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MISSING MAGDALA AND THE NAME OF MARY 'MAGDALENE'

Joan E. Taylor

Traditionally, Mary Magdalene's name is assumed to indicate the place she came from: Magdala, meaning 'the Tower'. However, no place named Magdala is mentioned in the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament or in other contemporaneous writing. The site called 'Magdala' in Israel today, some 5 km north of Tiberias and just north of Mount Arbel, continues a Byzantine identification, from the 5th or 6th centuries CE. It is often assumed that the sizeable town now coming to light here was more commonly called by the Greek name Tarichaea. However, questions may be asked about evidence. There was a village attested in rabbinic literature as Migdal Nuniya ('Tower of Fish'), lying about one mile north of Tiberias, which was probably called 'Magdala' locally, but this Magdala lay south of Mount Arbel. It is suggested in this article that the town known from the Byzantine period through to today as Magdala was in the early Roman period called Magadan (Matt 15.39), with Dalmanoutha (Mark 8.10) being a possible sister town or additional name. Homonoia is an attested Greek name for a town here, but the location of Tarichaea is unclear. Magadan became Magdala for the Byzantine pilgrimage route, as also in later manuscripts of the New Testament, to conform to the expectation that there was a town of this name here, and Migdal Nuniya was side-lined. While Mary may well have come from Migdal Nuniya, referred to as Magdala by people of the lake, the epithet 'the Magdalene' may be understood as meaning 'the Tower-ess': a nickname like others Jesus gave to his closest apostles.

Keywords: Mary Magdalene, Magdala, Migdal Nuniya, Tarichaea, Dalmanoutha

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the ancient town of Magdala is identified about 5 km north of Tiberias, just beyond Mount Arbel, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Extensive ruins are being uncovered there beside an extremely large harbour measuring 180 m long. Famously, in 2009, a 1st-century synagogue was found. This building includes mosaics, frescoes and a central carved stone, with a depiction of the tabernacle menorah in between two pots (Corbett 2011; Aviam 2013).

The huge harbour and extensive remains indicate that this was a large and important city. However, while many towns are referred to in writings of the 1st to 4th centuries as lying on the Sea of Galilee, a large city named 'Magdala' is never mentioned. It is widely assumed today that Magdala was another name for Tarichaea, and that this city is what is now being brought to light. However, the historical evidence does not support such an association. In order to trace how a supposed town of Magdala became identified as being situated here, it is necessary to survey the evidence step by step. We begin with the name of Mary Magdalene.

2. THE GOSPELS: MAGDALENE

A town named Magdala has been long assumed to have existed at the time of Jesus because of the epithet 'Magdalene' attached to Jesus' foremost female disciple, Mary. In the Gospel of

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Mark, Mary is not defined in the normal way for a woman as someone in relation to her father, husband or son (e.g. Joanna the wife of Chuza, in Luke 8.2), but rather she is given a designation that defines her as an independent woman with no connection to a man. She follows Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem and witnesses both his crucifixion and the empty tomb, and in the longer ending of Mark she is the first witness to the Risen Christ (Mark 16.9–11). She is defined as "Maria the Magdalene", Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνή (15.47; 16.1, 9). However, in Matthew's Gospel her first name is different: she is Mariam the Magdalene, Μαριὰμ ἡ Μαγδαληνή (Matt 27.56, 61; 28.1), one of several women to witness the Risen Christ. In the Gospel of John likewise she is at the cross and the empty tomb, and is first to see the resurrected Jesus (John 19.25; 20.1, 11–18); she is named in John as she is in the Gospel of Mark as Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνή, but when Jesus addresses her directly he calls her Mariam (Μαριὰμ). The name "Mariam" appears to preserve the original Aramaic or Hebrew (Ἑβραϊστί), as also her address to Jesus as "Rabbouni" (Ραββουνι), 'my great one/sir', translated in John as 'Teacher' (John 20.16), meaning that she was a disciple of Jesus. In using the name Mariam, Matthew is then consistently reflecting a more authentic Aramaic/Hebrew form of her name, rather than the Hellenised 'Maria' (cf. Rom16.6).

That she is 'the Magdalene' is easily read as being a reference to her place of origin, though in Luke 8.2 she is Μαρία ἡ καλουμένη Μαγδαληνή, "Maria called Magdalene", and, more interestingly still, ἡ Μαγδαληνή Μαρία, "the Magdalene Maria" (Luke 24.10), which may suggest that the name 'Magdalene' is more than a reference to a place. When other people are 'called' by such epithets in Luke-Acts, it is because they are named in a special way by Jesus or others. Thus:

Σίμωνα τὸν καλούμενον Ζηλωτὴν, "Simon called Zelotes" (Luke 6.15 cf. Acts 1.12)

Ἰούδαν τὸν καλούμενον Ἰσκαριώτην, "Judas called Iscariotes" (Luke 22.3)

Σίμων ὁ ἐπικαλούμενος Πέτρος, "Simon called Peter" (Acts 10.18; 11.13)

Ζηλωτής, 'Zelotes', and Ἰσκαριώτης, 'Iskariotes', are nicknames typical of Jesus' apostles, those designated as being among 'the Twelve', and in neither case do they indicate provenance. Simon's name 'Zelotes' translates an Aramaic term we have evidenced elsewhere as 'the Kananaean', Σίμωνα τὸν Καναναῖον (Mark 3.17; Matt 10.4), which actually renders the Aramaic word *kana'anai,*' 'zealous/striving one'.[1] As I have argued elsewhere (Taylor 2010), following Origen, the epithet 'Iscariot' in Ἰούδαν τὸν καλούμενον Ἰσκαριώτην or Ἰούδαν Ἰσκαριώθ should be understood as an Aramaic word *Iskarioutha*, meaning 'choked up'. Judas 'Iskarioth' would also be distinguished then from the other apostle Judas (Matt 10.3, Mark 3.18, Luke 6.15), who was similarly called by a nickname, 'the twin' (John 11.16; 14.22; 20.24; 21.2), in Aramaic, *Thoma*, hence Thomas (see too Matt 13.55 and parr.). Simon being called 'Zelotes' would distinguish him from the other Simon that Jesus called by the name of *Kepha* an Aramaic word meaning 'rock' (*petros*, Πέτρος, hence Peter) (Mark 3.16, cf. John 1.42; Jastrow 1943, 634–35). For the sons of Zebedee, called Boanerges (Mark 3.17), the epithet Βοανηργές probably transliterates Aramaic 'sons of noise', *b*ᵉ*ni r*ᵃ*gasha*', that is 'noisy men', and it illustrates how Mark tried to reflect the pronunciation of this epithet rather than its letters as written (Βοανη for *b*ᵉ*ni,* and ργές for *r*ᵃ*gasha*').

In these instances we are in the ambiance of Aramaic nicknames, which were either transliterated or translated into Greek. Other qualifications to names of the Twelve or of close disciples might also be nicknames: 'Bartholemew' is not a first name, strictly speaking, since it means 'son of Tholmai', and 'Tolmai' or 'Talmai' in Jewish folklore was one of the Giants (b.Yoma 13a, Sot. 34b; Jastrow 1943, 1672). Traditionally, it is the epithet of the disciple Nathaniel (John 1.23–41; 21.2).

It was apparently typical of Jesus to use nicknames for his close disciples. It is said that Jesus himself dubbed Simon 'Peter' (Mark 3.16; Luke 6.14; John 1.42), likewise James and John 'the sons of thunder' (Mark 3.17). In addition, we find in Acts that people 'called' by various epithets indicate persons of importance in the early church, who could be distinguished in a way that designated them more particularly than by a common Jewish name:

Ἰωσὴφ τὸν καλούμενον Βαρσαββᾶν, "Joseph called Barsabbas" (Acts 1.23)

Ἰωάννου οὖ ἐπικαλουμένου Μάρκου, "John called Mark" (Acts 12.12; 15.37)

Συμεὼν ὁ καλούμενος Νίγερ, "Simon called Niger" (Acts 13.1)

Ἰούδαν τὸν καλούμενον Βαρσαββᾶν, "Judas called Barsabbas" (Acts 15.22)

Being 'called' something indicated a distinctive feature about you. It was a way of defining you not just by reference to your family relations as 'son' or 'daughter' of someone, thus I think 'Barsabbas', Aramaic *Bar Sabba*, is more likely to mean 'son of the Sabbath' or 'son of the elder/scholar/old man' rather than indicating someone who was simply called 'the son of Sabba' (cf. Ilan 2002, 395–96; Bauckham 2008, 81). These are primarily insider names, not official names of people, and in fact such nicknames were quite common at this time (Ilan 2002, 46; Hachlili 2005, 205–31).

Place-names were used for defining people more generally, and they are not so much nicknames but identifications of people who have left their home towns. Matthew identifies Jesus' home town as 'Nazareth' (Luke 1.26; 2.4, 39, 51) or 'Nazara' (Matt 4.13, cf. Luke 4.16) in order to fulfil the rather mysterious prophecy of "he shall be called a *Nazoraios* (Ναζωραῖος)" (Matt 2.23). Jesus himself was then called "Jesus the *Nazoraios*" (Matt 26.71; Luke 18.37; John 18.5, 7; 19.19; Acts 2.22; 3.6; 4.10; 6.14; 22.8; 26.9) or 'the Nazarene', ὁ Ναζαρηνός (Mark 1.24; 10.47; 14.67; 16.6; Luke 4.34; 24.19), but in the Gospel of John he is also called: "Jesus the son of Joseph from Nazareth", Ἰησοῦν υἱὸν τοῦ Ἰωσὴφ τὸν ἀπὸ Ναζαρέτ (John 1.45, cf. 46, Matt 21.21; Acts 10.38). It was common to designate men by a word which has the name of the town they come from with a Greek '-*enos*' ending—like calling a man from Paris a 'Parisien'—meaning Jesus was a '*Nazara*-man'. Likewise, as 'Parisienne' refers to a Paris-woman, Mary would have been appropriately 'called the Magdalene' because she came from somewhere named Magdala, and thus she was a 'Magdala-woman' or 'Magdala-ess', but that is all that is said about her.

As a parallel, there is an unusual burial inscription from Beth Shearim (Besara), reading: "Anna daughter of Mathithia *Bisarene*" (='Bisara-ess') (Avi Yonah and Schwabe 1942, 31; Leibner 2009, 228). There is also the fragmentary ossuary inscription from Jerusalem of "Salome the Galil[ean]" (Hachlili 2005, 213). In the case of Anna, who is buried in Besara, she is classified in relation to the town, and it may mean she has been brought back there in death by her mother Mathithia (presumably a widow); in the case of Salome, she is buried far from home, in Jerusalem.

At any rate, such a designation puts Mary in a special category of 'called' people, and designated independent women, and that may mean that the epithet is not only about where she came from, but indicative of who she was, like other nicknames for disciples who were close to Jesus.

3. MAGDALA

While Besara and Galilee were well-known localities, Magdala is unclear as a place designation, since *magdal* in Aramaic just means 'tower' (Hebrew *migdal*). It invariably appears with another name, to indicate the 'Tower of Something', like the Tower of London. A

place called 'the Tower', Magdala, is then a shortened form of a fuller name, and to have it on its own is not very specific.

It seems quite clear that Mary's name was precisely as found in the Syriac versions of the Gospels: Mary is consistently referred to as *Mariam Magd^{e}laitha*', 'Mariam the Tower-ess'. In Syriac she is *not* found as *Mariam d^{e}Magdala*, 'Mary of/from Magdala/the Tower', which would have provided a place-name, as with Jesus 'from Nazareth' in Matt 21.21, John 1.45 or Acts 10.38.

Rabbinic literature refers to (male) scholars called *Migdalia*, *Magad^{e}la'a*, or *Magd^{e}laya* (j.Ber 9 [14a]; j.Taan. 4.2 [64b]; j.Eruv. 4.3 [21d]; Bereshit Rabba 13.15 [Jastrow 1943, 726]), which seems to be a parallel to what we have in the case of Mary Magdalene. There appears to be a reference to a place, or places, but the names could also be used in terms of a pun. In Baba Metsia 25a the designation is found in a discussion of whether you should declare found coins. A certain R. Yitzhak *Magad^{e}la'a* said: "This is if the coins were arranged like towers". This was also taught in a baraita, in that if one found money scattered, it belonged to the finder. If they were arranged in towers, they must be announced. The definition of a tower was "three coins one on top of another". Therefore, even if Mary came from a place called 'Tower of Something' her nickname could be a *double-entendre*.

There are many possibilities in terms of understanding the symbolism. In the Targum of Isa 2.15, the Day of the Lord will come against "all those who dwell in a high tower and those who encamp within a fortified wall" (Chilton 1987, 7; cf. Targ. Gen 11.4; Targ. 2 Chron 26.9; Targ. Exod 38.20), since a tower could be conceptualised as a fortress. In the Jewish mystical text 1 Enoch (86, 88) the seer is a shepherd who builds a high tower as the house of the Lord and his sheep, and in the Sibylline Oracles the Temple itself is a "great and boundless Tower" (566–68). We do not need to look very far to find a highly developed example of the symbolism in an early Christian text: *The Shepherd of Hermas* has extended presentations of the Church as both a woman and a Tower composed of the 12 tribes of Israel in the new Kingdom (especially Similitude 9.12–13). Thus, to call someone 'a Tower-ess', in a milieu of people whose awareness of the symbolic or the possibility of punning was acute, is itself quite suggestive.

If we are to look particularly for a place called 'Tower of Something' that Mary came from, to base her epithet in her provenance, there is nothing in the Gospels to help us situate her. We have to look beyond them (see Fig. 1).

The biblical site of Migdal Eder (Gen 35.21; Micah 4.8), 'the Tower of Eder', is attested in the Mishnah (m.Shek. 7.4), and was identified by Jerome as lying near Bethlehem (*Liber locorum* 43.12–13). It is now identified as Khirbet es-Siyar, also called Siyan al-Ghanan (OIG 171123) (Avi Yonah 1976, 80; Negev and Gibson 2001, 339). Other 'Tower' sites include Migdalsenna (Num. 34.4; Eusebius, *Onom.* 154.16), probably lying at Khirbet Beiyudat (OIG 194152), or Migdal Thauatha (Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis* 30; Sozomen, *Historia Eccl.* 3.14; Peter the Iberian 96, probably at Khirbet Umm et-Tut, OIG 090096). Eusebius mentions a place just called 'Magdala' on the basis of his version of the Septuagint, rendering the Migdal Gad of Joshua 15.37 (= Magadalgad elsewhere), in the territory of the 'tribe of Judah' (*Onom.* 130.9) (OIG 140105) (Freeman-Grenville, Chapman and Taylor 2003, 143). Migdal-Gad is in Judaea, south of Beth Guvrin. There is also Eusebius' mention of Magdiel (*Onom.* 130.21–22), rendering Migdal-El as "Tower of God" (Josh 19.38), within the boundaries of Naphtali, probably Majadel or Mejdel Salim or Islim (OIG 194292), about 40 km north of the Sea of Galilee.[2] This town was in existence in the Roman period, as seen from archaeological remains (Burke 2007, 50–51).

That Migdal-Gad was contracted to 'Magdala' in Eusebius' version of the Septuagint is significant because it shows that any 'Migdal' could be referred to as Magdala by people familiar with it. A list of priestly courses found in Caesarea includes a word גדל, *gdl*, which seems to be part of the word *migdal* (Avi Yonah 1962), but which 'Migdal' is not possible to determine.

Fig. 1.   Known villages with part of their name comprising 'Migdal' (Tower). Locals may have shortened the full name of any of these to 'Ha-Migdal' (Hebrew) or 'Magdala' (Aramaic), 'the Tower', as an informal reference. The location of Migdal Tsebaya is not shown as its location is unknown, but it was not far from Jerusalem. A place just named 'Magdala' does not exist (© Joan Taylor).

In Rabbinic literature there is also a "Tower of Malha", Migdal Malha (j.Demai 2.1, [22c]), probably Khirbet Malha (OIG 144231). There is a reference in j.Ta'an. 4.6 [69a] to

Migdal Tsebaya, "Tower of Dyers", where there were 80 shops selling fine woollen cloth, and in Midrash Lamentations 2.2.4 reference is made to 300 shops for sacrificial pigeons. Migdal Tsebaya supplied wood for the Temple sacrifices (j.Pes. 2.1 [28c]). This locates the town close to Jerusalem; there is no indication that this place was in Galilee (Leibner 2009, 342). In j.Maaser Sheni 5.2 [56b] (cf. Midrash Lamentations 3.3) a certain Nikai, master of a school in Migdal Tsebaya, arranges the Sabbath lamps on the Friday (morning), goes to Jerusalem to pray and returns again in time to light them. The town was destroyed apparently for its 'prostitution', in the Roman destruction of Judaean towns and villages following the Bar Kokhba revolt in 135 CE, along with Betar and other places in Judaea. Moreover, according to the full list of citations made by Adolphe Neubauer (1868, 217–18), Migdal Tsebaya could be shortened to 'Magdala'. It is then most likely the 'Magdala' that sent great treasures to the Temple (j.Ta'an. 4.8 [69b]), given its close association with Temple operations and its wealth.

Most important of all, mention is also made of a place *one mile* from Tiberias called Migdal Nuniya (b.Pes. 46b), the 'Tower of Fish' (Avi Yonah 1976, 80). Migdal Nuniya is of greatest interest as it is clearly on the Sea of Galilee close to Tiberias—and Tiberias was a centre of rabbinic activity in Galilee from the later 2nd to 7th centuries. Being very familiar to the rabbis of Tiberias, Migdal Nuniya would provide the most likely provenance for the rabbis designated above as *Magd^elaya*, since Migdal Nuniya could even be shortened to 'the Tower', Magdala, in some texts (e.g. j.Sheb. 9.1 [38d]). This is because it was 'the Tower' closest to hand for the rabbis of Tiberias.

But even if we associate Mary with Migdal Nuniya, because of its situation on the Sea of Galilee, it should be remembered that there could have been hundreds of 'towers' identified locally in Galilee and beyond, because a 'Tower of Something', and thus Magdala, could be named in any field or harbour, as a watchtower, lighthouse, or fortified enclosure. Places so named could also preserve references to ancient Bronze and Iron Age military watch-towers, as Aaron Burke (2007) has argued. Burke studied all the archaeological data available from sites named as 'Tower' in textual sources and also examined a total of 57 sites named in Arabic as *majādil*, 'towers', with actual towers long gone.

Towers were built as look-outs. In the parable of the wicked tenants, Jesus describes the process of setting up a vineyard: "A person planted a vineyard, and set a boundary around it, and dug a pit for the wine-press and built a tower" (Mark 12.1a // Matt 21.33, cf. Luke 20.9); the construction of a watchtower is considered a normative part of preparing a vineyard, and in fact this exact scenario—towers, wine press and pit (= vat)—has been uncovered in the University of the Holy Land excavations in Nazareth Village Farm (Pfann, Voss and Rapuano 2007) (see Fig. 2).

Assuming, however, that Mary's epithet did link her to the local Galilean site Migdal Nuniya, the moment Mary Magdalene left the area of the Sea of Galilee, her name would not have been easily tied to any particular locality, since Migdal Nuniya does not appear to have been a well-known, large city. The name 'Magdala' might as well have referred to various other places. There is then the strange combination of a woman given a specific designation, independently, that seems to locate her place of origin, when the place of origin is extremely vague the moment she moved out of a particular neighbourhood. 'The Tower' to people of the western Sea of Galilee was not 'the Tower', Magdala, of people living close to Migdal Gad or Migdal Tsebaya.

Migdal Nuniya, moreover, does not give us the Magdala of the present day, because it lay very close to Tiberias. In b.Pes. 46a dough is said to be designated as leavened rather than unleavened in the time it takes you to walk between Migdal Nuniya and Tiberias, which is where the walking distance of one mile is important (see Leibner 2009, 218–19). While Leibner suggests that the original reference was to four miles and was shortened as a result of rabbinic questions about how long it took to consider dough to be leavened (ibid.), the

Fig. 2. First-century watchtower (partially reconstructed) close to a treading area and vat at the Nazareth Village Farm project (© Joan Taylor).

idea that you would need to walk four miles before dough is considered to be in the category of leavened rather than unleavened seems too long, since it is not a point of completion but a point at which it is possible to identify that the yeast has clearly begun working.

Migdal Nuniya is also very close to Tiberias in the Pesiqta deRab Kahana 11.16: Shimon bar Yohai leaves Tiberias and soon after "passed in front of the synagogue of the Tower (Magdala)", which correlates with its placement one mile from Tiberias in b.Pes. 46a. This is important also for dating as Shimon bar Yohai is a late 1st-century to early 2nd-century sage, which should indicate that Migdal Nuniya was in existence at this time, and it may have been already referred to locally as 'the Tower'.

Migdal Nuniya is referred to elsewhere as a place to which the 3rd-century Rabbi Shimon ben Laqish flees from Tiberias (j.Sanh. 2.1 [19d]. In j.Hor. 3 [47a] it is added that "some say it was to Kefar Hittaya" (Hattin, see Leibner 2009, 231), a place further along the same road (Avi Yonah 1976, 72; Leibner 2009, 265–70, lying at OIG 192245), which only makes good sense if Migdal Nuniya was indeed one mile from Tiberias, but *south* of Mount Arbel, since the road west to Kefar Hittaya led inland from there, as can be seen in the PEF map (sheet VI) of 1880 (see Fig. 3).

Thus, the literary evidence is clear that Migdal Nuniya lay close to Tiberias, on the south side of Mount Arbel rather than on the north.

It would be likely that Migdal Nuniya was given the distance of one mile measured from the northern gate. This gate would have lain along the ancient northern wall which—at least in the Byzantine period—has been identified by Amos Harif (1984), close to today's Ha-Yarkon street in Tiberias. The unit of mile measurement was up to 1.7 km at this time; this can be seen by actual milestones along Roman roads in Palestine, with distances of 1.6–1.7 km apart (Roll and Ayalon 1986, 115–16; Freeman-Grenville, Chapman and Taylor 2003, 175), and distances were invariably rounded up or down. It may then have been considered closer to one than two miles, but in this case it could only have been measured up to 2.55 km to be designated as one mile. Measuring 1.7 km north of the likely Byzantine wall would place Migdal Nuniya just around the curve in the road towards Ha-Sheket beach (Fig. 4), not far from the fishermen's quay beyond Ron Hotel, below the slope of Qiryat Shmuel and Newe Hadar, where there are terraces up the hill (Fig. 5).[3] Even assuming a maximum of 2.55 km the location remains south of Mount Arbel, close to Tel Raqqat (Fig. 6) and Dekel Beach.

However, it should be noted that the wall of the earlier town has not yet been found, but it is likely to be further south, since Roman Tiberias is concentrated south of the present town and up the slope of Mount Berenice, which might pull the location of Migdal Nuniya even further south.

William Foxwell Albright (1921–22, 43) identified Migdal Nuniya around Tel Raqqat (Khirbet el-Quneitrah, OIG 200246), a hill lying close by a spring (Ain el-Fuliyeh). There was apparently a later castle there, but the ancient remains thus far identified are from the Early Bronze and Iron Ages (Hartal 2008). The vicinity of Qiryat Shmuel is promising in that a large built Jewish tomb dating to the 1st to 2nd centuries CE has been found there, filled with earth containing later Byzantine sherds (Vitto 2008). A village proximate to this tomb would have been a site with some elevation and prominence that stretched down to the beach. The PEF map has a reference to ruins, marked "R." at Hannanet el-Kussis, also in this general vicinity.

Albright himself stated, however, that:

Just south [of Ain el-Fuliyeh] the cutting of a road has laid bare on both sides for several hundred feet a section of a Roman village, the existence of which could hardly be suspected from an examination of the surface. The house walls are built of stone and mud, and the rooms are very small, so we unquestionably have to do with a Roman village, as the potsherds prove conclusively (Albright 1921–22, 43).

No trace of this Roman village is visible today. How far 'just south' is in Albright's reckoning is also unclear.

4. BYZANTINE MAGDALA

How then do we get to the identification of present day Magdala? Clearly, the location of Magdala has been long attested here, and was preserved in the small fishing village of al-Majdal.

Fig. 3.   Palestine Exploration Fund, Survey of Western Palestine, detail. The site of Tel Raqqat is given here as Khirbet el-Kaneitri'eh. The village of el-Mejdel, which no longer exists, lies on the northern side of Mount Arbel. Note that there is a road leading west from Khirbet el-Kaneitri'eh to Hattin.

It is important then to determine when precisely we have an identification of this exact location as Magdala. In the writings of Eusebius and Jerome, in the 4th century, a town called Magdala here was not identified. It is missing from all the pilgrim accounts of the 4th and 5th centuries. The first attestation of the town "where my lady Mary was born" is in

Fig. 4.   View from Ha-Sheket Beach to Tel Raqqat and Mount Arbel, with Plain of Ginnosar beyond (© Joan Taylor).

Fig. 5.   View up the terraced slope of the hill from Ha-Sheket Beach, looking west (© Joan Taylor).

Fig. 6.   Tel Raqqat (© Joan Taylor).

the writings of the 6th-century pilgrim Theodosius (*Itin.* 2). It is stated as being 'two miles' from Tiberias. From here it was another two miles to a place called 'Seven Springs' (Heptapegon) where "the Lord baptised the apostles" (where a beautiful Byzantine mosaic has been found) and another two miles to Capernaum. Unfortunately, this account is confused. Theodosius is right about the distance from Heptapegon to Capernaum, but it was 15 km or about 9 Roman miles from Tiberias to Capernaum, meaning that at least one of the other distances is given incorrectly, since the total number of miles Theodosius gives is 6 Roman miles between Tiberias and Capernaum, or about 10 km. Magdala cannot have been located precisely 2 Roman miles from Tiberias because this area is uninhabitable on account of the slope of Mount Arbel, which plunges directly into the lake. The sequence is, nevertheless, important—Tiberias, Magdala, Heptapegon, Capernaum—and for the first time Magdala is named as a pilgrim stopping place (Wilkinson 2002, 103–105).

It seems indisputable that this Byzantine 'Magdala' of Theodosius is to be identified where we site this place today, just north of Mount Arbel on the edge of the lake, spread out and beginning some three Roman miles from Tiberias. In the 8th century, Hugeburc (14) mentions that this was the birthplace of the Magdalene, and there was a pilgrim church established called 'the House of the Magdalene' where her seven demons were driven out (Luke 8.1–2), mentioned also in the 8th-century work of Epiphanius the Monk (32) and in the 10th century (Eutychius of Alexandria, *Annals* 317; Wilkinson 2002, 327). Byzantine Magdala lies on the pilgrim trail to Capernaum, providing a convenient stopping place. This location was consistently remembered through to 1948 in the name of the Palestinian village of al-Majdal, which lay on the southern border of the Byzantine site (OIG 198247). A Jewish settlement of Migdal was established west of the road, 1.5 km away, in 1909, and after Israel's independence, al-Majdal was abandoned and bulldozed (Schaberg 2004, 48–49).

While then the site of al-Majdal was the Magdala of Byzantine pilgrims, it does not get us to a 1st-century village called Magdala, and thus it complicates issues in terms of 'Magdala' of rabbinic references. Unlike in the case of the village of Migdal Nuniya, what existed prior to the development of Byzantine Magdala was a very significant city.

Excavations in the area of Magdala have been rich (see Fig. 7 for the site). In 1965 sar-cophagi were found in a cemetery just south of al-Majdal, and these were dated to the 3rd century CE (Teflinski 1965, 14; Leibner 2009, 216). The ancient town border is then marked in the south by this cemetery. The Franciscan excavations took place in 1971–73 and 1975–76 in property just north of the village of al-Majdal (Corbo 1974, 1976, 1978; Corbo and Lof-freda 1974, 1976, 1977, 1985; Loffreda 1976). They brought to light the ruins of a town with material dated from the 1st century BCE to the 4th century CE, including what they supposed was a paved plaza, along with wide streets and large courtyard buildings, as well as a public building (9 × 7 m) initially identified as a synagogue, then thought to be a fountain house (*nymphaeum*), connected with water installations of pools and a water tower (Corbo 1974, 19–32; Netzer 1987; Strange 1992), and now considered to be a bath-house complex of the 1st century CE.[4] A Byzantine structure was also revealed in the southern part of the site, probably a monastery (Corbo and Loffreda 1976, 9).

As noted above, underwater surveying identified a huge quay here with a promenade and sheltered basin created by a large breakwater (Raban 1988, 1993, 965). The promenade, par-allel to the shore, begins where al-Majdal was situated and runs north for almost 100 metres (Nun 2006, 37). A small salvage excavation of 1991 (Area B) uncovered a private dwelling in existence from the 1st century BCE to the 3rd century CE and also a Byzantine bathhouse and church dated to the 8th or 9th century (Abu-Uqsa 1993, 1997, 2001), linked with the pre-viously excavated monastic compound. In 2002 a further excavation in Areas C and D to the south-east of Area B uncovered remains dating from the 2nd to 3rd centuries through to the 4th century (Leibner 2009, 216), as well as from the 12th century (Crusader period) (Abu-Uqsa 2005). An excavation 500 m south brought to light a storehouse and other building remains possibly from the late 2nd century BCE to the 4th century CE (Avshalom-Gorni 2009). Exca-vations in the region of the Franciscan property continue to the present, headed by Dina Avshalom-Gorni. The northern border of the town is discussed by Stefanski (1986).

In 2009, some way north of the Franciscan excavations, a salvage dig ahead of the con-struction of a new hotel and building of the Notre Dame Pontifical Institute uncovered a

Fig. 7.   View south over the area of Magdala. The current excavations at the Notre Dame Pontifical Institute are in the foreground, with the Franciscan area behind stretching to the trees along the lake. Mount Arbel lies beyond where the road cuts through, and in the distance are the buildings of modern Tiberias (© Joan Taylor).

120 sq m building identified as a synagogue dating to the 1st century BCE, with a stone carving depicting the Temple menorah in between two pots (Corbett 2011; Aviam 2013), along with mosaics and frescoes. The excavations at the site are on-going, under the supervision of Stefano de Luca and Marcela Zapata-Meza, and have brought to light more of the harbour complex, numerous streets and houses. The site has areas dating to the Hasmonean era through the mid-4th century, and includes three well-preserved *miqva'ot*, filled by ground water infiltration (Reich and Zapata-Meza 2014).[5]

Leibner (2009, 235) has previously noted that of the pottery excavated in Magdala only a small number of types (2.9%) post-date the 4th century. The picture is the same in terms of coins, leading to the conclusion that there was a deterioration of the occupancy of the site, apart from a small area around a pool close to the shoreline, in the middle of the 4th century, probably as a result of the earthquake in 363 CE (Russell 1980; Levenson 2013). A Byzantine monastic settlement was then constructed. I suggest that at this point the place was identified as Magdala. The Jewish village of Migdal Nuniya, close to Tiberias and apparently thriving under the rabbis, was left untouched.

5. TARICHAEA

The usual assumption is that the ruins before the Byzantine developments represent a Roman-period city called Tarichaea, which should be identified with the Magdala Mary came from, and so everything that is written about Tarichaea in our literary sources is then considered to indicate Magdala. The reasons for this are the following (see e.g. Manns 1976):

1. There is a town named Migdal Nuniya in rabbinic literature, just north of Tiberias (b. Pes. 46a), otherwise known as Magdala
2. The name Migdal Nuniya means 'Fish-Tower'
3. The name Tarichaea means 'place of fish-salting'
4. Therefore, Tarichaea and Migdal Nuniya are the same place.[6]

In fact, the names are not the same. The main meaning of 'Tarichaea' is not 'place of fish salting' specifically, but rather ταριχεία means 'preserving, pickling' in general (Liddell, Scott and Jones 1940, 1758), and it can even refer to preserving human bodies in the case of mummification. Tarichaea's name is thus 'preservation, pickling', though it is a fair assumption that fish were being preserved by salting (cf. Strabo 16.2.45) by the Sea of Galilee. Given the fishing industry of the lake, a 'tower of fish' (Migdal Nuniya), however, cannot be linked with a town called 'salt preservation' simply because of a fish association, since fish preservation works did not involve towers. Fishing itself could do, however, since fish watchtowers were used to spot shoals from afar, as Strabo (11.2.4) notes (Munk Højte 2005, 158). The explicit correspondence is actually a false one. A 'tower of fish', used for shoal-spotting, would have been located some way up a hill, yet still reasonably close to the water, for fishing boats. Further, as we have seen, Migdal Nuniya, lay too close to the town of Tiberias to be rightly placed at Byzantine Magdala, since it was only about one mile away from its northern gate.

There is no indication in any of our sources that Tarichaea was called Magdala. Tarichaea was a very important large town in the 1st century, and was added to the kingdom of Agrippa II in 55 CE (Josephus, *War* 2.252; *Ant.* 20.159). It became a centre of Jewish revolt, and was described by Josephus in the context of the lake, since he fortified it ahead of the arrival of Vespasian's troops in 67 CE. Nikos Kokkinos has examined in detail the movements of people and troops within the narratives of Josephus (see *War* 1.80; 2.252; 3.443–542; 4.1–12; *Ant.* 14.20; 20.159; *Life* 29; 137; 187–88 cf. Suetonius, *Titus* 4.3) and considered the placement of Tarichaea *south* of Tiberias by Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* 5.71), and has argued that Tarichaea indeed lay

30 stadia—about 3.7 Roman miles (5.5 km)—south of Tiberias, beyond Ammatho (Hammath Tiberias). Vespasian's army went south from Tiberias, and camped at Ammatho (Hammath Tiberias) (*War* 4.11), before engaging in a sea battle and taking Tarichaea, and then looped around the south-eastern side of the lake to move north and attack Gamala. Tarichaea is described as a fortified town (*War* 4.464), with a major harbour. Thus, Tarichaea would have been north of where Philoteria is located (at Tel Bet Yerah/Khirbet Kerak OIG 204237), where there is indeed evidence of a huge harbour, with the town then presumably proximate to Ein Poriya (Ein Kadesh), rising up the slope of the hill between present-day Kinneret and Poriya Illit. It is possible that Sennabris itself should be placed further to the west (Kokkinos 2010, 15–16), but the Arabic name of al-Sennabra is associated with a bridge over the River Jordan, where Crusaders under Baldwin I lost a battle in 1113. Philoteria would more likely then have been linked to Sennabris as a kind of twin town. A continuation of the excellent survey work of Leibner (2009) in this area would therefore be very interesting.

According to Josephus Tarichaea was taken by the Roman general Cassius (*Ant.* 14.120), in 53 BCE, meaning it was already a well-established city at this point. Cassius established a camp there (Cicero, *Ep.* 12.11, see Leibner 2009, 219–20). The arrival of Cassius and the changes he made is a watershed in the area. While there are Hasmonean structures in Magdala, the main development of the city appears to have taken place in the middle of the 1st century BCE, around the time of Cassius (see Leibner 2009, 94–101). It does not seem to have been a particularly large town before Cassius' arrival, though clearly it did exist, but perhaps best proof it might be Tarichaea would be if remains were discovered showing that it was a Roman military camp.

Kokkinos has noted that there is another attested place that would better identify the city we know today as Magdala. This was located at the border of Lower Galilee, identified by Josephus as lying 30 stadia north from Tiberias (Josephus, *Life* 281–85), about 3.7 miles or 5.5 km, and it is called Homonoia (Kokkinos 2010, 15–16). The word Ὁμόνοια in Greek means 'concord', and later on it existed as a loan word in Hebrew and Aramaic: *homonya*, הומוניא (Jastrow 1943, 339). It is likely that there was an Aramaic designation for the place as well as a Greek one, as in the case of other towns of the lake, such as Hippos-Sussitha, the Greek and Aramaic names respectively for 'horse'. The name Homonoia in fact would relate well to an establishment just after 53 BCE, in which 'concord' was established between Rome and Judaea. A distance of 30 stadia north of Tiberias would bring us precisely to the site that has come to be known as Magdala.

6. MAGADAN-DALMANOUTHA

At this point we may remember another town on the edge of the lake. In Matt 15.39 Jesus goes to τὰ ὅρια Μαγαδάν, 'the borders of Magadan', though in Mark 8.10 this same area is called τὰ μέρη Δαλμανουθά, 'the parts of Dalmanoutha'. Magadan must have been lying on the shores of the lake, since it is reached by boat. The location of Magadan, or Dalmanoutha, has been mysterious. Early in the 4th century, the bishop of Caesarea, Eusebius, did not identify the place as being on the western side of the Sea of Galilee, but in the territory of Gerasa (Jerash): "Christ visited the borders of Magedan, as Matthew [states]. And Mark recalls Magedan. It is (or: there is) now Magedane near Gerasa" (*Onom.* 134.18–20). But Eusebius was not as knowledgeable about Galilee as he was about the south of Palestine and the coast. The territory of Gerasa did not stretch to the Sea of Galilee, but was bordered by Gadara, so this seems to be a misidentification. Clearly, Magadan or Magedan is not Magdala and Eusebius does not associate this place with Mary Magdalene. The Aramaic name 'Magadan' comes from the word *magad*, which means 'precious ware' or 'fine fruit' (Jastrow 1943, 726).

It is important that Eusebius indicates here also that his copy of the Gospel of Mark read 'Magedan', which provides important textual witness to manuscripts of Mark that read

'Magedan' *earlier* than the mid-4th-century Codex Sinaiticus, which attests the textual tradition that reads 'the parts of Dalmanoutha' in Mark 8.10.

Dalmanoutha is also found in early textual variants as Dalmanountha (B, Vaticanus, 4th century), Dalmanounai (Armenian, 5th century) and Dalmounai (W, Freer Gospels, 5th century). If the 'd' at the start is read as the Aramaic prefix ד, meaning 'of', we have Alma-noutha, which means 'widowhood' in Aramaic (Jastrow 1943, 72). This does not seem to be Homonoia, but perhaps indicates a colloquial Aramaic pun on the Greek name, with the closest similarity in the textual variant of (D)almanounai.

The 'parts of Dalmanoutha' would normally indicate a city territory (see Burkitt 1916, 16). It is here that Pharisees come to test Jesus; he then departs by boat to 'the other side' of the lake, with his disciples, and 'they came to Bethsaida' (Mark 8.22), which is in the north-east. Thus, it has to lie on the western or southern side. It would fit with Kokkinos' placement of Homonoia in terms of where it is located.

If it is not a pun on Homonoia in some way, 'Dalmanoutha' may be a composite name from Aramaic *d^ewal*, דול, meaning 'reel' (Jastrow 1943, 286) and *manwautha*, מנוותא, meaning 'shares' or 'portions' (Targ. Esther 2.9; Jastrow 1943, 802–803), which could have some signifi-cance for shipping operations on the lake. Gustaf Dalman (1935, 128) long ago suggested Dal-manoutha was a corruption of 'Migdal Nuniya', but this would mean playing with the letters quite significantly and the reference to 'parts' (if original, see below) seems to indicate a larger place than Migdal Nuniya ever was.

As mentioned, Matt 15.39 reads 'the borders of Magadan'. Eusebius read τὰ ὅρια Μαγεδὰν, 'the borders of Magedan,' in his text of Matthew (*Onom.* 134.18–20). This would cor-relate perfectly with the fact that the borders of Lower Galilee were here, as Josephus indicates in regard to Homonoia.

In addition, given many variants in the manuscripts of Mark 8.10 at this point there is a serious question about textual corruption. There are extant manuscripts of Mark from the 4th and 5th century that have 'Mageda', 'Magada' or 'Magedan' (the Bezae [corr.], Sinaitic Syriac, Palestinian Syriac, Gothic, Georgian and old Latin versions, for example), preceded by the words τὰ ὅρια or τὸ ὄρος ('the borders' or 'the border') as in the text known to Eusebius. While these variants are usually read by textual critics as a modification of Mark designed to align the text with Matthew (Metzger 1994, 41; 97), it is unexplained why the author of Mat-thew's Gospel would have decided to put 'the borders of Magadan' in his text, if there was something so very different found in his copy of Mark (assuming Marcan priority). There is no extant manuscript that indicates any scribe tried to accommodate Matthew's reading to Mark's. Furthermore, Matthew shortens what he finds in Mark at this point, and it would therefore be more probable that he truncated rather than totally altered an original description of place.

Matthew's version can be explained if the text of Mark that the author of Matthew used had a longer description: τὰ ὅρια Μαγεδάν Δαλμανουθά, "the borders of Magedan-Dalmanoutha". Since this is a long place-name, Matthew dropped 'Dalmanoutha', while a key early copyist of the Marcan text dropped ὅρια when he condensed Μαγεδάν into μέρη, resulting in the two variations we have now. Since the early manuscripts were written only in capital letters, without breaks, various errors of copying occurred when there were similar letters. The eye can jump from one letter to the next and, in this case, the delta and alpha, ΔΑ, of Magedan, ΜΑΓΕΔΑΝ, replicated at the beginning of ΔΑΛΜΑΝΟΥΘΑ, could have caused this early modification, with ΜΑΓΕ becoming ΜΕΡΗ.

Regardless, what is very important for site identification is that the editorial modifications to our extant texts as time went on indicate that Christians had no trouble at all remaking Magadan as Magdala. Manuscripts of Matthew and Mark were corrupted to read Magdalan or Magdala to fit with the pilgrim place established in the Byzantine era. In the variants to Matt

15.39 we find 5th- and 6th-century manuscripts altering the name Magadan to Magdalan (C, N, W). In due course it would become Magdala in the majority Byzantine text.

With Tarichaea identified with present-day Magdala, there seemed to be no room for Magadan on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. With Homonoia placed correctly, then this locality can be defined with more confidence (see Fig. 8). The town declined after the earthquake of 363 CE, thereafter reviving and becoming the site of a small Byzantine complex for pilgrims en route to Capernaum in the 5th century. It was at this point that it was identified

Fig. 8.   Locations of towns around the Sea of Galilee, using NASA map (Wikimedia Commons).

as the supposed hometown of Mary, Magdala, because of the similarity of the old name Magadan, while the Jewish village of Migdal Nuniya was left untouched. As the manuscripts clearly show, later Byzantine copyists were quite prepared to conclude that ancient Magadan was indeed Magdala. What is present in the manuscript evidence correlates precisely with what occurred on the ground in Palestine. But in the 1st century, the city of Magadan was always a different place from the village of Migdal Nuniya.

The Early Roman ruins of Magdala are therefore to be associated with this site called Magadan-(D)almanoutha. Could there have been two towns lying side by side here, like we have south of Tiberias at Philoteria-Sennabris? The very high population density of the region might have demanded that towns be consolidated to maximise agricultural land (cf. Josephus, *War* 3.506–21). Recent ground surveying work done by Ken Dark in the summer of 2012 has provided data that suggest that this might be the case. Dark noted a concentration of archaeological material between the modern settlement of Migdal due east towards the coast: 'hundreds of sherds of Roman-period and later pottery, along with a wide range of other material' (Dark 2013, 187). The earliest pottery is dated from the Late Hellenistic period, while most came from the Roman period and some from the Byzantine period. There were also Early Roman stone vessel fragments, stone and ceramic tessarae from mosaics, and glass shards. This ancient town extended into present-day Migdal, located on a hill, where Dark and his team found fragments of Roman and Byzantine architectural elements and agricultural objects such as mortars and querns (Dark 2013, 189–97). However, moving southward from this zone Dark noted that there was a strip *c.* 150 m wide with very few finds, before coming to the site now identified as 'Magdala' (Dark 2013, 188). In other words, this previously unknown site would take in Migdal, and extend east to Ilanot and Tamar Beaches, just south of Nahal Tsalmon and Kibbutz Ginosar, and indeed the famous boat discovered *c.* 440 m south of this stream 'was located on the shore of this settlement' (Dark 2013, 188, cf. Raban 1988; Wachsmann 1995). Dark has suggested therefore that there were two 'harbour-side villages' which grew 'to produce adjacent urban communities' the northern site being Dalmanoutha (Dark 2013, 196).

Therefore, the (perhaps double) town of Magadan-Dalmanoutha (Homonoia) lay at one end of the plain and another town, named Gennesareth or Gennesar, was located at the northern end (though see Zangenberg 2008). The city and plain of Gennesar was famous for its fertility and is widely attested (1 Macc. 2.67; Luke 5.1; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.158; 18.27; *War* 2.573; 3.463, 506–521; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 5.71; t.Suk. 3.9; j.Meg. 1 [70a]; t.B.B. 5.6; b.Pes. 8b; b.Ber. 44a; b.Erub. 30b). While Magadan-Dalmanoutha was established in the Hasmonaean period, Homonoia, 'Concord', was developed in 53 BCE, and located at the border where lower Galilee and upper Galilee met. It is this site, known from the Byzantine period onwards as 'Magdala', that is providing such rich and exciting finds.

7. CONCLUSION

This investigation therefore provides a suggestion in terms of the placement and identification of Magadan-Dalmanoutha. It may have been a double town, but 'Dalmanoutha' (*d-almanoutha*) would most likely have been an additional Aramaic designation meaning "of widowhood". A settlement here had a Greek name of Homonoia, meaning "concord". It lay on the border to Upper Galilee, and was possibly established by the Romans after the war of 53 BCE. A village attested from later rabbinic literature, Migdal Nuniya, lay about one Roman mile north of Tiberias, and is to be understood as Magdala, 'the Tower', of the rabbis of Tiberias. It probably gained its name from a shoal look-out tower over the lake. It may well have existed in the 1st century, and, if so, it is quite likely that this was where Mary came from, since this was the local 'Tower' for the people of the western shore of the lake. Migdal Tsebaya, however, was a Judaean town, close to the Temple of Jerusalem, and destroyed in the Bar Kokhba rebellion. In

neither case of Migdal Nuniya or Migdal Tsebaya are these sites to be equated with Tarichaea. However, one further point does need to be mentioned. The topic of the exact placement of Tarichaea will undoubtedly not go away, despite the argument provided by Kokkinos, and its location is not central to this study. If Tarichaea is to be located to the north of Mount Arbel, however, its Aramaic name was Magadan, not Magdala, and we would have to suppose that it abutted Homonoia.

Magadan-Dalmanoutha was a place visited by Jesus and his disciples, of which Mary 'called' Magdalene was one; her hometown lay just on the other side of Mount Arbel and she would have known the city well.

As for Mary's epithet, it remains the case that 'Magdalene', is a very vague way of refer- ring to her, given the preponderance of towers and given that there is no one town simply called Magdala that would have been recognisable once she left the area of the Sea of Galilee. To be called 'Mary the Tower-ess' in Jerusalem, or anywhere else, could not indicate Migdal Nuniya specifically. It was therefore her Galilean nickname: it made sense in her time with Jesus, away from her village on the roads of Galilee (Luke 8.1–3). Mary was not named in association with a man, and was therefore not married to anyone. People referred to her as *Magd*^{e}*laitha*: she was called this, as Simon was called *Kepha* (*Petros* in Greek). As such, beyond Galilee, Mary's distinctive name not only indicated her provenance but also her position as one of Jesus' closest disciples, and more. Perhaps, as Simon Peter was a Rock, she was in some way the woman of the 'Tower'.

NOTES

[1] Jastrow (1943, 1388, 1390–91). In Hebrew a similar word, in plural form, came to refer to "the zealots, the terrorists during the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans" (Jastrow 1943, 1388).

[2] Eusebius wrongly places it at a large village out from the fifth milestone of Dor on the way to Ptolemais, which is actually Migdal Malha, and it is not in the territory of Naphtali. The town of Magdiel would have been out from the route from Caesarea Philippi to Tyre.

[3] In a research visit in July 2014 I noted a potsherd that appeared Roman on this beach.

[4] De Luca 2009. See the helpful review by Jürgen Zangenberg, 'Archaeological news from rural Galilee', http://www.magdalaproject.org/WP/?p=3784.

[5] For updates on the finds and the extent of the city, see postings in the website http://www.magdalaproject.org. An excavation report is to appear shortly (Marcela Zapata-Meza, personal communication).

[6] However, Albright (1921–22) had a slightly different argument, in that he thought that Migdal Tsebaya, the 'Tower of Dyers', was at Tarichaea, placed in the north, hence he correlated the town with a possible Magdala. He did not read the rabbinic references carefully enough to notice the town's situation in Judaea.

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