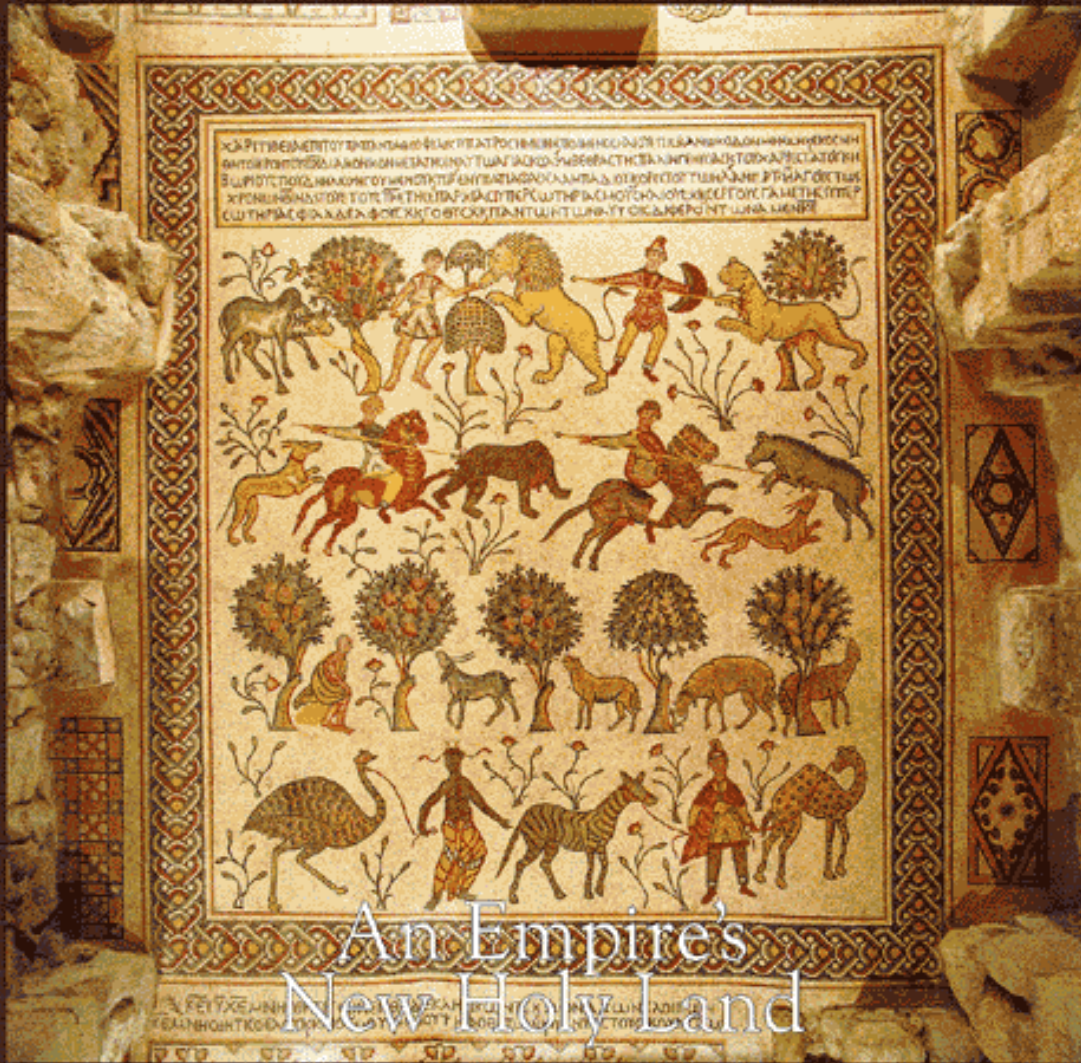


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An Empire's
New Holy Land

The Byzantine Period

The Byzantine Period: An Empire's New Holy Land

S. Thomas Parker

Here we learn of the transformation of a poor step-child into a favored daughter. The archaeology of the Byzantine Period used to be "too late" for those interested in the Biblical periods and "too early" for those scholars specialized in the remains of Islamic civilization. Now that situation has been totally transformed by a wideranging burst of archaeological energy involving a broad range of specialists and perspectives. In his detailed summary of the main currents and fruits of research into the material remains of Byzantine Palestine, Tom Parker begins his historical review with Diocletian to provide a more well-founded sense of the political processes that shaped the transformation of culture in the region. A summary of significant inscriptions and the implications to be drawn from the sophisticated archaeological surveys that have been accomplished in recent years leads to a review of excavations, including that new focus on smaller, rural settlements. Then the treatment shifts to the architecture, pottery and other material remains that have now been recovered, concluding with an evaluation of the impact of archaeological research on historical understandings of the period.

Landscape and the Sacred: The Sanctuary Dedicated to Holy, Heavenly Zeus Baetocaece

Ann Irvine Steinsapir

Archaeology need not be invasive to be informative. In her discussion of the ruins at Baetocaece, a Roman sanctuary located near the coast in Syria, Ann Steinsapir offers a nuanced interpretation of the cult and cult practice at the site based on a careful evaluation of the configuration of its sacred spaces, its architectural and decorative features, and the physical setting in which it was placed. Starting from a description of the topographic setting of the site, the study moves on to review the preserved evidence of inscriptions, the large temple, the smaller precinct, and various features of the iconography, producing a reading that situates the site in ideological and social space. This innovative methodology, a type of landscape archaeology, shows its power to illuminate with a perspective that is novel in Near Eastern archaeology.

On the cover: The mosaic from the Diakonikon of the Church of Moses at Mount Nebo depicts a variety of hunting and pastoral scenes, stock themes in Byzantine mosaics.

Courtesy of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum, Jerusalem

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