Hisban, ‘Umayr and Jalul are three archaeological sites currently being excavated by the Madaba Plains Project in Jordan. The sites are located to the east of the Jordan River in the fertile highlands overlooking the Dead Sea. The region, home to various people groups for millennia, was rich in agricultural capacity. Major settlements occupied ‘Umayr and Jalul in the Bronze Ages, including a massive defense system at ‘Umayr in 1600 BC which reflects the need to protect people and property. An ‘Umayr temple from 1400 BC signals the importance of religion to the ancients. The Iron Ages (1200-500 BC), extremely well represented at all three sites by architecture and other material cultural remains, saw tribal groups settling down and the rise of small kingdoms, known in the Bible as Ammonites and Moabites. Hisban revealed remains from later periods including temples and reservoirs from Greek and Roman times; mosaic floors and church architecture from the Byzantine period of the sixth and seventh centuries; rich building remains from the Middle Islamic period, especially Mamluk times in the 12th and 13th centuries AD; and structures and artifacts from the Late Islamic periods.
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