

Archaeologists find 1,500-year-old Jerusalem street

February 10 2010



A Jordanian man cleans the Madaba Map. Archaeologists said they have found a 1,500-year-old Jerusalem road that was once a bustling throughfare used by throngs of Christian pilgrims and which is depicted on a famed mosaic map of the Holy Land.

Archaeologists said on Wednesday they have found a 1,500-year-old Jerusalem road that was once a bustling throughfare used by throngs of Christian pilgrims and which is depicted on a famed mosaic map of the Holy Land.

The small segment of road was found in a dig conducted before

[Jerusalem](#) authorities carry out infrastructure rehabilitation just inside the Old City's Jaffa Gate.

"After removing a number of archaeological strata, at a depth of 4.5 metres (14.80 feet) below today's street level, much to our excitement, we discovered the large flagstones that paved the street," said excavation director Ofer Sion.

The single, central thoroughfare is clearly visible on the Madaba [Map](#), a floor mosaic in the Byzantine church of Saint George in Jordan which is the oldest surviving map of the Holy Land, said Sion, standing on scaffolding above the cracked flagstones.

"In those days, thousands of pilgrims from across the Christian world would be using that road," he said.

Sion recounted that an eminent scholar of the Byzantine period, whom he wouldn't name, was close to tears when he saw the flagstones, which are over one metre- (3.2-foot) long.

But, because it is below a busy [street](#), the dig will have to be covered up again in a few weeks, Sion told journalists.

The excavation led by the Israel Antiquities Authority also uncovered remains of buildings from later periods as well as a water cistern measuring eight by 12 metres and five metres deep (26 X 39 x 16 feet.)

In addition, the archaeologists found numerous pottery vessels and coins and five small square bronze weights.

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Citation: Archaeologists find 1,500-year-old Jerusalem street (2010, February 10) retrieved 22

September 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2010-02-archaeologists-year-old-jerusalem-street.html>

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