	
Transcription: ΘΕΩΔΩΣΙΑ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΑ			
Translation: Theodosia Georgia			
Source: Olszewski 2011: 655-664, fig. 7. Vincent 1901: 436-444 and 1902: 100-103. Friedmann 1969: 1-36.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
26	Θεοδοσίαν – Theodosia Μαρια – Maria	6 th /7 th century	-
Site: Khirbet Deiry – Nes Harim, Church The site Kh. Deiry is located near Moshav Nes-Harim, 5 km east of Beth Shemesh Palestina I		Description and location: The inscription is set in a <i>tabula ansata</i> , preceded by a cross. Black letters on white ground. Located in a small basilica church with narthex. The mosaic was found in the square apse of a chapel, attached to the southern side of the church.	
Transcription: +ΚΕΘΘΣ [..] ΕΩΔΟΡΟΥΔΙΑΦΥΛΑΞΟΝΤΟΥΣ ΔΟΥΛ.[..].ΝΙΝ ΘΕΩΔΟΣΙΑΝΕΙΛΛΟΥΣΤΡΙΟΝ [Α.[..].ΘΕΩΦΥΛΑΚΤΟΝ ΙΩΑΝΠΡΕΣΒΥ] Κ[..]ΜΑΡΙΑΣ ΙΟΑΝΟΥΤΟΝΠΙΡΟ [..].ςΚΕΕΛΕΙΣΟΝΣΤΕΦΑ Κ(ύρι)ε ό θ(εός) [τού άγίου] Θεωδόρου διαφύλαξον τούς δούλο[υς σου...]+ΝΙΝ (καί) Θεωδοσίαν είλλουστρίον (καί) Α+[..]+ Θεωφύλακτον (καί) Ιωάν(νην) πρεσβύ(τερον, -τέρους). Κ[..] Μαρίας (καί) Ιοάνου τόν προ [..]++ς.κ(ύρι)ε, έλείσον Στέφα(νον).			
Translation: Oh Lord, God of St. Theodorus, save your servants ...and Theodosia, the illustrious one, and A...Theophylaktus and Ioanes, the priest(s)?... of Mary and Ioanes, the ...Lord, have pity on Stephanus. <i>Holy Lord of St. Theodor, guard over the noble Antonius and Theodosia, and Theophylactus and the priest John, remember the donors Mary and John, in the 6th year of the indiction, have mercy on Stephan. (Madden, 2014)</i>			
Source: Madden 2014: 114-115, no. 156. Magen/Kagan 2012: 69-70, no. 200. CIIP IV.1, Ameling 2018: No. 3183, fig. 3183.1, 3183.2			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
27	Επαναγία – Epanagia	500 A.D. 6 th century,	diameter 57 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Beit Loya (Kh. Lehi), Chapel Palestina I		The inscription is set in a medallion formed of wreath of flowers in the middle of the mosaic. Located in the middle of the northern chapel.	
Transcription:			
Ἐπαναγία ὑπὲρ ἀναπαύ- σεως καὶ μνή- μης Ἀετίου τὴν ψήφωσιν ἀνέθηκα.			
Translation:			
Epanagia, dedicated the mosaic for the repose and memory of Aethios.			
Sources:			
SEG 35:1539			
Madden 2014: 26-27.			
Patrìch/Tsafrir 1985: 106-111.			
Patrìch/Tsafrif 1993: 265-272.			
CIIP IV.2, Ameling 2018: No. 3748, fig. 3748.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
28 A	Μαρία – Maria	528-530 A.D. 6 th century	letters 8 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Gaza (Jabaliyah), Basilica Palestina I		The inscription is set in black letters on white ground, framed by a single black rectangle. Located in the Diaconicon.	
Transcription:			
[Κύριε] πρόσδεξ(ε) την καρποφορίαν των προσεινικότων [Πα]ύλου και Μαρίας.			
Translation:			
Lord, receive the offerings of the donors Paul and Maria			
Sources:			
Madden 2014 : 66. Saliou 2000 : 396, pl. III – a) Inscr. 5. CIIP III, Ameling 2014: No. 2447.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
28 B	Μαρία – Maria Φλαυία- Flauia	6 th century, 528-530 A.D.	letters 7,2 cm
Site:		Location in the site:	
Gaza (Jabaliyah), Basilica Palestina I		The inscription is set in a <i>tabula ansata</i> . Black letters on white ground. Located in the central nave of the diaconicon.	
Transcription:			
Ὑπέρ σωτηρίας Παύλος Ούλπια- νού μοναζων κ(αί) Φ- λα(υ)ία κ(αί) Μαρία.			
Translation:			
For the salvation of the monk Paul, son of Oulipanos; and Flauia and Maria.			
Sources:			
Madden 2014 : 66.			
Saliou 2000 : 396, pl. II – a) Inscr. 4.			
CIIP III, Ameling 2014: No. 2446. <i>Maria</i> here is identical with <i>Maria</i> from no. 24 A, she appears several times in inscriptions from this church, together with her brother <i>Paul</i> . In CIIP III nos. 2451, 2453 and 2454, she is already deceased, and <i>Paul</i> prays for “her rest and salvation”.			



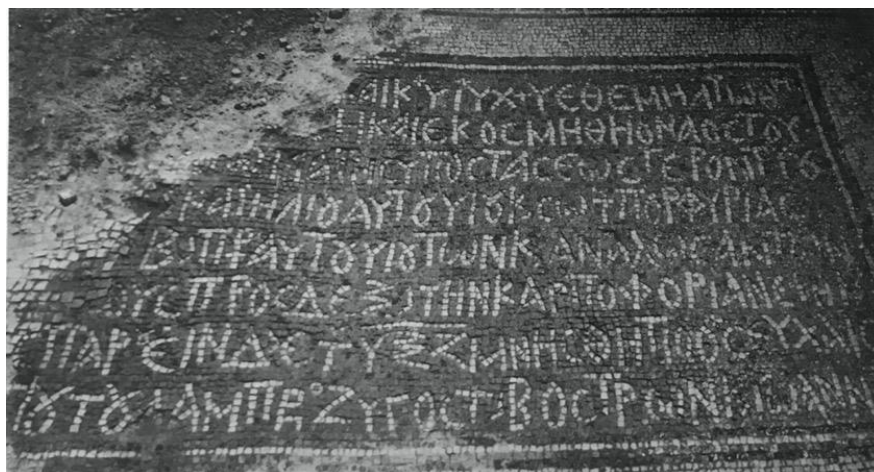
No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
29	Σαλάμθα – Salamtha	End of 6th century	-
Site:		Description and location:	
Gaza (Jabaliyah), Basilica Palestina I		The inscription is set in a medallion, surrounded by a thin black frame. The letters are black, on white ground. Located in the northern aisle, in front of the northern apse.	
Transcription:			
Ὑπέρ σωτ- (η)ριάς Βίκτωρ Σαλα(μ)άνου κ(αί) Σαλάμθα ΓΥΚΟ... [έ]πί Σαλα(ο)νος δι- ακό(ν)ου.			
Translation:			
For the salvation of Victor, son of Salamanos, and Salamtha (?) GYKO under Salaon the deacon.			
Sources:			
Madden 2014 : 64-65. Saliou 2000 : 407, pl. VIII – b) Inscr. 17. CIIP III, Ameling 2015: No. 2458, fig. 2458.			



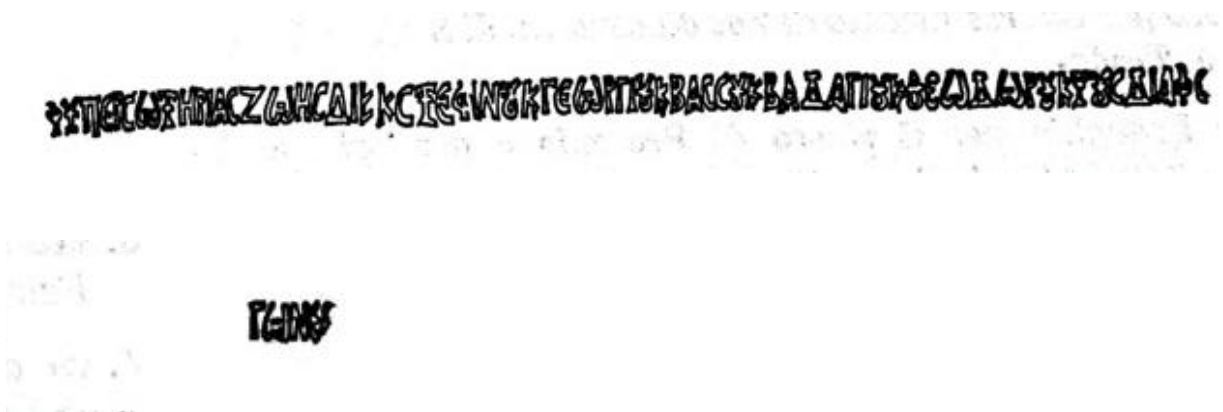
No.: 30	Name: Καληώρα – Kaleora ή κυρά Σιλθούς – Lady of Siltous/Silto	Date: 576 A.D. 6 th century	Size: about 130 x 60 cm
Site: Kissufim – Bir Abu Radi, Church Palestina I		Description and location: The inscription is set in black letters on white ground surrounding the depiction of two females. Located in the north intercolumnar panel.	
Transcription: ΚΑΛΗΩΡΑ Η ΚΥΡ(Ι)Α ΣΙΛΘΟΥΣ			
Translation: Beautiful hour – the Lady of Syltous/Sylto			
Sources: Madden 2014: 99. Cohen 1993: 277-282. CIIP III, Ameling 2014: No. 2544, fig. 2544. Ashkenazi 2018: 716-719. Oxford dictionary: The Cult of Saints in late Antiquity - Online catalogue. http://csia.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E03137			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
31	Μαρίας - Maria	6 th century	letters 7.5 cm
Site:	Description and location:		
Kissufin, Church Palestina I	The inscription is set in black letters on white ground. One line running along the rectangular edges of a tomb. Great parts of the mosaic are destroyed. Located in the centre of the northern aisle, placed over a tomb.		
Transcription:			
[.].+++ΟΣ+[.] τόν ώσίου πατρ(ός) ήμών Ζοναίνου πρε[σβυτέ(ρου)..] Μαρίας. Κ(ύριο)σ, φύλα{ξον ..}+ΤΕ τήν καρποφ[όρον ..]ΤΟΣ. Ἀμήν			
Translation:			
... of out holy father Zonainous, the priest...of Mary...Lord, protect...the offering...Amen			
Source:			
Cohen 1993: 277-282. CIIP III, Ameling 2014: No. 2546, fig. 2546. Ashkenazi 2018: 716-719. There were five skeletons found in the tomb underneath the mosaic. Mary could have been one of the donors of the mosaic and possibly one of the persons buried in the family tomb.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
32	Πορφυρία – Porfyria/Porfuria	573/4 A.D. 6 th century	ca. 280 x 100 cm
Site: Kh. Sa’ad - Bostra, Basilica Arabia		Description and location: The inscription is set in <i>tabula ansata</i> , on top of the central mosaic carpet. The letters are white tesserae on a reddish, brown background. Located in the central nave, in front of the bema.	
Transcription: [Χάριτι Θεοῦ καὶ Κ(θρί)ου Ἰ(ησο)ύ Χ(ριστο)ύ ἐθεμηλιώθη [καὶ ἐψηφώθη] καὶ ἐκοσμήθη ὁ ναὸς τοῦ [ἀγίου Θ]ώμα τῆς? ὑποστάσεως Γερωντίου [...] καὶ Ἡλίου αὐτοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ σωτ(ερί)ας Πορφυρίας [συμ]β(ίου) πρ(οτέρ)ας αὐτοῦ υἱοῦ τῶν καὶ ἀναλωσάντων. [Κε Ἰη]σοῦς πρόσδεξ(αι) τὴν καρποφορίαν. Ἐψη(φώθη) [...]σ παρ () εἰνδ(ικτιώνος) ἐτ(ους) υξξ. Μνήσθητι ὁ Θε(ε)σ εὐχαις [...]ιου τοῦ λαμπρ(οτάτου) ζυγοστ(άτου) Βοστρών καὶ Ἰωάννου.			
Translation: By the grace of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, this church of Saint Thomas was founded (and paved with mosaics) and furnished for the life of Gerontios (...) and of his son Elias and the salvation of Porfuria the former wife of his son and of the people who have paid the money. O Lord Jesus accept the offering. It was paved (by care of?) on the fifth indiction of the year 467 (572/3). Remember o God the vows of (...) the illustrious master of weights of the people of Bostra and of John.			
Sources: Sari, 1995: 526-529.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
33 A	Zωη – Zoé	594 A.D. 6 th century	-
Site:		Description and location:	
Rihab, St. Basileos church Arabia		The inscription is set in black letters on white ground, no framing. Located in front of the alter.	
Transcription:			
+ΥΠΕΡΣΩΤΕΡΙΑΣΖΩΗΣΔΙΚΚΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΥΚΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥΚΒΑΣΣΟΥΚΒΑΔΑΓΙΟΥΚΘΕΩΔΩΡΟΥ- ΚΤΟΥΣΔΙΑΦΕ[.....]ΓΩΝΕ[]			
+Υπέρ σωτερίας Ζώης δι(α)κ(ονίσσης) κ(αί) Στεφάνου κ(αί) Γεωργίου κ(αί) Βάσσου κ(αί) Βαδαγίου κ(αί) Θεοδ(ώ)ρου κ(αί) τούς διαφέ[ροντας κ(αί) υπέρ αναπαύς(εως) τών] γ(ο)νέ(ων).			
Translation:			
For the salvation of Zoe, the deaconess, and Stephanos, and Georgios, and Bassos, and Badagios, and Theodoros, and for the Rest of their families (parents?).			
Sources:			
Piccirillo 1981: 70-73, fig. 6, 7; and 1993 A: 311, fig. 626. Avi-Yonah 1947: 69-70. Oxford Dictionary. The cult of Saints in late Antiquity, online catalogue. http://cs1a.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E02045			



No.: 33 B	Name: Ζωη – Zoé	Date: 594 A.D. 6 th century	Size: -
Site: Rihab, St. Basileos church Arabia		Description and location: The inscription is set in a tabula ansata. Black letters on white background with red interlines between the rows. Located in the floor of the nave, near the steps of the choir, facing the altar.	
Transcription: προνοία θε(εο)ῦ ἐθεμ[ελιώ]θη κ(αὶ) ἐτελιώθη ὁ ναὸς τοῦ ἐνδοξ(οτάτου) μάρτυρ[(ος) το]ῦ ἁγ(ίου) Βασιλ[ίου ἐπ]ὶ τοῦ ἁγιωτ(άτου) κ(αὶ) ὁσιωτ(άτου) Πολυεύκτ[ου ἀ]ρχι- επισκό(που) [ἐξ ἐπιμ]ελ(είας) Ζώης διακο(νίσσης) καὶ Στεφάνου κ(αὶ) Γεωργίου κ(αὶ) Βάσσ[ου κ(αὶ)] Θεοδῶ- ρου κ(αὶ) Βαδ[αγίου ὑπὲρ] ἀναπαύσ(εως) Προκοπίου κ(αὶ) γ(ο)νέων. ἐγράφ(η) τοῦ ἔτ(ους) υπθ' χρό(νοὺς) ιβ' ἰν(δικτιῶνος)			
Translation: By the providence of God was laid the foundation and was completed the church of the most glorious martyr, Saint Basilios in the time of the most holy and most pious Polyeuktos, archbishop, from the offering of Zoe the deaconess and Stephanos and Georgios and Bassos and Theodoros and Badagios as a vow for the repose of Prokopios and parents. (This) was written in the year 489, in the times of the 12 th indiction.			
Sources: Piccirillo 1981: 70-73, fig. 6, 7; and 1993 A: 311, fig. 626. Avi-Yonah 1947: 69-70. Oxford Dictionary. The cult of Saints in late Antiquity, online catalogue. http://csia.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E02045			



No.: 34	Name: Γεωργία – Georgia	Date: 533 AD 6 th century	Size: -
Site: Jerash, St. Cosmas and Damian Arabia		Description and location: The inscription is set above a female depiction, black letters on white ground. The rectangular frame surrounds the whole ensemble. Located in the main nave, in front of the steps leading to the chancel screen and the altar	
Transcription: ΓΕΩΡΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΥ ΠΑΡΑΜ			
Translation: Georgia (wife) of Theodoros, the paramonarius			
Sources: SEG/ Gerasa 316 Welles 1938: 482 Piccirillo 1993 A: 277, 288-289.			



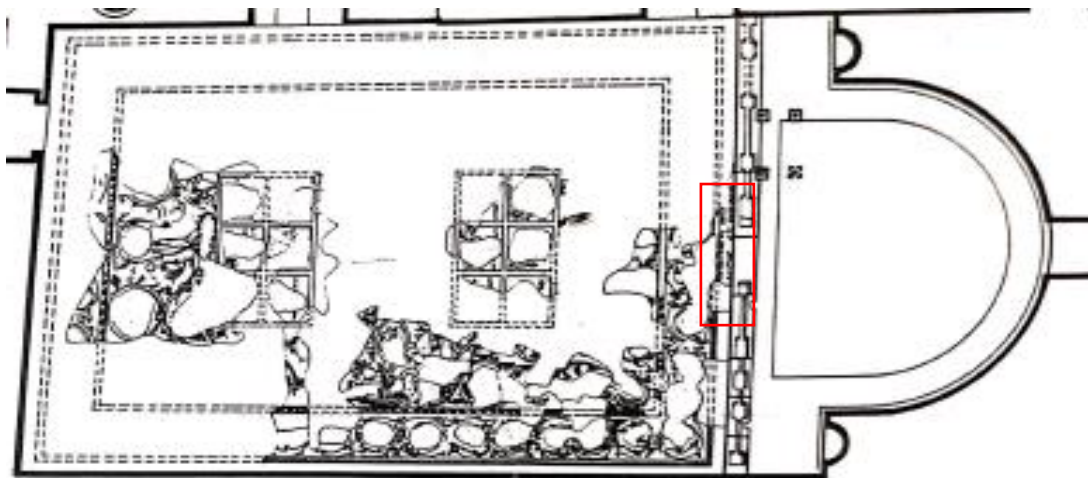
No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
35 A	Εύλαμπία – Eulampia	558/9 A.D. 6 th century	303 x 34 cm
Site: Jerash, Church of Bishop Isaias Arabia		Description and location: The Inscription is set with black letters on white ground. Framed by a rectangle. Semi-circuits are attached on both short ends. Located in front of the central apse.	
Transcription: Ἐπὶ τῶν ἁγίω(τάτου) καὶ μακαριω(τάτου) Θωμᾷ μητροπολ(ίτου) καὶ Ἡσαίου ἐπισκ(όπου). ⟨H⟩ γιά[σθη τ]οῦτο / τὸ ἅγ(ιου) εὐκτήρ(ιον), οἰκοδομήθη δὲ ἐκ θεμελίων καὶ ἐψηφώθη καὶ διεκοσμήθη ἐκ προσφορᾶς / Βηροίου καὶ Εὐλαμπίας λαμπ(ροτάτων) ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας αὐτῶν τε καὶ τῶν αὐτῶν τέκνων καὶ/ αναπαύσεως γονέων αὐτῶν. Ἐν ἔτει α[κχ'] μηνὶ Δαισίου χρ(όνοις) ζ' ἰνδ(ικτιῶνος).			
Translation: At the time of the most holy and blessed Thomas, the Metropolitan, and Isaiah the Bishop. This place of / prayer was consecrated, and built from the foundations, covered with mosaics, and beautified through the offerings of the most illustrious / Beroios and Eulampia, salvation to them, and of their children, and / for the repose of their parents. In the year 621, in the month of Daisios, in the seventh indiction.			
Sources: Clarke/Bowsher 1986: 303-341. Piccirillo 1993 A: 294-295. https://referenceworks-brillonline-com.uaccess.univie.ac.at/entries/supplementum-epigraphicum-graecum/*-a37_1541_1543			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
35 B	Εύλαμπία – Eulampia	558/9 A.D. 6 th century	265 x 17 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Jerash, Church of Bishop Isaias Arabia		The Inscription is set with black letters on white ground. Framed by a tabula ansata. Located in front of the north apse.	
Transcription:			
Ἐκ προσφορᾶς Εὐλαμ{ι}πίας λαμπροτάτης ὑπὲρ μνήμης Ἰωάννου πατρὸς καὶ Εὐγενίου θίου μακαριωτάτων			
Translation:			
Offered by the most illustrious Eulampia in memory of her blessed father Ioannos and son Eugenios.			
Sources:			
Clarke/Bowsher 1986: 303-341. Piccirillo 1993 A: 294-295. https://referenceworks-brillonline-com.uaccess.univie.ac.at/entries/supplementum-epigraphicum-graecum/*-a37_1541_1543			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
36	Ιουλία – Julia	570 A.D. 6 th century	ca. 130 x 60 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Jerash, Church of Bishop Marianos Arabia		The inscription is set in black letters on white ground and framed by a thick single rectangular frame. Located in the doorway to the main nave.	
Transcription:			
Χάριτι Χ(ριστο)ύ ἐκτίσθη καί ἐψηφώθη ὁ ἀγ(ιος) ναός οὗτος ἐκ σπουδῆς Ραφαα κ(αί) Ἰουλίαν κ(αί) Σαβίνου κ(αί) Προκοπίου κ(αί) Νόννου.			
Translation:			
By the grace of Christ, this holy temple was built and covered with mosaics through zeal of Raphaa, and Julia and Sabinos and Prokopios and Nonnos.			
Sources:			
Gawlikowski/Musa 1986: 137-166. Piccirillo 1993 A: 298, fig. 579.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
37	Μαρία – Maria	6 th century	180 x 21 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Jerash, Chapel at the Cathedral Arabia		Located in the nave of the Cathedral chapel, before the chancel enclosure.	
Transcription:			
+ Ἀναπαύλης μνήμην φέρει τών προσαγαγό(ν) τ[ων] [....]ου καί Μαρ[ίας] τῆς ἀγλαῆς ψηφίδος			
Translation:			
(For) the rest and memory of the tomb of [....]ου and Maria who had the mosaic laid.			
Sources:			
SEG/ Gerasa 294			
Welles 1938: 475, Inscr. 294. (mentions the mosaic as unpublished)			
Piccirillo 1993 A: 284-285, pl. 528.			
* No picture or drawing of this mosaic has been published jet. The one above is fig. 528 from Picirillo 1993 A, a plan of the Chapel at the Cathedral in Jerash – the inscription can be seen right in front of the chancel screens.			

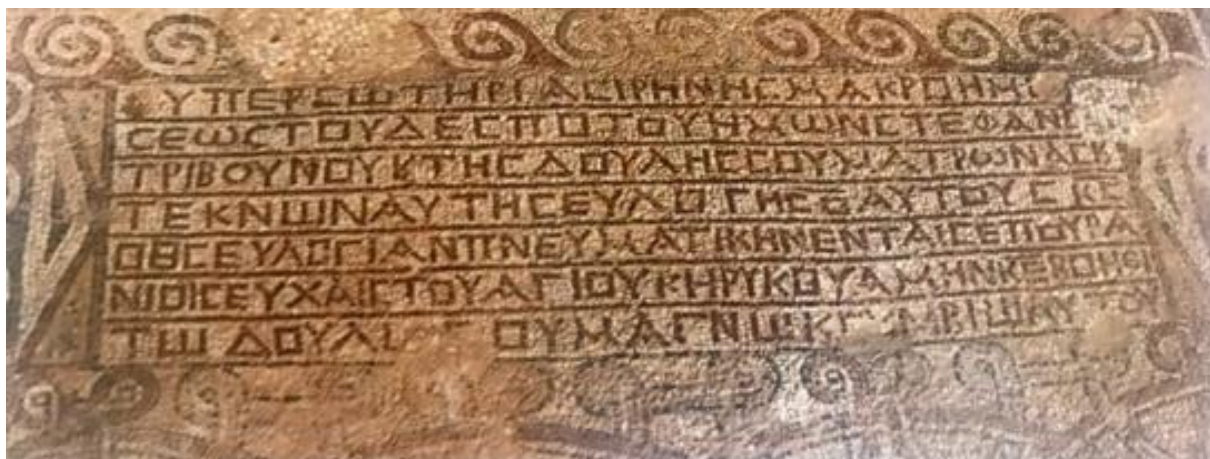
ΚΕΤΡΟΣ ΔΕΞΕΤΗΝ ΠΡΟΣΦΤΩΠΡΟΣΕΝΕΚΚΟΝΤΙΚΑΙ ΤΩ ΓΡΑΨΑΙ
 ΥΜΟΥΣ ΗΛΙΩ ΜΕΤΑΤ ΕΚΝΩΗ·
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No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
38	Μαρία – Maria	568/569-581/582 A.D. 6 th century	350 x 70 cm
Site: Tall al-Umayri, Church of St. Sergius Arabia		Description and location: Located in the main nave, in front of the aps and the chancel screens. The mosaic has been heavily damaged and destroyed in the last years.	
Transcription: Κ(ύρι)ε πρόσδεξε τήν προσφ(οράν) τώ προσενέκκοντι καί τώ γράψαν[τι δούλω σ]ου Μουσηλίω μετέ τέκνων Κ(ύρι)ε Ι(ησού)σ Χ(ριστό)σ ό Θ(εό)σ τού άγίου Σεργίου διαφύλαξαν τόν μεγαλαπρ(επέστατον) Αλμούωδαρον κόμ[ητα .] ό Θ(εο)σ τού άγίου Σεργίου εύλόγησον τόν δούλον σου Εύσεβήν μετά τέκν[ων .] ό Θ(εο)σ τού άγίου Σεργίου εύλόγησον τόν δούλον σου Ιωάννην μετά συνβίου καί τεκ[νων .] ό Θ(οε)σ τού άγίου Σεργίου εύλόγησον τόν δούλον σου Αβδάλλα καί Διανύσην καί Σ[...] ῤεπί τού θεοφιλεστάτου Πολυάκτου έπισκ(όπου) έψηφώτη τό άγιαν Μαπτύριον τού άγ[ίου Σεργίου] [σ]πουδή Μαρι Παββου εύλαβ(εστάτου) πρεσβ(θέρου) καί Γεωργίου διακ(όνου) καί Σαβίνου καί Μαρίας έν μ(ηνί) Άπριλίω χρόνω[ν . . ίνδ(ικτώνος)] 1 προσενεγκόντι 2 διαφύλαξον μεγαλοπ(επέστατον) 5 Διονύσιον 6 Πολυένκτου έψηφώθη άγιον			
Translation: Lord, receive the offering of the donor and the one who has created (this mosaic), [your servant] Mouselios along with his children. Our Lord Jesus Christ, God of Saint Sergius protect the megaloprepestatos (magni.centissimus) Almoundaros, the komes. God of Saint Sergius, bless your servant Eusebius along with his children. God of Saint Sergius, bless your servant Ioannes along with his wife and children. God of Saint Sergius, bless your servant Abdalla and Dionysios and S. . . .			

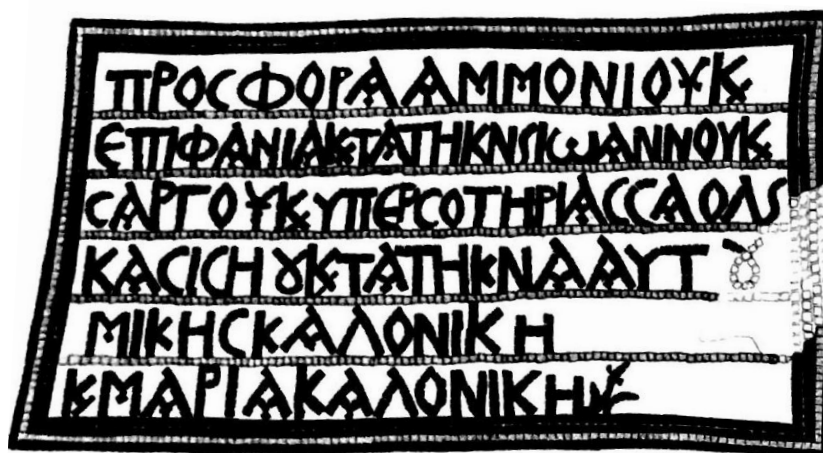
In the time of the bishop Polyeuktos, the most beloved by God, the holy Martyrion of Saint Sergius was decorated with a mosaic floor by the zeal of Mari, son of Rabbos the most devout priest, and Georgios the Deacon, and Sabinus and Maria in the month of April at the time of the .. [indiction]

Sources:

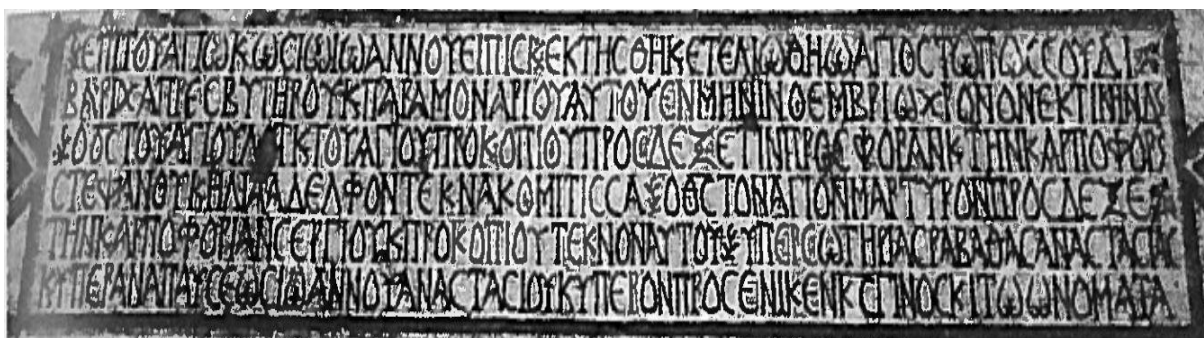
Beven et. al. 2015 : 49-68.



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
39	Ματρώνα - Matrona	6 th century	-
Site:		Description and location:	
El Quweisme, Church of Kyriakos (Upper Church, B) Arabia		The inscription is set in a <i>tabula ansata</i> . With black letters on white ground and lines dividing the rows. Located in the nave, in front of the chancel.	
Transcription:			
Ὑπέρ σωτερίας ἱρήνης μακρομε[ρεύ]- σεως τοῦ δεσπότης ἡμῶν Στεφλانو[υ] τριβούνου κ(αί) τῆς δούλης σου Ματρώνας κ(αί) τέκνον αὐτῆς. Εὐλόγησο(ν) αὐτούς Κ(ύριο)ς ὁ Θε(ός) εὐλογίαν πνευματικὴν ἐν ταῖς ἐπουρα- νίοις εὐχαῖς τοῦ ἀγίου Κηρύκου. Ἀμήν. Κ(ύρι)ε βοήθι τῷ δούλῳ σου Μάγνῳι κ(αί) σουμβίῳ αὐτοῦ.			
Translation:			
For the salvation, peace, and long life of our master, Stephan, the tribune, and of Your servant Matrona and of her sons. Bless them, o Lord, with a spiritual blessing through the heavenly vows of Saint Kyriakos. Amen. Lord help your servant Magnus and his consort.			
Sources:			
SEG 34-1515/ IGLSyr 21,2 54 Piccirillo 1993 A: 268, fig. 489, 494. Oxford Dictonary. The cult of Saints in late Antiquity, online catalogue: http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E02394			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
40	Επιφανια – Epiphania Μαρία – Maria Μίκη – Mika Καλονίκη – Kalonike	535 A.D. 6 th century	109 x 62 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Khirbet el-Mukhayyat, Church of St. George Arabia		The inscription is set in a rectangular frame – in black, red, and yellow XLVIII ^{English} XLVIII. The letters are red on white ground and the lines are separated by yellow lines rows . Located in the second intercolumniation from the west.	
Transcription:			
ΠΡΟΣΦΟΡΑΑΜΜΟΝΙΟΥϚ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΙΑ ΚΤΑΤΗΚΝ ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥΚ ΣΑΡΓΟΥΚΥΠΕΡΣΟΤΗΡΙΑΣΣΑΟΛϚ ΚΑΣΙΣΗϘΚΤΑΤΗΚΝΑΑΥΤ Ϙ ΜΙΚΗΣΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ ΚΜΑΡΙΑΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ			
Προσφορά Ἀμμονίου κ[αι] Ἐπιφανία κ[αι] τὰ τέκν[α] Ἰωάννου κ[αι] Σάργου κ[αι] ὑπέρ σοτηρίας Σαολ[α] Κασισήου κ[αι] τὰ τέκνα αὐτοῦ Μίκης Καλονίκη κ[αι] Μαρία Καλονίκη			
Translation:			
Offering of Ammonious and Epiphania and (their) children John and Sergius; and for the preservation of Saolas (son) of Kasiseus and his children, Mike Kalonike and Mary Kalonike			
Sources:			
SEG/ IGLSyr 21,2 101 Piccirillo 1989: 177- 181; and 1993 A: 178-179. Gatier 1986: 100-105. Di Segni 1998: 441, nr. 40.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
42	Αναστασια – Anastasia Κομιτισσα – Komitissa Ραβαθα – Rabatha	558 or 573 A.D. 6 th century	0.52 x 2.92 m
Site:		Description and location:	
Khirbat el-Mukhayyat, St. Lot and Procopius Arabia		The inscription is set in form of a tabula ansata. There are multiple decorative elements found within the text. Located in the floor of the nave, in front of the chancel screen.	
Transcription:			
<p>(<i>palm</i>) ἐπὶ τοῦ ἁγίω(τάτου) κ(αὶ) ὠσιω(τάτου) Ἰωάννου εἰπισκό(που) ἐκτῆσθῃ κ(αὶ) ἐτελιώθῃ ὡ ἅγιος τώπως σου δι (<i>palm</i>)</p> <p>Βαριχα πρεσβυτήρου κ(αὶ) παραμοναρίου αὐτοῦ ἐν μηνὶ Νοεμβρίῳ χρόνον ἕκτιν ἰνδ(ικτιῶνος).</p> <p>(<i>palm</i>) ὁ <θ>(εὸ)ς τοῦ ἁγίου Λὸτ κ(αὶ) τοῦ ἁγίου Προκοπίου πρόσδεξε τὴν προσφορὰν κ(αὶ) τὴν καρποφορ(ίαν)</p> <p>Στεφάνου κ(αὶ) Ἡλίας ἀδελφὸν τήκνα Κομίτισσα. (<i>palm</i>) ὁ θ(εὸ)ς τὸν ἅγιον μαρτύρον πρόσδεξε (<i>palm</i>) τὴν καρποφορίαν Σεργίου κ(αὶ) Προκοπίου τέκνον αὐτοῦ. (<i>palm</i>) ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας Ραβαθας Ἀναστασίας κ(αὶ) ὑπὲρ ἀναπαύσεως Ἰωάννου Ἀναστασίου κ(αὶ) ὑπὲρ ὃν προσένικεν. Κ(ύριο)ς γινόςκι τὸ ὄνόματα.</p>			
Translation:			
<p>(<i>palm</i>) Under the most holy and most venerable bishop Ioannes was built and completed this holy place (<i>hagios topos</i>) of Yours, through its presbyter and guardian (<i>paramonarios</i>) Barichas. In the month of November, in the times of the sixth indiction.</p> <p>(<i>palm</i>) O God of Saint Lot and of Saint Prokopios, accept the offering and the gift of Stephanos and Elias, brothers, children of Komitissa! (<i>palm</i>) O God of the holy martyrs, accept (<i>palm</i>) the gift of Sergios and Prokopios, his son! (<i>palm</i>)</p>			

As a vow for the salvation of Rabatha, daughter of Anastasia, and for the repose of Ioannes, son of Anastatios, and for those who made offerings. The Lord knows their names.

Sources:

SEG 8:336/ IGLSyr 21,2 97

Piccirillo 1989: 182-188; and 1993 A: 160-161, 164-165.

Gatier, 1986: 97-99.

Di Segni 1998: nr. 42.

Oxford Dictionary. The cult of Saints in late Antiquity, online catalogue:
<http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E02557>



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
43	Επιφάνια – Epiphania	6 th /7 th century	Letters 7 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Khirbet el-Mukhayyat, Church of St. Lot and Procopius Arabia		The inscription is set in black letters on white ground. Located in the western part of the main nave mosaic.	
Transcription:			
ΤΩΤΗΑΝΟΙΣΟΥΣΙΝΗΠΙΤΩΘΥΣΙΑΣΤΗΡΙΩΝΣΟΥΜΟΣΧΟΥΣΚΥΗΛΗΕΙΣΟΝΕΠΙΦΑΝΙΑΕΙΤΑΠΙΝΣ			
Τώτῃ ἀνοίσουσιν ἥπὶ τῷ θυσιαστήριῳ σου μόσχους. Κύ[ριε] ἡλῆεισον Ἐπιφάνια εἰ ταπιν[ή]			
Translation:			
Then they shall offer bulls on thy altar. Lord, have mercy upon the humble Epiphania.			
Sources:			
SEG 8:338/IGLSyr 21,2 99			
Piccirillo 1989: 187-188; and 1993 A: 164-165.			
Gatier 1986: 103-104. Di Segni 1998: 143-144, nr. 43.			



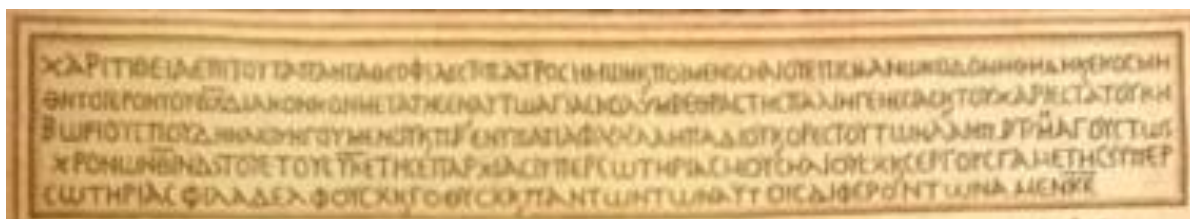
No.: 44	Name: Μαρία – Maria Πορφυρία – Porphuria Ῥώμη - Rome	Date: 558 or 573 A.D. 6 th century	Size: 26 x 114 cm
Site: Khirbet el-Mukhayyat, Church of St. Lot and Procopius Arabia		Description and location: The inscription is set in a <i>tabula ansata</i> . Black letters on white ground. Located in the floor of the south aisle, in front of the entrance to the south chamber flanking the apse.	
Transcription: ΑΓΙΕΛΩΤΠΡΟΣΔΕΞΕΤΗΝ ΠΡΟΣΕΥΧΗΝΡΩΜΗΣ ΠΟΣΥΡ. Ϛ Ϛ ΜΑΡΙΑΣΤΩΝΣΩΝΔ ϘΙΔΩΝ			
‘Άγιε Λώτ, πρόσδεξε τήν προσευχήν Ῥώμης (καὶ) Πορφυρ(ίας) (καὶ) Μαρίας τῶν σῶν δουλίδων			
Translation: Saint Lot, accept the vow/votive offering (?) of Rhome, and Porphyria, and Maria, your servants!			
Sources: SEG/ IGLSyr 21,2 98 Di Segni 1998: 444, no. 44. Piccirillo 1989: 182-188; and 1993a, pp. 164-165. Oxford Dictionary. The cult of Saints in late Antiquity, online catalogue: http://csa.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E02557			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
45	Μαρία – Maria Πορφυρία – Porphuria Ῥώμη - Rhome	542/3 – 557/8 A.D. 6 th century	60 x 50 cm
Site: Wadi Afrit (Kh. Al-Mukhayat), Church of Amos and Kasiseus - Chappel of Priest John Arabia		Description and location: The inscription is set with black letters on white ground. Framed by a temple like building with multiple colours. Located in the centre of the chapel, the mosaic is part of the younger floor.	
Transcription: + ΥΠΕΡΣΩΤΕΡΙ ΑΣΚΠΡΟΣΦΟΡΙΑΣ ΤΩΝΔΟΥΛΩΣ ΣΕΡΓΙΟΥΣΤΕΦΑΝ ΚΠΡΟΚΩΠΙΟΥΠΟΡ ΦΙΡΙΑΣΚΠΙΟΜΗΣΚ ΜΑΡΙΑΣΚΙΟΥΛΙΑ ΝΟΥΜΟΝΑΡΧΟΥ			
Ῥύπερ σωτερί- ασ κ[αι] προσφορας των δούλων σου Σεργίου Στεφάνου κ[αι] Προκωπίου Πορ- φυριας κ[αι] Ῥομης κ[αι] Μαρίας κ[αι] Ἰουλια νού μοναρχού			
Translation: For the preservation and offerings of Thy (your) servants, Stephan (son) of Sergius and Procopius (son) of Porphyria; and Rome and Mary and Julian the monk			
Sources: SEG/ IGLSyr 21,2 107 Piccirillo 1989: 190-197 and 1993 A: 174-175. Di Segni 1998: 447-448, nr. 52 Gatier 1986: 106-108.			



No.: 46	Name: Ματρώνα - Matrona	Date: 2 nd half of 6 th century	Size: L: 85 cm H: 47 cm
Site: Ayoun Musa, Basilica Church – Moanstery of Kaianus Arabia		Description and location: The inscription is set in a <i>tabula ansata</i> . The letters are red, on white ground. Located between the columns on the south side.	
Transcription: +ΥΠΕΡΣΩΤΗ ΡΙΑΣΠΡΟΣΦΟ ΡΑΣΜΑΤΡΩΝΑΣ			
Υπερ σωτη- ριας [και] προσφο- ρας Ματρωνας			
Translation: For the salvation and the offering of Matrona.			
Sources: SEG 34:1511/IGLSyr 21,2 96 Piccirillo 1989: 205-210 and 1993 A: 190-191. Di Segni 1998: 456, nr. 68. Gatier 1986: nr. 96. Buschhausen 1986: 224, Katalog nr. 11. Metropolitan Museum: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/477398			



ΧΑΡΙΤΙΘΕΙΑΕΠΙΤΟΥΤΑΠΑΝΤΑΘΕΟΦΙΛΕΣΤΗΠΑΤΡΟΣΗΜΩΗΚΤΟΙΜΕΝΟΣΧΑΙΟΥΕΠΚΑΛΗΩΚΟΔΟΗΘΗΔΗΚΕΚΟΣΗ
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ΩΤΗΡΙΑΣΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΟΥΣΧΚΓΟΘΟΥΣΧΚΤΑΝΤΩΝΤΩΝΑΥΤΟΙΣΔΙΦΕΡΟΝΤΩΝΑΜΕΝΚΕ

No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
47	Σεργια – Sergia	530 A.D. 6 th century	430 x 66 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Mount Nebo – Memorial of Moses		The inscription is set in black letters on white ground. The rectangular frame is set with red and yellow tesserae.	
Diaconicon – Baptistry		Located at the eastern part of the central mosaic –	
Arabia		in front of the baptistry.	
Transcription:			
1. Χάριτι θείαι, ἐπὶ τοῦ τὰ πάντα θεοφιλεστα(άτου) πατρός ἡμῶν κ(αί) ποιμένος Ἡλίου ἐπισκ(όπου) ἀνωικοδομήθη δὴ κ(αί) ἐκοσμή-			
2. θη τό ἱερόν τοῦ Θε(ο)ῦ διακον(ι)κόν μετὰ τῆς ἐν αὐτῷ ἀγίας κολυμβέθρας τῆς παλι(ν)γε(ν)εσίας κ(αί) τοῦ χαριεστάτου κη-			
3. βορίου, σπουδῇ Ἡλίου ἡγουμένου κ(αί) πρε(σβυτέρου), ἐν ὑπατίαι φλ(αουίων) Λαμπαδίου κ(αί) Ὁρέστου τῶν λαμπρ(ο)τ(άτων), μην(νι) Α(ύ)γουστω,			
4. χρόνον θ ἰνδ(ικατιώνος) τοῦ ἐτους ΥΚΕ τῆς ἐπαρχίας. Ὑπέρ σωτηρίας Μουσηλίου σχο(λαστικοῦ) κ(αί) Σεργούς, γαμετής, ὑπέρ			
5. σωτηρίας Φιλαδέλφου σχο(λαστικοῦ) κ(αί) Γοθ(ο)υ σχο(λαστικοῦ) κ(αί) πάντων τῶν αὐτοῖς διφερόντων. Ἀμέν, Κ(ύρι)ε.			
Translation:			
By divine grace, at the time of our father and Bishop, Elias, beloved by God,			
the holy <i>diaconicon</i> of God was rebuilt, and adorned with the basin of regeneration it contains and with the splendid ciborium,			
by the good offices of Elias, hegumen, and priest, under the consulate of Flavii Lampadius and Orestes, in the month of August,			

in the ninth indiction of the year 425 of the Province (of Arabia = 530 A.D.). For the salvation of Muselius, advocate, and Sergia, his wife,
and for the salvation of Philadelphus, advocate, and of all his kinfolk. Amen, Lord.

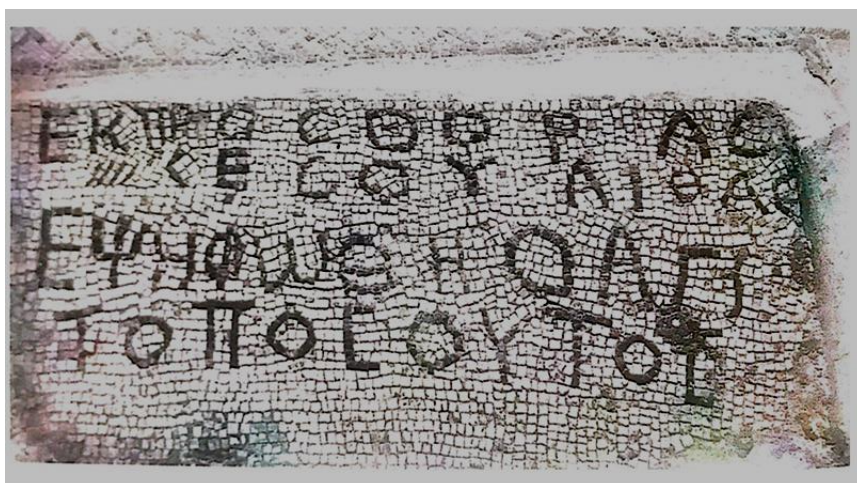
Sources:

SEG/ IGLSyr 21,2 74

Piccirillo 1989: 155-157; and 1993 A: 135, 146-147, fig. 166, 182.

Di Segni 1998: 429-430, nr. 6.

Gatier 1986: nr. 74-75. – translates with Sergius.



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
48	Αιθα – Aitha	6 th century	54 x 110 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Madaba, Atwal chapel (southeast of the Acropolis) Arabia		The inscription is made with Black letters on white ground. Located near the entrance, main nave.	
Transcription:			
ΕΚΠΡΟΣΦΟΡΑΣ [..ΛΕ]ΣΟΥ ΑΙΘΑΣ ΕΨΗΦΩΘΗΟΑΓ[...] ΤΟΠΟΣΟΥΤΟΣ.			
‘Εκ προς(φ)οράς [δουλης] σου Αίθας έψηφώθη ό άγ(ιος) τόπος ούτος.			
Translation:			
With the offering (of) your (servant) Aitha this holy place was paved with a mosaic.		Con l’offerta (della) tua (serva) Aitha fu mosaicato questo santo luogo.	
Sources:			
IGLSyr 21,2 148/ SEG 8.331 Piccirillo 1986: 129-132 and 1993 A: 128, fig. 144.			



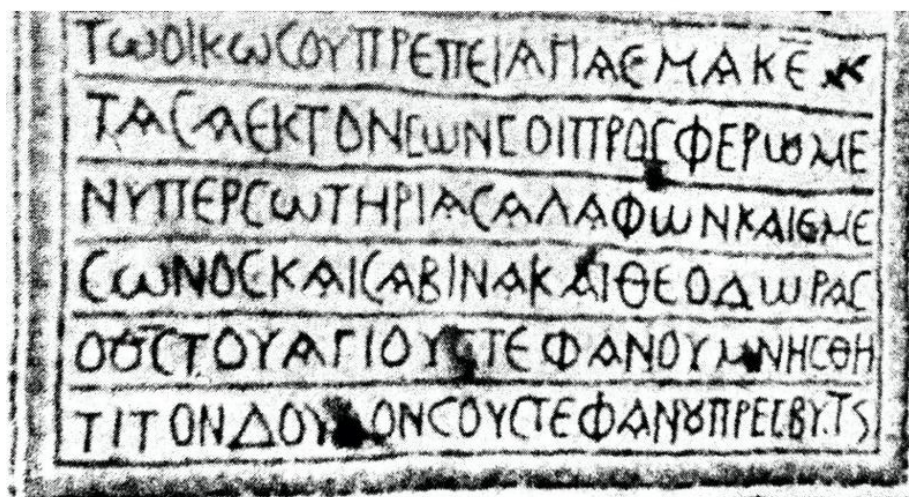
No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
49	Θεοδωρα – Theodora	6 th century	-
Site: Madeba, Church of the Apostles Arabia		Description and location: The inscription is set in a circle, surrounding the depiction of Thalassa. The letters are black on white ground. The outer frame is set in red with black borders, the inner frame is set in lighter, yellow, again with black outlines. Located in the middle of the nave.	
Transcription: Κ(ύρι)ε ὁ Θε(ός)ς ὁ ποιήσας τόν οὐρανόν καί τήν γήν δός ζωήν ‘Ανασ- τασίῳ καί Θωμάι καί Θεοδώραι καί Σαλαμανίου ψηφ(οθέτου).			
Translation: Oh Lord, God, who made (?) heaven and earth; give live to Anastasios, and Thomas and Theodora and Salamanios, the mosaicist.			
Sources: Piccirillo 1989: 69-107 and 1993 A: 106-107, fig. 95. Gatier 1986: 138-139, nr. 142. Buschhausen 1986: pl. XI.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
50	Σοφία – Sophia	6 th century	-
Site:		Description and location:	
Umm er-Rasas – Kastron Mefa’a Church of Bishop Sergios Arabia		The inscription is set in black letters, on white ground, not framed. The inscription belongs together with other names that occur in the mosaic floor. Located in the middle aisle, part of the main mosaic.	
Transcription:			
ΣΩΦΙΑ			
Translation:			
Sophia			
Sources:			
Piccirillo 1993 A: 234-235, fig. 371.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
51	Ταλιθα – Talitha	6th century	-
Site: Umm er-Rasas, Kastron Mefa’s Church of the Lions Arabia		Description and location: The inscription is set in black letters on white ground. It is part of an ensemble that also contains a partly destroyed motive. Located in the southern apse.	
Transcription: ΠΑΦΑΝΩΝ ΤΑΛΙΘΑ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ ΣΥΕΛΥ			
Translation: Pafanon, (son) of Talitha/ John, (son) of Soel			
Sources: Piccirillo 1993 A: 236-237, fig. 375. Piccirillo 1993 B: 220, Insc. 72.a.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
52	Θεοδώρα – Theodora Σαβίνα – Sabina	Second half of the 6 th century	-
Site:		Description and location:	
Birsama – Kh. Be'er Shema, Church of St. Sephanus Palestina III		The inscription is set in black letters on white ground, framed by a single line. The rows are separated by lines. The panel is located on the bema in front of the apse.	
Transcription:			
ΤΩΟΙΚΩΣΟΥΠΡΕΠΕΙΑΓΙΑΣΜΑΚΕ ΤΑΣΑΕΚΤΟΝΣΩΝΣΟΙΠΡΟΣΦΕΡΩΜΕ ΝΥΠΕΡΣΩΤΗΡΙΑΣΑΛΑΦΩΝΚΑΙΕΜΕ ΣΩΝΟΣΚΑΙΣΑΒΙΝΑΚΑΙΘΕΟΔΩΡΑΣ ΟΘΣΤΟΥΑΓΙΟΥΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΥΜΝΗΣΘΗ ΤΙΤΟΝΔΟΥΛΟΝΣΟΥΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΥΠΡΕΣΒΥΤ.			
Τώ οικώ σου πρέπει άγιασμα Κ[ύρι]ε τά σά έκ τον σών σοι προσφέρωμε- ν ύπέρ σωτηρίας Άλαφών και Έμέ- σωνος και Σαβίνα και Θεοδώρας ό Θ[εός] τού άγίου Στεφάνου μνήσθη- τι τον δούλον σου Στεφάνου πρεσβυτ[έρου]			
Translation:			
Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord bringing before thee thine and thine all (psalm 93:5). For the salvation of Alaphon, and Emesus, and Sabina and Theodora. O God of St. Stephan, remember your servant Stephan the priest.			
Sources:			
Gazit/Lender 1992 : 33-40.			
Gazit/Lender 1993: 273-276.			
Madden 2014: 44.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
53	Μεγάλης - Megale	573/4 A.D. 6 th century	-
Site: el-Rashidiyah – Buseira, Church Palestina III		Description and location: The inscription is set with black letters on white ground, surrounded by a double lined octagonal frame. Set in the narthex of the church.	
Transcription: Ἐνταύθα εἰ- σέλθων κατανοή- σ(ε)ις μητέρα πάρθενον Χ(ριστο)ύ, ἀφραστον λόγον, Θ(εο)ύ οἰκονομίαν, καὶ εἰ πιστεύ- σης σωθήσῃ. Σύν Θ(ε)ῶι ἐτελειώ- θη ἡ ψήφωσις μη(νί) Περιτίῳ τοῦ ἐτ(ους) νξη΄ ἰνδ(ικτιώνος) ζ΄, ὑπέρ σωτηρίας Μεγάλις τῆς φιλοχρίστου. Ἔργ(ον) γε- νάμενον διὰ Ἀνδρέ- ου Ἑληνώτου ψι(φιστού).			
Translation: Entering hither thou will see the virgin mother of Christ, the ineffable Logos, dispensation of God, and if thou believe, thou shall be saved. With God’s help this mosaic was finished in the month of Peritius of the year 468, indiction 7, for the salvation of Christ-loving Megale. Work done by Andrew of Jerusalem, mosaic layer.			
Source: Di Segni 2006: 587-589, pl. 56 - fig. 7. Oxford Dictionary. The cult of Saints in late Antiquity, online catalogue: http://csa.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E02633			

ΧΑΡΙΤΙΗΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ΗΜΩΝ ΕΚΤΙΣΘΗΚΗ
ΕΥΗΦΟΡΗΚΑΙ ΕΤΕΛΙΩΘΗ Ο ΝΑΟΣ ΤΩ ΑΓΙΩ ΜΗΝΑΕ ΠΙΘΕΟΔΩ-
ΡΩ ΤΩ ΑΓΙΩΤΑΤΩ ΚΑΙ ΘΕΟΤΙΜΗΤΩ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΩ ΕΚ ΠΡΟΣΦΟ-
ΡΑΣ ΠΡΟΚΟΠΙΟΥ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΚΟΜΗΤΙΣΣΗΣ ΣΥΜΒΙΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΤΕΚΝΩ-
Ν ΑΥΤΩΝ ΥΠΕΡ ΑΦΗΣΕΩΣ ΑΜΑΡΤΙΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΑΝΑΠΑΥΣΕ-
ΩΣ ὧΝ ΓΡΑΦΗΝ ΜΗΝΙ ΜΑΡΤΙΩ ΧΡΟΝΟΝ ΟΓΔΟΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΩ ΦΚΘ



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
54	Κομητιση – Komitissa	635 A.D. 7 th century	256 x 71 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Rihab, Church of St. Menas Arabia		The inscription is set in red letters on white background. The rectangular frame is set in a red and white pattern. Located in the intercolumnial space, north of the main aisle – close to the apse.	
Transcription:			
Χάριτι Ἰησοῦ [Χ]ριστοῦ θεοῦ καὶ σωτήρος ἡμῶν ἐκτίσθην κ(αί) εὐηφόθη καὶ ἐτελιώθην ὁ ναὸς τοῦ ἀγίου Μηνά, ἐπὶ Θεοδό- ρου τοῦ ἀγιωτάτου καὶ νεοτιμήτου μητροπολίτου, ἐκ προσφο- ρὰς Προκοπίου μαρτυρίου καὶ Κομητίσσης συμβίου καὶ τέκν- ων αὐτῶν, ὑπὲρ ἀφήσεως ἀμαρτιῶν καὶ ἀναπαύσε- ως γ[ον]έον. [Ε]γγραφὴ ἐν μηνὶ Μαρτίῳ χρόνον ὀγδόνος ἰν(δικτιώνος) (έ)του(σ) φκθ'.			
Translation:			
By the grace of Jesus Christ, our God and saviour, this church of Saint Menas has been built, plastered with mosaic (pavement) and completed, under Theodosius, the holiest Metropolitan honoured by God; with the donation of Prokopios (son) of Martyrius and (his wife) Kometissa and their children; for the redemption of their sins and peace for the ancestors. Written in the month of march, in the time of the eighth indication, in the year of (529) 635.			

Sources:

Mittmann 1967: 42-45

Piccirillo 1981: 76-77, fig. 11; and 1993 A: 313, fig. 632.

* Translated to Englisch ML, German translation by Mittmann 1967: 42.



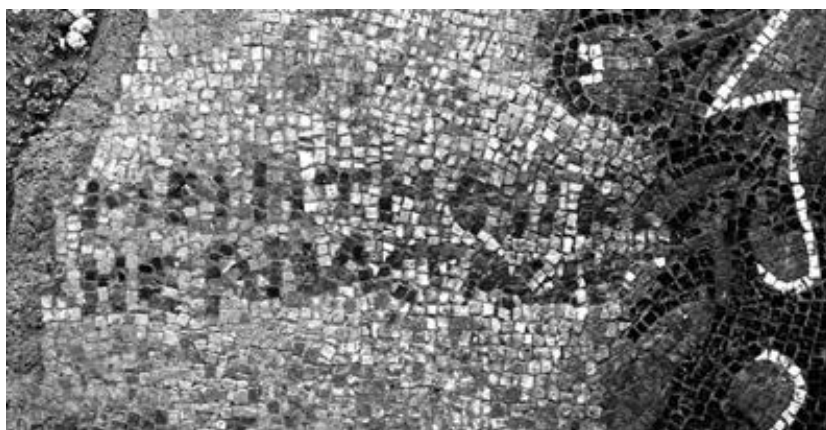
No.: 55	Name: Μαρία – Maria Σορεγ - Soreg	Date: 1st half 7th century	Size: 70x 70 cm
Site: Jerash, Chappel of Elias, Maria and Soreg Arabia		Description and location: The inscriptions are set around the depictions of two women. In black letters on white ground. Located in the nave, in front of the altar.	
Transcription: <div>1.) ΜΑΡΙΑ.</div> <div>2.) ΣΟΡΕΓ</div>			
Translation: <div>1.) Maria</div> <div>2.) Soreg</div>			
Sources: Saller/Bagatti 1949: 269-289. Buschhausen 1986: 244, Katalog nr. 40, 41. Piccirillo 1993 A: 296, fig. 567, 572.			



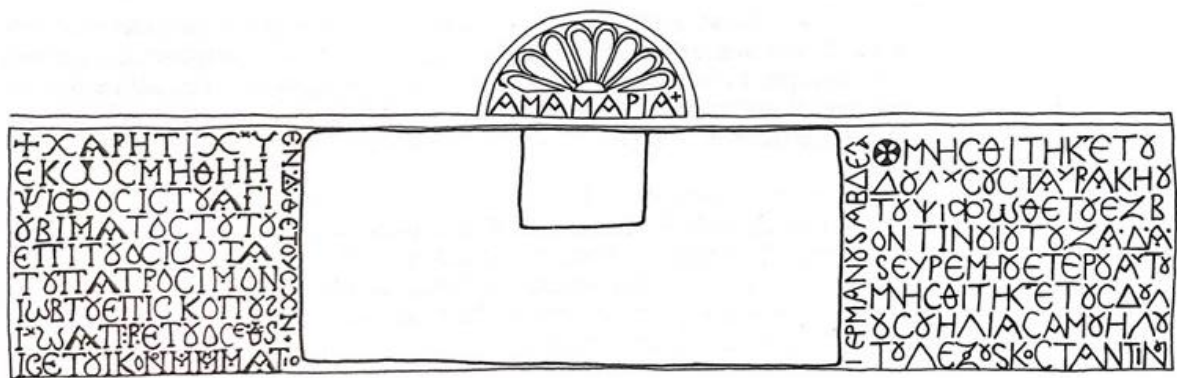
No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
56	Παλλους – Pallous	601 A.D. 7 th century	3,2 m wide
Site:		Description and location:	
Nessana - Auja El-Hafir, Valley-Church Palestina III		The inscription is set in a <i>tabula ansata</i> . With black letters on white ground. Possibly located in the nave.	
Transcription:			
[Υ]πέρ σωτηρίας τών καρποφορησάντων Σεργίου(ου) από συμπόν(ου) κ(αί) μοναρχ(ού) κ(αί) Παλλ(ού)τος/ ἀδελφ(ής) κ(αί) Πιαν(ού) διακ(όνου) αὐτῆς υ(ιού) πρωτέοντ(ος) μητροπ(όλεως) Ἐμμίς(ης) ἐ(τους) υοις ἰνδ(ικτιώνος) ε΄μη(νός) Γορπ(ιαίου) κ΄.			
Translation:			
For the salvation of the benefactors Sergius, assessor and monk, and Pallous/ his sister, and Pianos the deacon, her son, Primicerius of the metropolis of Emesa, the 20th of the month Gorpaeus in the year (496) 601, indiction 5.*			
Sources:			
Meimaris 1992: 278, Insc. 440. Madden 2014: 172. Avi-Yonah 1932: 137-142, nr. 11. Welles/Kirk 1962: 173-174, pl. XXXII.I. *era of Arabia = 7 September 601 (Madden 2014: 172)			



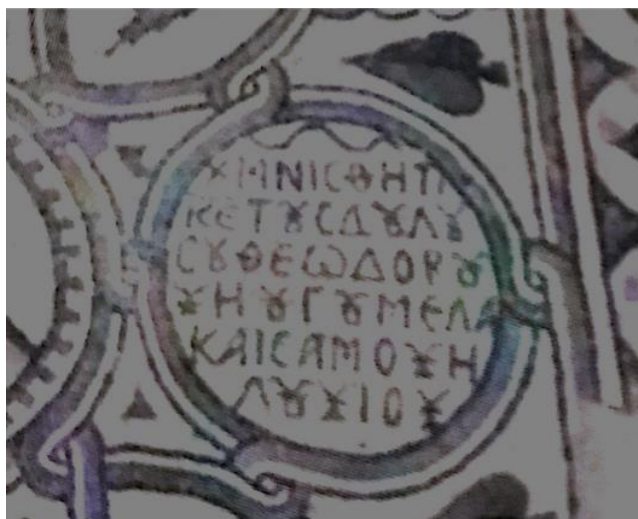
No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
57	Αλεξάνδρα - Alexandra	784/5 or 785/6 A.D. 8 th century (eventually 801/2 A.D, 9 th century)	-
Site: Khirbet el-Shubeika, Church, Phonicia		Description and location: Located central at the northern edge of the bema, the inscription is set in a rectangular frame.	
Transcription: + Ηρακ λιτος Διακ(ω)ν Αλεξαν δρα			
Translation: + Heraklitos deacon. Alexandra.			
Sources: Tsaferis 2003: 83-86. Syon 2003: 75-82.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
58	Ανασίας – Anasia (more likely Anastasia)	8 th century	letters 4.2 -5.5 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Horvath Hani, Church – Monastery (nunnery) Palestina I		The inscription is set in the mosaic floor without a frame. It shows Black letters on white ground. Set in the south-eastern room, next to the church.	
Transcription:			
μνή(σ)τηθη, κύριε, Ἀνασίας εὐ(σεβεστάτη)σ or ἐγ(ουμένη)σ			
Translation:			
Remember. Lord. the most pious Anasia; <i>or</i> mother superior Anasia.			
Source:			
CIIP IV.1, Ameling 2018: No. 2656, fig. 2656. Dahari/Zelinger 2014: 179-203.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
59	Zαδα – Zada Μαρία – Maria	756 A.D. 8 th century	-
Site: Umm er-Rassas, Kastron Mefa‘a St. Stephanus Arabia		Description and location: The inscription is set in black letters on white ground. The mosaic is divided in three panels surrounding the altar. The mosaic is located in the area of the altar.	
Transcription (2 nd , right part): +ΜΝΗΣΘΙΤΗΚΕΤΟΥ ΔΟΥΛΟΥΣΟΥΣΤΑΥΡΑΚΗΟΥ ΤΟΥΨΙΦΩΘΕΤΟΥΕΖΒ ΟΝΤΙΝΟΥΙΟΥΤΟΥΖΑΔΑ ΣΕΥΡΕΜΗΟΥΕΤΕΡΟΥΑΥΤΟΥ ΜΝΗΣΘΙΤΗΚΕΤΟΥΣΔΟΥΛ ΟΥΣΟΥΗΛΙΑΣΑΜΟΥΗΛΟΥ ΤΟΥΛΕΖΟΥΣΚΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥ ΓΕΡΜΑΝΟΥΣΑΒΔΕΛΑ + ΑΜΑΜΑΡΙΑ +			
+Μνήσθιτη Κ(ύρι)ε τού δούλου σου Σταυρακήου τού ψιφωθέου έζβ- οντίνου ίου τού Ζαδα και Εύρεμήου έτέρου αύτού μνήσθιτη Κ(ύρι)ε τούς δουλ- ου σου ‘Ηλία Σαμουήλου τού Λεξου και Κοσταντίνου Γερμανού και Αβδελα + άμα Μαρία +			
Translation: + Remember, o Lord, your servant Staurachios, the mosaicist, Ezbontino, son of Zada and Euremenos, his college. Remember, o Lord, your servants, Elias (son) of Samuel of Lexos, and Constantine, and Germanos and Abdela + with Maria +			
Sources: Piccirillo 1989: 284-285. Piccirillo 1993 A: 238-239, fig. 383. Piccirillo 1994: 241-258.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
60	Γουμελα – Goumela	8 th century	ca. 60 cm (diam.)
Site:		Description and location:	
Umm er-Rasas,Kastron Mefa’a St. Stephanus Arabia		The inscription is set in a circular frame, with multiple colours. The letters are black on white ground. Located at the northern aisle next to the bema.	
Transcription:			
ΜΝΙΣΘΗΤΙ ΚΕΤΟΥΣΔΟΥΛΟΥ ΣΟΥΘΕΩΔΟΡΟΥ ΥΗΟΥΓΟΥΜΕΛΑ ΚΑΙΣΑΜΟΥΗ ΛΟΥΥΙΟΥ.			
Μνίστητι Κ(ῑ)ρι)ε τούς δούλους σου Θεωδόρου υίου Γουμελα καί Σαμουή λου υίου.			
Translation:			
Remember, Lord, your servants Theodoros, son of Goumela and Samoue(le) his son.			
Sources:			
Piccirillo 1989: 290-291.			
Piccirillo 1993 A: 238-239, fig. 383.			
Piccirillo 1994: 241-258.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
61	Ματρώνα – Matrona Μαν[...]θίνης – Man(ea)thine	-	80 x 80 cm
Site:		Description and location:	
Khirbet el-Wahadnah - near Khirbet Mar Liyas Church Palestina III		The inscription is set in black letters on white ground, framed by three rectangles. The location at the site is unknown.	
Transcription:			
ΠΡΟΣΦΟΡΑ ΑΜΑΜΑΥΠΟΔΙ ΑΚΟΝΟΥΚΑΙΟΙΚΟ ΝΟΜΟΥΑΜΑΜΑ ΤΡΩΝΑΣΥΝ[.] ΩΚΑΙΜΑΝ[.] ΘΙΝΗΣΘΥΓ[.] ΤΡΟ[]ΑΥΤΟ[.]			
Προσφορά ‘Αμαμα ύποδι- ακόνου καί οίκο- νόμου άμα Μα- τρώνα συν[βί]- ωι καί Μαν - - θίνης θυγ[α-] τρός αύτό[ν]			
Translation:			
Offering by Amama, subdeacon and oikomen, and by Matrona his wife, and Man(ea)thine, her daughter			
Sources:			
Piccirillo, 1981: 18-20 Piccirillo, 1993 A: 339.			



No.:	Name:	Date:	Size:
62	Σησήννη – Sesenna/Sesenne	-	-
Site:		Description and location:	
Khirbet el-Wahadnah – near Khirbet Mar Liyas Central church Palestina III		The inscription is set with black letters on white ground, framed by two lines. Parts of the mosaic are destroyed.	
Transcription:			
---ONΦΥΛΩXP---			
---IYKONOMO---			
---YKAΙΣΗΣΗNNH---			
Transcription:			
---[αύτ]όν φυλώχρ-			
---ONΦΥΛΩXP---			
[ιστον λαόν]			
---IYKONOMO---			
---ικονόμου---			
---YKAΙΣΗΣΗNNH---			
---υ καί Σησηννη---			
Transaltion:			
... Christ loving People...			
...popolo amante di Cristo...			
...econom...			
...economy...			
...and Sesenna/Sesenne...			
...e di Sisinni...			
Sources:			
Piccirillo 1981: 18-20.			
Piccirillo, 1993 A: 339.			