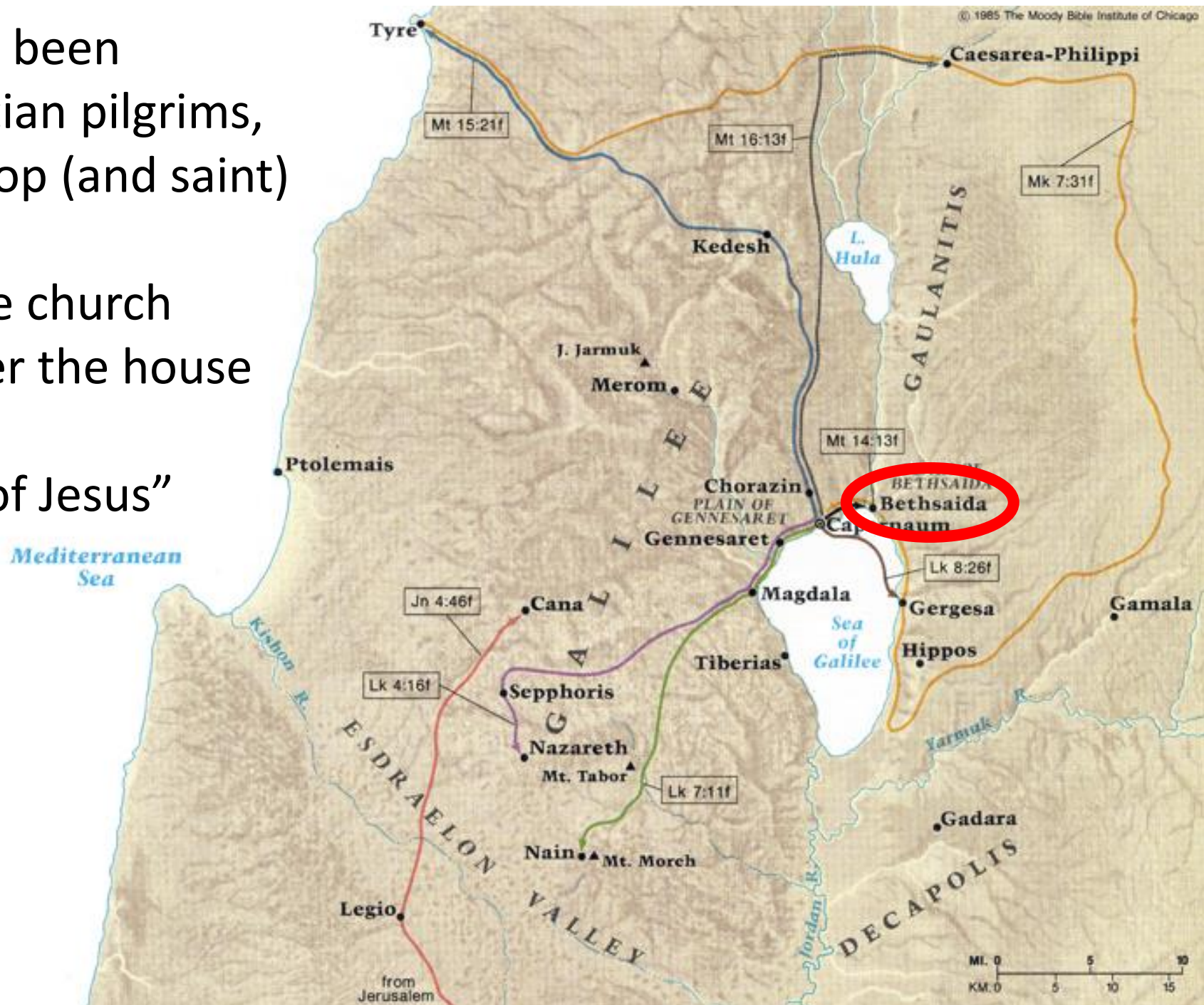






The Byzantine church had been mentioned by early Christian pilgrims, notably the Bavarian bishop (and saint) Willibald in 725 A.D.

“[Willibald] states that the church was in Bethsaida built over the house of Peter and Andrew, among the first disciples of Jesus”



The professor Steven Notley of Nyack College in New York, added that the church's discovery is significant for at least two reasons. "First, until its recent discovery, many scholars questioned its existence. Although it is mentioned in Byzantine pilgrimage itineraries, many thought these reports mistaken," he explained. "Of equal importance, the church indicates that there existed a living memory in the Christian community about the location of Bethsaida, home of Peter, Andrew and Philip (John 1:44)."