



# EXCAVATING Mary Magdalene's Hometown

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**MAGDALA WAS THE LARGEST AND** most important city on the Sea of Galilee at the dawn of the Common Era. The first-century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus implies that it was a city of approximately 30,000 people.<sup>1</sup> Although there is no archaeological evidence that Jesus visited Magdala, it is almost certain that he did.

Matthew 9:35 tells us that “Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness.”

Separate archaeological missions have worked at Magdala over the years: excavations directed by the Franciscans

**THE MAGDALA SYNAGOGUE** consists of a room measuring 36 by 36 feet and a hallway enclosing it. Mosaics were supposed to adorn the hallway pavement, but were left largely unfinished—possibly due to the First Jewish Revolt against Rome (66–70 C.E.) that brought destruction to the city by the Roman army. Decorative themes visible in the eastern part of the hallway include a rosette with meander patterns on either side.