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2. Excavation of the Northeast Insulae

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Excavation of the Northeast Insulae

*The project is a component of the Hippos-Sussita Excavations,
sponsored by the University of Haifa*

Mark Schuler

Excavation of the Northeast Insulae
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INTRODUCTION

Presented in this volume are revised copies of the annual reports submitted for each of the excavation seasons (2002-2016, 2019). Revisions provide consistent terminology and presentation of graphic materials. These reports serve as the basis for the summaries and synthesis in the report, *Northeast Insulae Project: Context and Analysis*.

MARK SCHULER
Excavation of the
Northeast Insulae

1.

THE 2002 SEASON

Approximately fifty meters to the east of the Northwest Church is the collapse of a building. Surface indications of an eastward apse and several column drums protruding from the debris have led previous surveyors to identify the site as a small church.

Figure 1 Plan of excavation

The following discussion summarizes the work:

- The apse (L504)
- The southeast corner (L503)
- The southwest corner (L505)
- The eastern end of the south aisle (L506)
- The burial (L507, L508)

Figure 2 Chart of loci for 2002

The apse

The apse wall (W502, L501, L504) is intact to seven courses above the *synthronon* (1.57 m) with some declination of the north side. It is approximately 4.5 m wide and 3 m deep. Basalt stones with a rectangular, stipple face comprise the lower courses. Destruction fill suggests that upper courses were of limestone. The dome was surfaced on its interior with plaster. Pigmented plaster fragments (red, yellow, and orange) suggest a fresco covered the dome.

Figure 3 Apse

A *synthronon* (L518, depth of 1 meter, height of 30 cm) surrounds the apse. At the center of the apse, the *synthronon* protrudes to 1.54 m from the apse wall and may have had additional height. The *synthronon* and transitions between the floor (F516) and the apse wall (W502) were covered with plaster.

Figure 4 Floor

The floor of the chancel is *opus sectile* in local stone with a few marble fragments in secondary use. The south end of the chancel north of the row of columns displays a pattern. 20 x 20 cm stones are set in a row. Each stone is rotated 45 degrees so that its corner is at the top and the stones contact each other at the corners, resulting in a row of diamonds. Subsequent rows of 20 x 20 cm stones align with the bottom points of the previous row. Gaps between the stones are filled with smaller square stones that have not been rotated. Triangular stones fill the remaining gaps.

Northern sections of the apse west of W502 remain to be excavated to floor level. Architectural fragments of cornices, pilasters, doorjambs, and a partial altar screen post were recovered from the fill.

The southeast corner

Shallow trenches exterior to the southeast corner (L503) revealed two factors of note. The apse wall is exterior to the building—as is true of only a minority of Byzantine churches excavated in Israel.¹ Of greater possible significance is a second wall (W512) that runs parallel and directly next to the wall of the east end of the south aisle (W509), effectively doubling its thickness (2.3 m). W512 seems to continue to the south. Its exact function is to be determined.

The southwest corner

Figure 5 Southwest corner (looking east)

The exterior southwest corner (L505) was identified and cleared to a depth of 1 m from the surface. 1 m of the south wall (W510) was revealed to the east and 4.5 m of the west wall (W511) was uncovered to the north. An entrance to the southern aisle begins 2.6 m from the southwest corner, suggesting that the church has three

¹ Sixty seven of one hundred seventy eight in Ovadiah's catalog. Asher Ovadiah, *Corpus of the Byzantine Churches in the Holy Land*, Theophaneia; Beiträge zur Religions- und Kirchengeschichte des Altertums 22 (Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1970), 194.

entrances from the west. Architectural fragments (lintel stone, doorjambs, and pilasters) were in the fill.

2.5 m to the west of W511 is another wall (W513) running parallel. Its function and relationship are to be determined.

The eastern end of the south aisle

Figure 6 Tomb enclosed by walls

Four meters of the eastern end of the south aisle (L506) were cleared to floor level. The interior southeast corner is 3.95 m from the southern corner of the apse. The aisle is set off from the nave by a run of four columns (52 cm in diameter), separated by 2.5 to 2.75 m on center. A single drum protrudes from the surface in each case. The aisle is about 13 m east to west and 2.75 m from column to south wall. The floor at the east end is of similar *opus sectile* style in local stone with some marble pieces in secondary use. The construction quality is poor. All the floor is east of and level with the top of the channel for the chancel screen, which seems to transect nave and aisle on the same north-to-south line (only partially excavated).

Two short, perpendicular walls are constructed on top of this floor. One wall (W515) runs from the first column to the east wall. The other (W514) runs from the same column to the south wall, skewing somewhat to the west over the top of the channel

for the altar screen. W515 has a small doorway toward its east end. The design of what remains plus doorjambs recovered from the fill above suggests that the door was not used for regular access. These secondary walls and the room itself seem to serve a protective purpose for what is inside.

The burial

Inside the room created by W514 and W515 is a rectangular surface. It is 16.5 cm above the floor and 57 cm from the south wall (W510). The surface is monolithic limestone stone that had been plastered. It is 76 cm wide (N to S) and 227 cm long (E to W). The sides of the raised surface are marble slabs 3 cm thick. On the north side is an incised cross. The lower member of the cross is not visible. W514 is skewed to the west because of the size of this stone.

Figure 7 North facing of the tomb with cross

On the top of the plastered stone is a small basin and hole. Its center is 36 cm from the south edge and 53 cm from the west. The shallow basin is 9 cm in diameter with a 1 cm rim and a 1 cm hole. There are some indications in the damaged plaster top that the plaster extended the shallow basin 3 cm around. The hole was probed with a wire to the depth of 9 cm.

Figure 8 Basin and hole bored into the lid of the sarcophagus

A 58 x 48 cm section of the floor (F516) next to the cross was opened (L507). After a plaster subsurface, the fill was dirt and stones to a depth of 22 cm. At that level there was hard plaster. Thirty-six single tesserae were recovered (red, white, and black). Also found was one 2 x 6 block of tesserae (4 black and 2 red). Although the area of excavation is quite small, the plaster layer is identified as an earlier floor (F517). It is at approximately the same level as the floor for the south aisle, the elevation of which is surmised from the elevation of the channel for the chancel screen.

A small hole (20 x 30 cm) was opened in this floor for another 14 cm (L508), to the bottom of the marble piece with the incised cross. The marble piece is 62 cm wide and 52 cm high. It is incised with a Byzantine cross of a style that would come to be called "Teutonic" in the Middle Ages. The cross is 23 x 17 cm. Below the left arm is a capital Greek alpha (5 cm high and 4 cm wide). Below the right arm is a lower-case omega (3 cm high and 6 cm wide). The cross is 7.5 cm from the top of the marble piece. Only the top three arms of the cross are visible from F516. The cross and the alpha and omega would be visible from F517.

Excavation continued in the small hole to a depth of 77 cm from the top of the raised surface. A smooth and finely worked vertical surface of limestone or marble (chipped white) was revealed behind and below the marble inscription. Although only a small section is exposed, it seems that an intact sarcophagus is buried in the south aisle of the church to the east of the chancel screen.

The above evidence indicates at least two stages in the history of the church. During stage one, the earlier floor (F517) and the sarcophagus were put in place. During

stage two, the top floor (F516) and the walls around the sarcophagus (W514 and W515) were added. A key question is the sequence between the earlier floor and the sarcophagus. The earlier floor may have been cut to insert the sarcophagus. In breaking through F517, there was a difference in plaster hardness to about 15 cm from the sarcophagus along a parallel line (a repair after a cut?). However, that difference could be a construction technique. Although the fill below F517 was contaminated due to the close quarters of the probe, the fill revealed only a few tesserae (7).

The second stage (F516, W514, W515) shows much poorer construction (*opus sectile* in local stone, half the inscription is hidden, W514 is skewed from the line of the chancel screen channel, misalignment covered over by plaster). The expected marble top for the sarcophagus is missing. Perhaps there was an attempt to repair or hide the sarcophagus after damage or desecration was done (Sasanians in 614 CE?). Seemingly, those who did the second stage of construction were very poor and no longer knew the significance of the alpha and omega on the inscription.²

If future excavation proves the above proposal, this burial in the Northeast Church at Hippos is significant. Most Byzantine churches and monasteries with burials are “located outside, or on the fringes of the inhabited area of the city... close to or in the midst of cemeteries.”³ The Northeast Church is in the city center. The burial is even more unusual if Haim Goldfus’ research is confirmed:

Proportionally, the total number of tombs – especially inside the space of the prayer hall, in the Galilee and the Northern Coasts sites, as well as in the site of other regions – is by far lower than in most sites of the Negev region.⁴

There is one possible parallel for the burial. At the basilica church at Dor, built in the first half of the fourth century, is the tomb of two venerated bodies in the south aisle at the eastern end. Interestingly, the second of five slabs covering the tomb has

² Some inscriptions in the Negev show such ignorance. The alpha and omega are reversed below the arms of the cross. Arthur Segal, *Architectural Decoration in Byzantine Shvta, Negev Desert, Israel*, BAR international series 420 (Oxford, England: B.A.R., 1988), 154.

³ Haim Goldfus, “Tombs and Burials in Churches and Monasteries of Byzantine Palestine (324--628 AD)” (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1997), 238.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 249.

a hole that enables an earthenware pipe (70 mm thick) to carry oil into the grave. Claudine Dauphin calls the tomb a reliquary-tomb.⁵

Summary of the season

On the assumption of symmetrical construction, the work on the Northeast Church in 2002 reveals a square church (interior dimensions of the apse and two aisles are 12.5 x 13 m) with a single exterior apse. The aisles are separated from the nave by a row of four columns. There were three entrances from the west. An altar screen crossed the nave and two aisles just to the west of the first column. A sarcophagus of a venerated person or persons is buried at the east end of the south aisle. The church may have been built to house the burial (a *marturion*?). At a second stage of construction/repair, an *opus sectile* floor of local stone was laid behind the line of the chancel screen. Protective walls were erected around the tomb during a later stage.

Ceramics and small finds

Figure 9 Impressed plate with woman facing a cross

⁵ Claudine Dauphin, "On the Pilgrim's Way to the Holy City of Jerusalem. The Basilica of Dor in Israel," in *Archaeology and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. John R Bartlett (New York: Routledge, 1997), 161.

Ceramics and glass recovered from the destruction layers are from a narrow band of time (fifth to eighth CE), are very consistent, with prevailing types from sixth to eighth CE (Byzantine and Umayyad). Of note is a fragment from a Late Roman C 10 plate impressed with a cross and the left profile of a woman.

2.

THE 2003 SEASON

In 2003, systematic excavation exposed most of the apse, aisles and nave of the Northeast Church.

Figure 10 Domus of the church (looking east)

This report will address in turn work done in:

- The south aisle (L524)
- The north aisle (L542)
- Northern rooms outside the *domus* (L536)
- The chancel and apse (L504, L507, L518)
- The tombs in the chancel (L533 and L537)

Figure 11 Listing of Loci

General description of the destruction fill

There are no evident occupation layers above the floors of the Northeast Church. Rather, the floors are covered by one to two meters of fill. The fill shows surprisingly little evidence of the massive earthquake of 749 CE, as witnessed elsewhere on the site. Rather, the remains suggest decay and collapse over time.

The dominant soil profile of the destruction fill is as follows:

- A horizon - 0 to 15 cm; dark grayish brown (10YR 4/2) dry, very stony sandy loam, very dark brown (10YR 2/2) moist; weak fine granular structure; friable; 10 percent pebbles, 15 percent cobbles, 30 percent stones; clear wavy boundary.
- B horizon - 15 to 55 cm; grayish brown (10YR 5/2) dry, very stony sandy loam, dark grayish brown (10YR 4/2) moist; very weak, coarse subangular blocky structure; 10 percent pebbles, 15 percent cobbles, 35 percent stones; irregular boundary.
- C horizon - 55 to 150 cm; light gray (10YR 7/2) dry, very stony sandy loam, grayish brown (10YR 5/2) moist; massive; firm, hard in places near the floor; 10 percent pebbles, 10 percent cobbles, 20 percent stones; assumed to be calcareous (by color).

Soil in the slightly depressed center of the church is darker in color to a greater depth.

According to the USDA soil classification system this soil would be “Inceptisol.”⁶ This soil showed the beginning development of layers, called horizons that lie roughly parallel to the surface. The soil formed in material derived from the weathering of limestone, weathering of basalt, and windblown material. The initial deposition of soil material started with the collapse of the church and reflects its construction with limestone, basalt, and other earthen material between the stones. Windblown material of very fine sand and of silt from distant sources and coarser materials of sand from the adjacent hillsides were deposited on the site.

Grasses and other herbaceous plants contributed to the organic matter content of the soil. An abundance of snails and evidence of rodent, worm and insect activity were observed in the soil profile.

Pockets of an older buried soil were observed below the floor in the chancel. This soil was redder in color and more compacted. It appeared to be more developed but

⁶ United States Soil and Conservation Service, ed., *Soil Taxonomy: A Basic System of Soil Classification for Making and Interpreting Soil Surveys*, Agriculture Handbook no. 436 (Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service., U.S. Govt. Print. Off, 1975), 489–554.

not enough was observed to make a detailed examination. The lighter colored C horizon lies on the floor of the church.⁷

Within the destruction fill were various architectural fragments including cornices, lintel stones, numerous doorjambs (limestone and basalt), two chancel screen posts, two Ionic capitals, and one column drum.

Pottery and glass recovered from the destruction fill accord with the report from last year. They reflect a narrow band of time (fifth to eighth CE), are very consistent, with prevailing types from sixth to eighth CE (Byzantine and Umayyad). Occasional bones collected from the fill belong to sheep or goats.

The south aisle

The south aisle (L524) was cleared to floor level (F526). At the west end is an entrance 90 cm wide. Its door would close from inside the *domus*. At the east end of the aisle west of the base for the chancel screen is a second doorway to the south. It is 80 cm wide; its door would close from outside the *domus*; and it was blocked during a secondary phase of the church.

Figure 12 South aisle (looking east)

⁷ The soil analysis was prepared with the help of Glenn A. Borchers, M.S., retired soil scientist, NRCS-USDA.

Most of the floor (F526) was destroyed in antiquity. Only the pebble foundation and plaster remain in most places. Four meters from the west wall (W511) next to the south wall (W510) and running for 1.13 m to the west is a segment of the original mosaic floor.

Figure 13 Guilloche Mosaic

The background field is white. There is a black band of two tesserae, a white band of four tesserae, and black band of one tessera, and then a simple guilloche pattern (Avi-Yonah pattern B2)⁸ in black, white, red, and yellow (approximately 1 cm² tesserae). At about three meters from the west wall (W511) the border turns to the north briefly. The border also runs to the east beneath a bench (see below) for four meters. West of this border is a 80 x 60 cm segment of tesserae in a circular patterns (portions of four circles). At the west end of the aisle, in the southwest corner, and in two fragmentary locations along the stylobate are segments of white mosaic tile of larger size (1.5 cm² tesserae). These seem to be a later repair.

The south aisle is separated from the nave by a row of four column bases set on a stylobate. The stylobate (97-93 cm wide, comprised of diverse stones some in secondary use) runs west from the base of the chancel screen to the fourth column. The

⁸ Michael Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements in Palestine," *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities of Palestine* 2 (1932): 139.

intercolumniation averages 2.1 m. The shafts of the column bases are 52 cm in diameter with variant base profiles rising 30 cm and extending outward 10 cm.⁹

Next to the south wall (W510) is a stone bench. It is 4.01 m long, 38 to 44 cm wide, and 26-30 cm high. It begins 47 cm west of the blocked south doorway and ends 4.2 m from the southwest corner. It is constructed of stones of various lengths (60, 40, 100 cm) and was plastered. Some remaining wall plaster curves onto the top of the bench. The bench is secondary to the original construction of the church as it sits on top of the original mosaic floor.

Benches are uncommon in the Byzantine churches of Palestine. Both the entrance hall and narthex of the church at the monastery of St. Martyrius at Ma'ale Adummim have benches. In the narthex, the benches were part of a sixth century renovation.¹⁰ Benches also are reported against the west wall in the church on the coast at Ostrakine¹¹ and in one of the three rooms of the monastic oratory at Wadi Fra'iye.¹² In trans-Jordanian regions, benches occur occasionally. H. C. Butler notes a bench on the north side of the nave between the second and third columns in the west church at Bākirhā.¹³ At Gerasa, benches occur in a southern side chapel at the church of St. Theodore, against the north wall of the Synagogue Church, and on the north, west, and southern walls of the nave of the Mortuary Church.¹⁴

⁹ Descriptions are like those published a more than a century ago. Gottlieb Schumacher, "Beschreibung Des Dscholan," *Zeitschrift d. Deutschen Palastine-Vereins* 9 (1886): 267-268: 331, figs. 106 and 107.

¹⁰ Yitzhak Magen, "The Monastery of St Martyrius of Ma'ale Adummim," in *Ancient Churches Revealed*, ed. Yoram Tsafrir (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993), 178; Pachomian sources indicate that monks used three postures when praying the hours: standing, sitting, and prostration. Columba Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, Oxford studies in historical theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 103.

¹¹ Eliezer Oren, "A Christian Settlement at Ostrakine in North Sinai," in *Ancient Churches Revealed*, ed. Yoram Tsafrir (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993), 307.

¹² Uzi Dahari and Yoram Tsafrir, "Remote Monasteries in Southern Sinai and Their Economic Base," in *Ancient Churches Revealed* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993), 347.

¹³ Howard Crosby Butler and E. Baldwin Smith, *Early Churches in Syria* (Princeton: Department of Art and Archaeology of Princeton University, 1929), 213.

¹⁴ Carl H. Kraeling, *Gerasa, City of the Decapolis* (New Haven, Conn: American school of oriental research, 1938), plates xxxiii, xxxvi, lii.

Figure 14 Basalt cross

In the destruction fill at the west end of the aisle, a basalt cross with base was discovered resting on its side on a thin layer of dirt above the floor. The cross is of Greek style with flared ends (40 cm high x 37 cm wide x 23 cm deep). The cross sits on a base (20 cm high x 23 cm wide x 56 cm deep). Cross and base are carved from one stone. Plaster on the edges of the base and numerous roof tiles in the fill suggest that the cross came from the peak of the western facade. Artistic renditions of such a cross at the peak of the Constantinian aedicule may provide a point of comparison.¹⁵

The exposed southern wall (W510) is of poor quality. It is essentially two rows of mostly reused stones of diverse sizes approximately 80 cm thick. Ashlars are used in corners and to frame doorways. Walls were plastered on the inside.

The north aisle

The north aisle (L542) was cleared to floor level (F538) at the west end. The entire run of columns and the stylobate were also exposed. The stylobate is of similar construction and dimension to that of the south aisle. However, the column bases and placement show a significant variance. Visible are five intact column bases. Again,

¹⁵ Martin Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ* (Gloucestershire [England]: Sutton, 1999), figs. 18, 19, 26.

the column shafts are 52 cm in diameter, but the base profiles vary dramatically in form and height.

Figure 15 North stylobate and bases (looking east)

The intercolumniation averages 1.1 m, except between the third and fourth bases from the east where the intercolumniation is 2.7 m. If a similar column base were placed in the middle of this gap, then all the intercolumniations would average 1.1 m. In that case, there would be six bases for the north aisle and four for the south – a most unusual configuration for a Byzantine church. Of further note, the stylobate ends 7.2 m west of the base of the chancel screen, as it does in the south aisle. The westerly column base (of larger diameter) sits a plaster foundation. Perhaps the north aisle of the church underwent some major structural modification at some point in the history of the church.

The walls comprising the northwest corner of the church (W511, W521) stand to the height of two poorly constructed runs. There is no western door for the north aisle. Instead, in the northwest corner is a segment of an aqueduct pipe (65 x 60 cm) serving as a cistern head. The pipe segment stands about 30 cm above the floor on a platform of paving stones (1 x 1.5 m). The pipe has a 30 cm opening. The cistern

appeared empty to a depth of 3 m. Cisterns are commonly found in the atrium and narthex of a Byzantine church, not in the *domus*.¹⁶

Figure 16 Aqueduct pipe segment over a cistern

Against the north wall (W521) is a bench of similar dimensions to the one against the south wall (W510). It, however, begins 2.24 m from the west wall and proceeds to the east. This bench is clearly tied in with a mosaic floor of white 1.5 cm² tesserae (identical to the mosaic from the second phase in the south aisle). A raised ridge of stones (3-4 cm wide x 5-7 cm high) runs south from the corner of the bench to the west end of the stylobate. Small patches of similar mosaic abut the west wall (W511).

¹⁶ A precedent does exist in the cave church at Khirbet ed-Deir at the head of the south aisle. However, the location of the cistern in that monastery is most likely a consequence of topography. Yizhar Hirschfeld, *The Early Byzantine Monastery at Khirbet Ed-Deir in the Judean Desert: The Excavations in 1981-1987*, Qedem 38 (Jerusalem, Israel: Institute of Archaeology, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1999), figs 37 and 43. Of minor note is a 42 cm sump in the southwest corner of the church at Khirbat al-Karak. Pinhas Delougaz and Richard C. Haines, *A Byzantine Church at Khirbat Al-Karak*, University of Chicago. Oriental Institute Publications v. 85 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 14.

Northern rooms outside the *domus*

In preparation for future work, 1 m trenches were dug on the exterior of W521 (L536), beginning at the northwest corner following surface indicators of walls. Some 7 m from the northwest corner of the church, a wall (W539) was identified that proceeds in a northerly direction. 1.5 m to the north, the wall has a doorway (74 cm wide) to the east that would close from the east, suggesting that a room lies to the east (see below for doorway to the same room from the chancel). The wall proceeds north for 62 cm to another wall (W540) that runs roughly east/west, skewing north somewhat from line of the north wall (W521) of the *domus*. A later wall (W541) veers from the top of W540 in a southwesterly direction. The outer wall (W540) is significantly thicker (1.3m) than other walls and partially incorporates a column base. Two other column bases (diameters of the shafts are 43 and 52 cm) are visible next to W521 near the corner with W539. Larger quantities of late Roman pottery shards were recovered from this locus. A primitive basin is attached to the west end of W521. The function of this area is unclear.

The chancel

The entire chancel and apse were cleared to the level of the *opus sectile* floor (F516).

The chancel is clearly demarked from the rest of the *domus* by the base for a chancel screen that runs across nave and aisles in a north/south direction. Two chancel posts of divergent design were recovered from the destruction fill along with a fragment from the top of a third. No part of the screen itself has been recovered. The base splits the first intercolumniation just west of the most easterly column bases. There were three openings in the chancel screen: one from the center of the nave, and one from each of the aisles next to their respective columns. The south end of the base for the chancel screen had been partially covered by W514 and plaster in a later phase of the church.

Against the apse wall (W502) is a highly eroded *synthronon* of soft limestone covered by plaster. Its depth of 1.0-1.12 m would accommodate one row of presbyters. The central section of the *synthronon* protrudes an additional 10-15 cm into the apse and rises 26 cm above the rest of the *synthronon*. The remainder of the apse floor (F516) is covered with stone *opus sectile*. Some of the tiles are in secondary use. Although some variance in color is visible, no design pattern is discernable.

Figure 17 Plan of the chancel

The section of the chancel at the east end of the north aisle has a discernable focus. A single panel of the chancel screen spanned the north/south dimension of this area, allowing an entrance to the cancel from the west just north of the easterly pillar in the north run. In an original phase of the church, access to this same part of the cancel was possible through a 1.06 m doorway. The doorway in the north wall (W521), which closed from outside the *domus*, was blocked in a later phase. The floor (F516) is *opus sectile* of no clear pattern, some tiles of which are in secondary use. There are two voids in the floor. One is centrally located in the middle of the axis of the northerly chancel screen panel. In it was a *loculus* for a reliquary (31 x 31 x 17 cm deep). Surrounding plaster suggests the lid was some 5 cm thick and rested some 10 cm below floor level. Next to the east wall (W520) and slightly south of the central axis was a second void. It too seems to a *loculus* for a reliquary, but its dimensions are smaller (20 x 20 cm) and its construction is poorer. Original wall plaster intact between the structure of this *loculus* and the wall confirms that F516 and both *loculi* are secondary to the original construction of the church.

Throughout the excavation of the chancel at the head of the north aisle, numerous fragments of plaster were recovered. At higher levels most were white. Lower in the

square, colors, lines, and patterns were observed. The dominant color is red although some yellows are also visible. It is possible to reconstruct from the fragments of basket 1831 a broad red band (6-7 cm wide) that is bordered by one to three very narrow stripes (1-2 mm). On the opposite side of the narrow stripes, the background color is yellow. From basket 1833 comes a fragment with a white background, a yellow band (4mm), and a red blotch that may be grapes. From the same basket comes a fragment with a yellow background, a brown band (4 mm) and a small red blotch. A small fragment from basket 1835 may capture the edge of a round red object.

Access to the central section of the chancel (at the east end of the nave) was gained through a central opening in the chancel screen. A 114 x 30 cm stone (in secondary use) spans the entrance. Although most of the *opus sectile* floor (F516) had been destroyed, two bands (1 x 2.2 m) of square-in-square pattern (dominant squares on end) are discernable on the north and south margins of the central section of the chancel. In the rest of the central section, some fragments of a decorative frame and one incised piece are suggestive of what is now lost. No evidence of an altar was found.

Under the level of the destroyed floor is the plaster layer of the first floor (F517). Many loose tesserae were recovered from the fill. Cut into the plaster layer (and thus part of a secondary phase) was another *loculus* for a reliquary (17 x 26).¹⁷ Preserved partially, it sits on the central east/west axis of the church. Just to its south is another similarly sized *loculus* made of thin marble slabs. It had been plastered full. A third possible *loculus* is west of the first, but its poor form makes such identification debatable.

Masonry tomb

To the north of the central axis is a masonry tomb in an east/west orientation. Three basalt stones were *in situ* covering the western half of the tomb. The eastern cover stones (limestone) were broken. The sidewalls of the masonry tomb are basalt

¹⁷ For an example of similar loculi, see Georges Tchalenko, E. Baccache, and Institut français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient, eds., *Eglises de Village de La Syrie Du Nord*, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique / Institut français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient t. 105 (Paris: Librairie orientaliste P. Geuthner, 1979), plate 153.

ashlars creating an opening 97 x 216 m. Two courses of the sidewall were exposed. The top course is 18-27 cm deep, and the bottom course is 34-44 cm deep.¹⁸

Figure 18 Chancel showing detail of the tombs

Between the second and third covering stones, a lead pipe extended down into the tomb. The lead pipe is rolled, not melted. Its top was hammered into a funnel. The pipe is 72 cm long (partly broken at 16 and 35 cm from the top). The exterior diameter of the pipe is 2.44 cm. The thickness of the lead is 3.7 mm. The funnel end has a diameter of 4.58 cm. A plaster mound held the funnel to the level of the *opus sectile* floor (F516).

¹⁸ Similar construction is visible in the tombs in the northwest corner of the Martyrion d'Antioche-Koussié. Jean Lassus, *Sanctuaires Chrétiens de Syrie: Essai Sur La Genèse, La Forme et l'usage Liturgique Des Édifices Du Culte Chrétien En Syrie, Du IIIe Siècle à La Conquête Musulmane* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1947), plate xli.

Figure 19 Lead pipe down to burial

At about 75 cm below the level of the *opus sectile* floor (F516) is the limestone box of a sarcophagus (its SE corner is 8 cm below its NE corner). The box measures 200 x 60 cm.¹⁹ Its walls are 11-12 cm thick and its internal depth is 30-34 cm. The box of the sarcophagus was covered by six stones 4-9 cm thick (secondary use; two were marble). Between the second and third stones from the west, two triangular stones and plaster connected the lead pipe to the burial below.

Figure 20 Remains in sarcophagus in masonry tomb

¹⁹ Comparative measurements to *sarcophagoi* on the surface in the cemetery outside the east gate at Hippos:

	Length	Width	Depth
#1	191	63	48
#2	198	66	49
#3	196	67	71
#4	212	89	unclear

The burial was undisturbed. A good portion of the box was filled with dirt. A single skeleton was partially exposed.

It is likely that both the sidewalls of the masonry tomb and the covering stones of the box of the sarcophagus were plastered, as a few small pieces of plaster were still adhering. One larger piece of painted plaster (in several sections) was recovered just above the stones covering the sarcophagus. It showed a dark band, a yellow background and the four fingers of a near life-sized left hand (outlined in red) on a parallel line to and below the dark band. The hand was likely part of a fresco in the area above the sarcophagus but below the original covering stones. By way of comparison, outstretched hands feature prominently in depictions of saints and in frescoes from Christian catacombs.²⁰

Figure 21 Fresco of hand from masonry tomb

Exposed sarcophagus

As was described in last year's report, a sarcophagus with a monolithic lid sits partially exposed above floor level in the chancel portion (L507) of the south aisle. The exposed sarcophagus is surrounded by later walls (W514, W515) and faced on its

²⁰ André Grabar, *Martyrium: Recherches Sur Le Culte Des Reliques et l'artchrétien Antique*, vol. 2 (London: Variorum Reprints, 1972), plates xxix – xxxii.

sides by marble slabs. The top is sealed and leveled by plaster. A basin and hole provide facility for anointing the remains (see 2002 Report for specifics).

To allow access to the sarcophagus, the west wall (W514) was removed. The wall sat directly on F516 and veered in a southwesterly direction over the base for the chancel screen. The wall was sealed to the floor with plaster. The exposed channel in the base for the chancel screen was also filled with plaster. Portions of the *opus sectile* floor (F516) were removed to the north, west and south of the sarcophagus. Fill was cleared to the plaster base of F517. A 1 m section of mosaic tile from F517 was still intact in L529 next to the south wall (W510). Visible was the same black band that characterized the border of the mosaic in L524.

The pieces of marble that faced the sides of the sarcophagus were removed. These pieces were clearly embedded into the plaster of F517.

On the east face is a single piece of unadorned marble 3.5 cm thick and 65 cm wide. The top portion is broken and missing. On the south, two thicker pieces faced the tomb to the level of the top of the lid (142 x 45 x 6.5 cm and 63 x 44 x 6.5cm).

Figure 22 Cross on west face of south tomb

On the west is a single piece of marble 3.5 cm thick and 65 cm wide. It too was broken at the level of the top of the sarcophagus box, with the top pieces coarsely plastered back. An inscribed cross was discovered under the crude plaster. As with the cross

inscription on the north face, the cross is “Teutonic” in form, each of the arms flaring to points. Small disks or dots are inscribed just beyond each point.²¹

Four pieces of marble faced the north side. From east to west:

- 57 cm wide x 45 cm high x 3.5 cm, broken in three pieces and plastered back in place
- 34.5 x 29(45?) x 2.5 cm, the top half is missing and was filled in by plaster
- 61 x 51.5 x 4.5 cm, inscribed with “Teutonic” cross and alpha and omega
- 56 x 47 x 4.5 cm broken horizontally and repaired by plaster.

Figure 23 Basin and hole bored into the lid of the sarcophagus

Plaster held a 9 cm basin in place over the hole that had been bored through the lid to allow anointing. This plaster also filled the gap between the east end of the sarcophagus and the east wall (W509) of the chancel. Plaster was also used to fill the gaps between the facing pieces and to level the rounded top of the monolithic lid of the sarcophagus.

²¹ This style of cross is frequently used for bronze processional crosses. John A. Cotsonis, *Byzantine Figural Processional Crosses*, Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Collection publications no. 10 (Washington, D.C: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1994), figs 8 and 9.

Figure 24 Sarcophagus and lid

The box of the sarcophagus²² is a single piece of limestone. Its width varies from 61.5 cm at the west end to 64 cm at the east end. Its length is 2 m on center. The walls range between 10 and 12 cm thick. The interior is rounded at the west end, beginning 33 cm from the west. The interior depth slopes from 35 to 38 cm west to east. Carving stokes on the interior of the north side angle down from east to west at about 60 degrees. On the south side, there are some discernable stokes in a downward direction.

The lid is a monolithic piece of limestone 23 cm high x 197 cm long x 59 cm wide. Small stones and plaster on the edge of the box created a 2-3 cm gap at the west end. There was a rather large gap in the northwest corner between lid and box.

The various layers of plaster and floor tiles, especially to the east of the sarcophagus, and well as the gaps and broken pieces, suggest several phases. The exposed sarcophagus is contemporaneous with the building of the church and the laying of F517, as its marble facing is set into the plaster of the floor. Subsequently, F516 was laid (phase 2). Some plaster from W509 curves on top of the tile of this floor east of the tomb. In a third phase, the sarcophagus was opened by breaking the western marble face and its inscribed cross. Then the lid was pried up from the west (gap in

²² The use of an exposed sarcophagus is without precedent in Byzantine churches in Palestine. For a discussion of the use of sarcophagoi in and near Byzantine churches of Syria, see Lassus, *Sanctuaires Chrétiens de Syrie*, 231–232.

northwest corner, eastern facing broken above the level of F516, the breaking of two of the north facing pieces). If the sarcophagus had a marble top piece, it was lost/destroyed at this time. The lid was then lowered back into place. Plaster filled gaps left by broken pieces and leveled the top. A basin for holy oil was plastered over the hole bored into the lid (newly bored at this time?). The shattered western inscription was put back and plastered over. Due to similar heavy use of plaster and the similar crude building of the walls that surround the sarcophagus (W514, W515), it is hypothesized that the walls also belong to this third phase. Desecration seems to be a logical explanation for the third phase, the repair done by the poor survivors of whatever had happened.²³ But, it is also possible that the damage was done while removing relics, a practice of eastern Christianity.²⁴

Figure 25 Opened sarcophagus

When the exposed sarcophagus was opened, it contained the bones of a single small woman of 60 plus years. The bones were gathered under the anointing hole, long bones placed in a frame around fragments of the skull, pelvis and other smaller

²³ A significant massacre took place at Kursi during the time of the Sassanid invasion in 613 CE. Kursi was within the territory of Hippos. Charles R. Page, "Kursi Excavations Resumed: Two New Seasons (2001, 2002)" (Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Toronto, Canada, November 23, 2002).

²⁴ V. Saxer, "Cult of Martyrs, Saints, and Relics," ed. Angelo Di Berardino, *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, Istituto patristico Augustinianum (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 533.

bones. A small quantity of earth was also recovered from the box of the sarcophagus (remains of decomposition). In the earth at the east end of the box were some fifteen metatarsals and phalanges of the foot. Four white tesserae were also recovered. While the sarcophagus was originally used for burial, after it was opened, the remaining bones were arranged under the location of the anointing hole, except for the bones from the feet that were missed in the decompositional remains.

Figure 26 Remains of a revered woman

The striking burial and saintly veneration of a woman in the chancel of this small Byzantine chapel in the heart of a Decapolis city raises questions of identity that are complicated by her anonymity. Barring a fortunate epigraphical discovery, the particular identity of the burial will remain unknown. However, a plausible parallel is the Kyria Maria church at Scythopolis. The chapel was part of an urban monastic community (for recluses). There are tombs in the northeast and southeast corners of the chapel. A mosaic inscription over the tomb at the east end of the south aisle reserves the tomb for “Lady Mary who founded this church.”²⁵ The burial in the Northeast Church at Hippos has the additional distinction of demarcating the tomb within the chancel, providing for on-going veneration, and according a degree of anonymity appropriate for a foundress/abbess. Should the hypothesis gain

²⁵ Gerald M. FitzGerald, *A Sixth Century Monastery at Beth-Shan (Scythopolis)* (Philadelphia: Published for the University museum by the University of Pennsylvania press, 1939), 27.

additional support, it could be suggestive of the function of the Northeast Church and its surrounding structures.

Phasing and date

While significant work remains to complete the excavation of the *domus* and surrounding rooms, currently one can posit at least two phases in the Northeast Church. When the church was built, it housed the exposed sarcophagus, had a mosaic floor with a guilloche border in both chancel and aisles, and had entrances from the north, south, and west. Likely, the cistern pre-existed the church. In a second phase, reliquaries were placed in the north and central parts of the chancel, the masonry tomb was dug, and an *opus sectile* floor was laid. In a second phase in the aisles, benches were added to the north and south walls and carpets of plain white mosaic tile were laid. Some major structural repair/alteration might have occurred in the north aisle. It is presumed that the second phases in the chancel and aisle are contemporaneous. The opening of the exposed sarcophagus, its repair and the construction of W514 and W515 would plausibly be part of a third phase, following a destructive act. But it is also possible that these alterations were intentional and even part of the second phase. Whether the blocking of the north and south doors is secondary or tertiary cannot be determined at this time.

Due to similarities in the border pattern among the mosaic floors of the Northeast Church, the Northwest Church, the baptistery of the cathedral, the monastery church at Khirbet Samra, and the baptistery at Kursi,²⁶ a late fifth century *terminus a quo* is assumed until other more datable remains are recovered. As no convincing evidence has been recovered demonstrating on-going usage of the church at the time of the earthquake in 749 CE,²⁷ the Northeast Church seems to have been closed or abandoned before that time.

²⁶ Arthur Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita : Third Season of Excavations : July 2002* (Haifa, Israel: Zinman Institute of Archaeology, 2002), 22.

²⁷ Kenneth W Russell, "The Earthquake Chronology of Palestine and Northwest Arabia from the 2nd through the Mid-8th Century AD," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 260, no. 1 (1985): 49.

EXCAVATION OF THE NORTHEAST INSULAE

3.

THE 2004 SEASON

In 2004, systematic excavation completed exposure of the final phase of the *domus* of the Northeast Church and began work on the northern rooms and the portico.

Figure 27 *Domus* excavated (looking northwest)

This report will address in turn work done in:

- The tombs in the chancel (L533 and L537)
- The nave
- The north aisle
- The north lateral chamber
- The portico

Figure 28 Schematic with loci

Tombs in the chancel

In 2003, the masonry tomb was excavated to the level of the burial. In 2004, exhumation of the skeletal remains from the limestone box was finished. The tomb contained the disturbed remains of at least three individuals that had been interred sequentially over time. With each inhumation previous skeletal remains were pushed aside, and some bones were inverted. Skulls were crushed. The pattern is like so-called “family tombs” at Beth Yerakh, Rekhovot-in-the-Negev, Khirbet Karkur, `Avdat, and Nesanna.²⁸

Figure 29 Remains in the masonry tomb

Field analysis of the skeletal remains suggests that the most recent burial was a young individual, since the squamosal suture between the temporal and parietal

²⁸ In discussing the multiple burial phenomenon, Haim Goldfus writes: “In many churches – evidently private foundations, whether of a single family or several families – the tombs were used as a family burial receptacle. The ‘family’ could have consisted of members of consecutive generations or of several members of the same generation, as we have observed in churches of the Negev region such as Rehovot-in-the-Negev, Nessana, and `Avdat.” In monasteries, “This ‘family’ was not necessarily based on blood ties but rather on ecclesiastical kinship or monastic brotherhood.” Goldfus, “Tombs and Burials in Churches and Monasteries of Byzantine Palestine (324--628 AD),” 240.

bones of the skull was not fully fused.²⁹ Using the field measurements of the subpubic angle and the siatic notch, the most recent burial seems to belong to a male.³⁰ The siatic notch of any earlier burial may be indicative of a female.

Only fragmentary pottery sherds and a few loose mosaic tesserae were recovered from the earth that had washed in around the bones. Several fragments of green Byzantine glass await formal identification. Numerous rodent bones were intermingled, especially at the head and foot of the box.

The dimensions of the limestone box holding the burials in the masonry tomb are similar to the box from the exposed sarcophagus.³¹ The chamber of the masonry tomb is constructed of four courses of ashlar.³² The interior opening of the chamber is 97 cm (width, north-south), 2.17 m (length, east-west), 1.42 m deep.³³

²⁹ William M. Bass, *Human Osteology: A Laboratory and Field Manual*, 4th ed., Special publication no. 2 of the Missouri Archaeological Society (Columbia, Mo: Missouri Archaeological Society, 1995), 12, 39.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 209, 213.

³¹ External dimensions of the sarcophagus box in the masonry tomb are 0.60 m wide, 2.02 m long, 0.53 m deep. Sidewall thickness is 11 cm; end thickness is 13 cm. Internal depth is 34 cm at west (head) and 38 cm at east (foot). The curve of the west end of the sarcophagus begins 30cm from the top. The width of the box of the exposed sarcophagus varies from 61.5 cm at the west end to 64 cm at the east end. Its length is 2 m on center. The walls range between 10 and 12 cm thick. The interior is rounded at the west end, beginning 33 cm from the west. The interior depth slopes from 35 to 38 cm west to east.

³² The bottom course is 37cm high. The blocks from west to east are 38 cm, 34 cm, 56 cm, 38 cm, 49 cm. The second course is 35 cm high. The blocks from west to east are 28 cm, 55 cm, 50 cm, 49 cm, 34 cm. The third course is 40 cm high. The blocks from west to east are 40 cm, 68 cm, 37 cm, 71 cm. The top course is 21 cm high. The blocks from west to east are 58 cm, 74 cm, 26 cm, 57 cm.

³³ A comparative chart shows similarity to other burial chambers on the site:

	Width	Length	Depth
NEC	0.97	2.17	1.42
NWC south	1.03	2.09	1.2
Gate north	1.03	2.13	1.21
Gate south	0.99	2.03	1.35

Notably, the sarcophagus in the masonry tomb sits somewhat askew from level. Further excavation between the north side of the sarcophagus box and the north basalt wall of the masonry tomb (L543) showed that the sarcophagus box is perched on irregular stones 27 to 33 cm above the smooth limestone floor of the chamber of the masonry tomb. Recovered from the accessible fill at the bottom of the masonry tomb chamber were several nails and nail fragments.

Figure 30 Nails from beneath the sarcophagus

These are identical to those recovered at other Byzantine burial sites in the Hefer Valley and at Rammun and likely belonged to a wooden coffin.³⁴

The space between the bottom of the sarcophagus box and the floor of the masonry tomb (27-33 cm) is comparable to the depth of Byzantine lead coffins.³⁵ From the

³⁴ Levi Itshaq Rahmani, "A Lead Coffin from the Hefer Valley," *Israel Exploration Journal*, no. 24 (1974): 124; Hamdan Taha, "A Byzantine Tomb at the Village of Rammun," *Liber Annuus* 48 (1998): 342, plate 5.

³⁵ A lead coffin with a depth of 31 cm is described by Levi Itshaq Rahmani, "A Christian Lead Coffin from Caesarea," *Israel Exploration Journal* 38, no. 4 (1988): 246; another lead coffin with a depth of 36 cm is noted by Rahmani, "A Lead Coffin from the Hefer Valley," 124–127; depths of 34 cm, 41 cm, 39 cm and 19 cm are cited by Levi Itshaq Rahmani, "Five Lead Coffins from Israel," *Israel Exploration Journal* 42, no. 1–2 (1992): 81–102.

edge of the area under the sarcophagus box, one vertebra was also retrieved as were a few Roman and Byzantine sherds. In a subsequent season, the sarcophagus box will be removed to allow careful examination of the lower burial.

Portions of the visible floor (F516) and the plaster layer of the first floor (L550) were removed in a 1.5 x 2.5 m section north of the masonry tomb chamber. A vertical line of plaster of indeterminate function runs parallel to the long axis of the tomb about 1.5 m to the north between the first column base and the east wall (W520). The north wall of the masonry tomb is held in place by assorted stones in a dense mortar. A conical socket for a post is evident 1.2 m north of the masonry tomb opening and 1.5 m west of the *synthronon* under the plaster base (L550) of the first floor (F517). Also of note is a Byzantine ionic capital covered with intact plaster that serves as the foundation stone for the north corner of the apse wall. Only Roman/Byzantine pottery fragments were recovered under the sealed base of F517.

Although excavation of the tomb is not complete, it seems that the chamber of the masonry tomb pre-dated the church and held a burial in a wooden coffin. It was likely part of some earlier Christian structure or facility upon which the Northeast church was built and from which the Northeast church may have reused architectural materials. Subsequently, a (reused?) box of a sarcophagus was crudely inserted into the chamber and set on stones that held it above the revered burial below. Into this box, at least three individuals were sequentially interred. While they might be individuals of note in the community, more likely they were benefactors who received such burial in proximity to a saint on the basis of their support. A rolled lead pipe to floor level allowed ongoing veneration. The practice of stacking burials has a parallel in the tomb of Azonaine in the church of St. Theodore at 'Avdat,³⁶ but the construction of the latter is finer.

The nave

The nave of the church was excavated to the level of a fragmentary mosaic floor (F544). In several locals, it was clear that the original floor was overlaid by 3-4 cm of plaster and a second mosaic floor. A section of that mosaic is a carpet of imbricated scales (Avi-Yonah pattern J3)³⁷ like those in the south aisle of the Northwest

³⁶ Avraham Negev, *The Greek Inscriptions from the Negev*, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. Collectio minor N. 25 (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1981) fig. 33.

³⁷ Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements in Palestine," 141.

Church and likely laid at the same time (late sixth century). Toward the western end of the nave, larger white tesserae might suggest a possible third layer, although there is a significant gap in continuity between the layers in the central part of the nave and those near the west wall. On the other hand, the white tesserae may be part of a carpet extending from the north aisle into the nave from the area of the north doorway (now blocked) and the cistern. The western doorway to the nave was blocked during the final phase of the church (see comments on the portico below).

Figure 31 Nave and portico

Due to the exceptionally poor condition of the floor (F544), significant efforts were devoted to stabilizing the edges of the remaining segments. Cleaning and mapping of patterns will await future seasons.

Figure 32 Chancel screen fragments

Two stone fragments of chancel screen panels were recovered from the destruction fill. Vine and cluster themes provide the background for the panel. The corner of the flared arm of a cross may be visible on one of the fragments. Two coins were recovered at floor level. One was next to the north stylobate and the westerly column base. It is a Roman provincial coin of Marcus Aurelius (165-166 CE) minted at Hippos. The second coin lay near the south stylobate and the second column from the west wall. It is an undated Umayyad coin of the mid-eighth century minted in Tabariya (Tiberias). Neither location was sealed. But the latter coin is consistent with the approximate *terminus ante quem* for usage of the Northeast Church.

The north aisle

The 2004 season witnessed the removal of destruction fill (L542) from the north aisle of the *domus*. Recovered from the destruction fill were several equally-sized corbels. Along with others teetering from their position, the corbels had been reused to build the north wall (W521). The rectangular face, which had held the stone roof beams in the corbels' original use, shows patches of plaster that were part of the wall covering. Identical corbels were used to create a bench along the north wall from the base of the chancel screen to the ridge of stones in floor (F538) that separated the mosaic of the aisle from the mosaic of the north entrance next to the cistern. The bench was plastered to the wall. This bench of corbels sits atop the original

mosaic of the floor, suggesting that the corbels forming the bench and the corbels reused in the wall were installed as part of a major repair to the church. This major repair, possibly after the earthquake of 551 CE,³⁸ may explain the unusual systyle intercolumnation in the north aisle. It does not balance the araeostyle intercolumnation in the south aisle because it is a repair, not the original.

At the west end of the north aisle is a cistern. It is 2.95 m wide and estimated to be some 4 m deep. The head for the cistern is a segment of an aqueduct pipe in secondary use. As the cistern extends under the walls in the northwest corner (W521 and W511) and required an unusual configuration of the northerly entrance from the west (see discussion of the North Lateral Chamber), the cistern was constructed before the church and may have predated it. A plain white mosaic floor surrounds the cistern and may have extended into the nave. A column base from the repair of the north part of the church sits on the plaster base of the floor.

Figure 33 Mosaic from east end of the north aisle

In the northeast corner of the aisle next to the base of the chancel screen, a section of the mosaic floor is preserved. Toward the east end next to the bench is a repair done with larger tesserae in no discernable pattern, probably from the same incident that required structural repair to the church. The poverty of the community in the late sixth century is reflected in the repairs which neither preserved the symmetry of the church nor the pattern of the mosaic.

³⁸ Russell, "The Earthquake Chronology of Palestine and Northwest Arabia from the 2nd through the Mid-8th Century AD," 44–46.

The original mosaic floor was decorated with several patterns. Running parallel to the stylobate is a three-strand guilloche (Avi-Yonah pattern B2)³⁹. The guilloche matches the pattern discovered in the south aisle last year and is separated from the stylobate by roughly the same dimension as the guilloche from the south aisle is offset from the south wall. The gap was likely filled by the same banding of white and black stripes (four white, two black, and four white).

The bulk of the still visible pattern consists of 20 cm squares framed by a single row of black tesserae. On each of the four corners is an 8 cm framed square. The field of the small squares is a solid color (red, brown, yellow, black, pink). The field of the large square is filled by diagonal lines in five or six colors constructed of 2 x 2 blocks of tesserae. Minor variations to the diagonal patterns can be seen. The rectangles between the corners are white.⁴⁰ The pattern was likely replicated down the aisle to the west.

Next to the base of the chancel screen in the center of the aisle are four 20 cm squares. The squares are framed mostly in red tesserae and are separated by 8 cm rectangles and squares. The central 8 cm square is framed in black and has a red field. Black framing continues to the west. The 20 cm squares have white field. In the middle of each field is an equal-armed cross (5 x 5 tesserae).

Crosses in mosaic floors are important due to the prohibition against their use after 427 CE by the Theodosian code.⁴¹

However, crosses continue to appear on Mosaic floors into the sixth century.⁴²

³⁹ Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements in Palestine," 139.

⁴⁰ General parallels can be found at Mt. Nebo and Jerash. Michele Piccirillo, Patricia Maynor Bikai, and Thomas A. Dailey, *The Mosaics of Jordan*, American Center of Oriental Research publications no. 1 (Amman, Jordan: American Center of Oriental Research, 1993), figs. 188, 521.

⁴¹ *Nimini locere signum salvatoris Christi vel in silice vel in marmore aut sculpere aut pingere*. "Codex Theodosianus," 1.8.0.

⁴² The prohibition was reaffirmed in the Code of Justinian and was even included in the canons of the Council of Trullo in 692 CE. Giovan Domenico Mansi et al., *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio: in qua praeter ea quae Phil. Labbeus et Gabr. Cossartius ... et novissime Nicolaus Coleti in lucem edidit ea omnia insuper suis in locis optime disposita exhibentur*, Editio novissima ab eodem patre Mansi ... curata; accedunt etiam notae, et dissertationes quamplurimae quae in ceteris editionibus desiderantur. (Paris: H. Welter, 1901) vol. 11, col. 975, no. 73.

Figure 34 Crosses from the east end of the north aisle

Ernst Kitzinger, in discussing the plain red crosses in the floor of the Martyrion of St. Babylas at Antioch, proposes,

In early Christian times crosses placed more or less conspicuously on or near entrances served primarily an apotropaic function. They denied access to the powers of evil.... Two kinds of buildings were in need of particular attention – the house and the tomb. Since the Martyrion of St. Babylas was both a tomb and a church our mosaic crosses fit into this picture very well.⁴³

The Northeast church likewise is a tomb and a church. The appearance of crosses, while suggesting an earlier foundation than the late sixth century, is also in continuity with the apotropaic practice of other churches in the lower Galilee. “The placement of crosses near entrances to the church and sanctuary continues in the mosaics of this region.”⁴⁴ Evil must be kept at bay.

⁴³ Ernst Kitzinger, “The Threshold of the Holy Shrine: Observations on the Floor Mosaics at Antioch and Bethlehem,” in *Kyriakon: Festschrift Johannes Quasten*, ed. Patrick Granfield and Josef A. Jungmann, vol. 2 (Münster/Westf: Aschendorff, 1970), 640.

⁴⁴ Karen Christina Britt, “Mosaics in the Byzantine Churches of Palestine: Innovation or Replication?” (Ph.D., Indiana University, 2003), 249. Britt cites examples from Kursi, Tabgha, Nazareth, and elsewhere.

The north lateral chamber

Typically, the *domus* of a Byzantine church has three entrances from the west. In the Northeast church, the expected northerly entrance from the west does not exist due to the location of the cistern. Instead, a wide entrance (1.47 m) to a long (6.9 m) lateral chamber provides access to the north aisle through a doorway (98 cm) in the north wall of the *domus* just east of the head of the cistern. In a later phase, this north doorway was blocked. The fourth-century cathedral and the fifth-century church of St. Theodore at Jerash have lateral chambers next to the aisles.

Structurally, the north lateral chamber and the room beyond it to the east are part of the original building and not annexes. The remaining exterior stones of the western wall (W511) span the joint of what would be the northwest exterior corner of the *domus*. The southwest interior corner of the lateral chamber has a plaster fixture that seems to have fed water into the cistern (drainage from the roof?). The wide (1.2 m) north wall (W540) of the lateral chamber was the north wall of the entire structure. A doorway (81 cm) in the east wall (W539) of the lateral chamber that closes from the east provides access to an unexcavated area. The doorway shows no sign of intentional blockage. The floor (F549) of the lateral chamber is hard plaster and packed earth.

Next to the north wall (W521) of the *domus* and just east of the north entrance is a small staircase climbing in an easterly direction. Although a balk blocks full view, the remains of the staircase may terminate at a column base squared off with ashlar 1.8 m from W539. The stairs would provide access to a small storage gallery⁴⁵ over the north aisle made possible by the extra width of the church on the north side. Or it could provide access to the second story of the building to the north.

The positioning of two more small column shafts in the east section of the chamber points to later domestic use of the space -- a hypothesis reinforced by the high incidence of sherds from cooking pots and storage jars along with many animal bones, often showing cuts and breaks.

Long after the destruction of the church, the remains of W540 served as the base for W541 which ran in a westerly direction over the northwest corner of the lateral chamber. It likely tied in with W513 which follows the line of the portico stylobate

⁴⁵ Barbara Schellewald, "Zur Typologie, Entwicklung Und Funktion von Oberräumen in Syrien, Armenien Und Byzanz," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 27 (1984): 216.

and floats half a meter above the remains of the portico. These walls may have made an animal pen of the remaining ruins of the Northeast Church. A Turkish pipe was recovered from this level in the destruction fill.

The portico

Figure 35 Portico (looking north)

With a 2.5 m trench, the western wall (W511) of the church was exposed along its entire length (18.5 m) to the level of the floor of the portico (F545). The floor consists of flagstone pieces uniformly 60 cm wide and of varying lengths. It is roughly 60% intact, the southern half being the best preserved. At the north end of the exposed floor is a cover for a reliquary in secondary use as a flagstone. It has an inscribed concavity and hole nearly identical in dimension to the receptacle on the exposed sarcophagus. The dimension of the stone would fit the reliquary loculus in the center of the chancel in the north aisle, the cover of which is missing.

Along the western end of the trench, 10 to 20 cm of the stylobate of the portico were exposed. The bases of four columns are partly visible. A systyle intercolumniation would align with three of the extant four bases and would properly place a column base at the north end of the stylobate. However, the north corner of the stylobate is only 1 m from a wall running east to west (W553), not allowing enough space for a north portico. The southern terminus of the stylobate has not yet been exposed and

seems to be the base for W552 running to the south. The church lacks a typical atrium surrounded by four porticos.

Floating above the column bases but following the lines of the stylobate is W513. It comes from a later period. However, ashlar (laid in a U shape between the southerly two column bases) and W552 (running to the south) both rest on the stylobate. Further excavation will clarify the interrelationships of these walls.

The flagstone floor is interrupted by three lacunae next to the exterior west wall of the *domus* (W511). In each lacuna, remnants of an earlier mosaic floor (F546) are visible (Avi-Yonah pattern B9).⁴⁶ In several spots, the plaster base of this floor (F546) curves up the side of W511, suggesting that the wall was plastered on its westerly face. The lacunae mark the location of benches installed at the same time as the flagstone floor, as evidenced by a surviving section of the bench near the entrance of the north lateral chamber (compare the benches in the atrium of the Northwest church). As two lacunae are balanced on either side of the blocked western entrance to the nave, that blockage occurred sometime after the laying of the flagstone floor.

At both ends of the exposed floor of the portico (F545), thresholds are installed that are contemporaneous with the flagstone floor (F545). Both are architecturally problematic. The smaller gate to the north (95 cm) is part of W553 that abuts the northwest corner of the church and extends the line of W541 to the west. The larger gate (1.6 m) to the south aligns with the southern wall of the *domus* (W510). However, it awkwardly abuts one of the column bases sitting on the stylobate of the portico— a secondary construction. To the south of the threshold is a street that may be one of the *cardines* of the city.

At floor level toward the north end of the trench, part of a grain mill was recovered. It is the bell-shaped bottom part (*meta*).⁴⁷ The hour-shaped upper stone (*catillus*) is missing (although one was recovered from the atrium of the Northwest Church). The mill attests to later domestic use of the north lateral chamber and the portico.

⁴⁶ Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements in Palestine," 138.

⁴⁷ L. A. Moritz, *Grain-Mills and Flour in Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 74–90; for a relief demonstrating the usage of this animal-driven mill, see Paola Ciancio Rossetto, *Il Sepolcro Del Fornaio Marco Virgilio Eurisace a Porta Maggiore*, I Monumenti romani 5 (Roma: Istituto di studi romani, 1973).

Phasing

With evidence gathered during the 2004 season, the probable phasing of the church is coming into sharper focus. The chamber of the masonry tomb, the street line of the portico, and perhaps the cistern predate the church. The tomb with the burial in a coffin and perhaps other components may have been of an earlier Christian complex.⁴⁸ At the death of a revered woman in the late fifth or early sixth century, the church was built with her exposed sarcophagus in the chancel of the south aisle and in respectful proximity to the revered coffin in the center of the chancel. After significant damage to the church caused by the earthquake of 551 CE, major reconstruction seems to have taken place. The work is of low quality indicating the harsh conditions of the time. The north wall of the domus was rebuilt, mosaics were repaired, and benches were installed in both aisles and in the portico on top of the original mosaics. Repair of earthquake damage might explain the unusual intercolumnation in the north aisle. A *synthronon* was installed in the chancel along with a flagstone floor, and several loculi for reliquaries. Likely, relics from the exposed sarcophagus were extracted at this time (to pay for the reconstruction?) and the remaining bones were gathered. A new mosaic floor was laid in the nave on top of the earlier one. The flagstone floor was laid in the portico, benches were installed, the north and south gates were added. After the reconstruction, burials in the masonry tomb resumed (a family whose benefactions to the reconstruction allowed such placement?). During a final phase, access to the church was severely restricted. Doors in the north and south walls were sealed, as was the main westerly entrance. Burials stopped. Reliquaries were removed. A crude wall was built around the exposed sarcophagus. A bench was installed inside the southwest entrance, and the north room was converted to domestic use. The church became a mausoleum and was little used or abandoned by the earthquake of 749 CE.

⁴⁸ A possible parallel would be the hypogeum and fourth century crypt at Gadara over which Christians built a small church in the fourth century and then a basilica in the sixth century. Thomas Weber and Ulrich Hübner, "Gadara 1998: The Excavation of the Five-Aisled Basilica at Umm Qays: A Preliminary Report," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 42 (1998): 449.

EXCAVATION OF THE NORTHEAST INSULAE

4.

THE 2005 SEASON

In 2005, excavation focused on areas surrounding the *domus* of the Northeast Church complex and on conservation of the nave mosaic.

Figure 36 Top plan for the season

The northern chambers

Excavation of the northern chambers in 2005 revealed an increasingly complex matrix of rooms. To the east of the north lateral chamber are two additional rooms and to the north are at least two other rooms.

In 2005, the balk in the north lateral chamber was removed allowing the stairs next to W521 were revealed.

Figure 38 Stairs (looking south)

The stairs and the column that form their corner sit atop the hard dirt floor of the chamber. They seem to be a later addition to the chamber. The stairs may have provided access to a gallery over the north aisle or allowed entrance to the second floor of the building to the north.

The opposite (north) wall of the chamber also displays a later alteration. What was thought to be an exceptionally wide wall is in fact two walls: a northerly wall (W540) of typical Byzantine width (72-75 cm) and an inner wall (W555) of poorer quality and narrower dimension (44-47 cm). 2.8 m east of W541 at floor level is a rectangular opening to a cistern (45 x 120 cm) framed by ashlar (Cistern B).

The opening abuts and runs parallel with W540. W555 apparently framed the opening to provide access to the cistern. Attached to W555 east of the cistern opening was a basin constructed of stones and plastered to funnel water into the cistern. The water presumably came from the roof. W555 also blocked an entrance to the building to the north at the east end of the north lateral chamber. The staircase, column shafts, and W555 are later additions to the chamber.

Figure 39 Cistern B (looking north)

To the east of the north lateral chamber is a square medial chamber (approx. 2.95 m). The doorway (81 cm) to this chamber through W539 closed from inside the chamber. Passageways from this chamber to the north (1.35 m wide) and to the east (1.15 m wide) lack door jambs. The medial chamber thus functions to separate these inner rooms from the more public space of the north lateral chamber and to provide free movement between them. W539 proceeds to the north of W540 on the west side of the north passageway. A parallel wall (W583) was discovered to the east of the same passageway. At least two additional rooms are to the north of the side chambers excavated in 2005.

During a later phase, presumably after the passageways had been blocked, a bench was installed in the southeast corner of the room next to the east wall (W560). The bench was 67 x 150 x 46 cm high. A small Corinthian capital was used as part of the fill of the bench. Below the bench and in the northeast corner of the medial chamber, small fragments of an earlier mosaic floor were detected. An intact oil lamp was also recovered from beneath the bench, sitting on a mosaic fragment.

In the southwest corner of the room, a segment of an aqueduct pipe was positioned on top of stones and earth and filled with ceramic and earth. It may have functioned as a crude chair or storage platform.

Figure 40 Bench in medial room (looking southeast)

The western doorways to the north lateral chamber and to the medial chamber were never intentionally blocked as were so many of the other doorways in the church complex. As suggested in the 2004 report, these two rooms continued to be used perhaps domestically after liturgical practice ceased in the Northeast Church. The use of two pieces of aqueduct pipe, one in the north medial chamber and one as a cistern head in the *domus* of the church (Cistern A), point to usage of the space into the eighth century CE. Large quantities of chopped animal bones and numerous shards of domestic cooking pots reinforce this hypothesis. Modifications to the north lateral chamber, noted above, may have come from this same period.

W540 continues to the east and forms an exterior corner with W575. W575 runs parallel to and abuts W520 to the exterior wall of the apse (as does W512 to W509 on the south side of the apse). These walls create a third side chamber east of the medial chamber and of similar size to it (3.15 m east to west by 3.43 m north to south). In addition to the passageway in W560, there is an exterior doorway (1.10m) in W575 that could be closed from inside the chamber. A third doorway provides direct access to the chancel and suggests that the room functioned as a preparatory space for

clergy. We identify it as a *skeuophylakion*, while recognizing the tentative nature of using this label.⁴⁹

The doorway to the chancel through W521 displays two phases. An original doorway (1.13 m) with jambs provided a door that could be closed and locked from inside the *skeuophylakion*. Later that doorway was narrowed into a passageway (81 cm) without door jambs and with a higher threshold to accommodate the laying of the second floor (F516) in the chancel. In a third phase the passageway was intentionally blocked, as was the east door and the west passageway, thus sealing off the *skeuophylakion*.

Figure 41 Mosaic from the *skeuophylakion*

⁴⁹ Ecclesiastical sources from the fifth to the seventh centuries specifically name such side rooms as the *diakonikon* and the *skeuophylakion*. The term *pastophoria* is used in a collective sense. See Georges Descoedres, *Die Pastophorien Im Syro-Byzantinischen Osten: Eine Untersuchung Zu Architektur- Und Liturgiegeschichtlichen Problemen*, Schriften zur Geistesgeschichte des östlichen Europa Bd. 16 (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1983) XVI.

The fortuitous sealing of the *skeuophylakion* in antiquity preserved the mosaic floor of the room. The edges of the mosaic tiles are about 1.7 cm with an average of 38 cubes per decimeter². The carpet is suited to the contours of the room. It consists of an outer area paved with mostly white tesserae, a seven-tesserae border, and a simple geometric pattern (Ovadiah Type A⁵⁰) filled with a geometric motif.

The outer area is interrupted with a medial line of single black tesserae. About every 40 cm the line expands to a Avi-Yonah type E diamond (7 x 7) bordered in black. In the center of the diamond is a white Avi-Yonah type D crosslet surrounded by pink tesserae with a single black tessera in the center.⁵¹ The medial line and diamonds are interrupted in front of the exterior doorway in W575.

Next to W521 and east of the passageway to the chancel are two flared crosses some 35 cm in height. The width of the arms of each cross is two tesserae, flaring at the end to four tesserae. The upper and left rows and the flairs are red; the lower and right rows are black. Between the two large crosses is a black crosswise arrangement (5 by 5) with an Avi-Yonah F3 pattern of three peach tesserae and three red tesserae in each corner.⁵² See the 2004 report for a discussion of the apotropaic function of crosses next to doorways.⁵³

Between the outer area and the main geometric pattern is a border of seven tesserae. From outside to inside, single rows of tesserae are black, red, peach, white, peach, red, and black.

The central Ovadiah Type A geometric pattern of the carpet is filled with the same geometric motif that appears between the two large crosses: a black crosswise arrangement (5 by 5) with an Avi-Yonah F3 pattern of three peach tesserae and three red tesserae in each corner. The geometric pattern replicates itself six times in each direction, filling the floor of the room.

⁵⁰ Ruth Ovadiah and Asher Ovadiah, *Mosaic Pavements in Israel: Hellenistic, Roman, and Early Byzantine*, Bibliotheca archaeologica 6 (Roma: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1987), 166.

⁵¹ Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements in Palestine," 138.

⁵² Ibid., 139.

⁵³ Arthur Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita : Fifth Season of Excavations : September-October 2004 ; and Summary of All Five Seasons : 2000-2004* (Haifa, Israel: Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa, 2004), 88–89.

In the northeast corner of the room against W540 is a bench that is 62 x 132 x 55 cm high. The mosaic floor is broken in front of the bench, making it unclear whether the bench sat on top of the floor. Also recovered from the fill in the room were several marble fragments that might have been parts of liturgical furnishings.

The south vaulted chamber

Figure 42 South vaulted chamber (looking southeast)

Earlier work on the southeast exterior corner of the church (see 2002 report) suggested that W512 proceeded to the south. A blocked doorway just to the west of the chancel screen base in W510 also suggested that part of the Northeast Church complex continued to the south.

Work in 2005 revealed a large barrel-vaulted room (6.23 m east to west and 5.63 m from north to south). Two pilasters for the ribbing of the barrel vaults are still in evidence next to the south (W554) and the north (W510) walls. A Roman-era pilaster base was inverted and reused as part of the westerly pilaster on the south side. The bases for the ribs are the typical 2.2-2.4 m apart. Some of the collapsed ribbing was recovered resting on about 25 cm of fine fill.

Three high benches or platforms were discovered next to the south, west and north walls of the vaulted chamber. The north bench fills the space between the pilasters (47 x 171 x 41 cm high). A south bench (64 x 190 x 41 cm high) fills the corresponding

space. A third bench fills the corner from the westerly pilaster on the south wall to the corner and from the corner to the north for 3 m (west section is 63 x 300 x 34 cm high; south section is 62 x 94 x 36 cm high).

Figure 43 Top plan of the south vaulted chamber

Lack of plaster between the stones of the bench and the pilasters may indicate that the benches were part of the original construction of the room. In the southwest corner of the room, a column base (69 cm diameter, 20 cm high) sits inverted and may have functioned as a pedestal. The presence of these benches would suggest that the room functioned as a *diakonikon*. Analysis of pottery shards was inconclusive.

On the south wall (W554) above the bench is a rectangular niche in the wall. The niche is 2.44 m west of W512 and 86 cm above the floor. It is 43 cm wide by 51 cm

tall by 46 cm deep. Partially intact plaster in the bottom of the niche would reduce the height to 36 cm. Nothing survives of the contents of the niche.

The floor of the chamber is covered in hard plaster on top of a pebble base. In several locations the plaster is still visible curving up from the floor onto the walls, benches, and pilasters, especially on W512. Likewise, some plaster still clings to the joints between the benches and the walls. In its final phase, plaster covered walls, benches, pilasters, and the floor.

Figure 44 Cistern D (looking northeast)

In the northeast corner of the *diakonikon* is a well-preserved cistern head. The head is a finely worked square stone (66 x 66 x 49 cm high). The opening is 36 by 38 cm and space is provided for a 46 x 48 cm lid, now lost. The front of the cistern (Cistern D) head faces the center of the room with one back corner 65 cm from W510 and the back other corner 37 cm from W512. The head sits on a platform, about 25 cm above the floor. Several stones are plastered to the southeast side of the head creating a catch basin that feeds the cistern. The cistern seems to be about three meters deep.

On the cistern platform in the northeast corner of the room, a small horde of gold jewelry was discovered hidden under a fragment of a ceramic jar. The horde included three belt elements and a magical amulet.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ This report is indebted to Adam Łajtar of the University of Warsaw and Jeffrey Spier of the Kimbell Museum in Fort Worth for their assistance in identifying the finds and in supplying supporting bibliography.

Figure 45 Gold horde

The belt elements consist of two nearly identical pieces 1.43 x 2.23 cm. They are made of two pieces of metal 0.7 mm thick with edges bent over and pressed together making a total thickness of 4.5 mm. On the obverse is an outer decorative border of quarter moons, arrows, triangles, and scrolling with an entwined pattern in the center. The reverse has a lightly punched pattern. One of the two pieces has a protruding nodule on the obverse that is part of a 4.7 mm small pin through the tab (creating a catch?). The third belt element is 1.48 x 1.61 cm. It is made of one piece of metal 1 mm thick with bent edges yielding a total thickness 2.9 mm. Its obverse is of similar pattern to the other two pieces. On the reverse are two eye hooks.

The belt elements are like a set of eleven pieces purchased in Constantinople but said to come from Syria and currently in the Dumbarton Oaks collection.⁵⁵ A gold buckle (probably from Italy) with a similar entwined pattern is in Berlin.⁵⁶ Similar belt elements have been discovered in widely scattered locations: Langobard Italy, along the Danube, Antioch and Cairo. The belt elements from Antioch were discovered with a silver candlestick with early seventh-century control stamps.⁵⁷ A dating to the late sixth or early seventh century seems plausible.

The amulet is fitted into a gold Byzantine setting. The complete piece has a horizontal dimension of 2.23 cm and a vertical dimension of 2.37 cm. Its thickness is 2.2 mm. The hanging ring at the top of the amulet has a 9.2 mm outside diameter. The ring has a smooth inner ridge; both outer ridges are nodules 0.9 mm thick with 23 nodules around the ring. The amulet stone is held in a gold fitting hammered around the stone. The outer ridge consists of similar nodules – 64 around the ring. The setting is from the sixth or early seventh centuries.

The amulet itself is a well attested type.⁵⁸ The amulet is likely made of haematite (an iron oxide), a material used for similar magical amulets. On the obverse is a long-legged bird, likely a crane (phoenix?), with rays (seven?) around the head. The bird stands on a crocodile. Above it is a winged scarab. On either side in descending order are a bird, a scorpion (the tail of which is partially hidden by the setting), and a stylized snake. The working of the animals is somewhat primitive, and the identification is partially based on clearer parallels. The reverse reads, in Greek over two lines, *pepte*, meaning "digest." Its primary purpose is stomachic, although an effective amuletic design might be appealed to for broader purposes. Below the Greek lettering is the Chnoubis symbol, a stylized coiled snake with a lion's head likely referred to by Galen.⁵⁹ Of such amulets, Campbell Bonner writes, "There is reason

⁵⁵ Marvin C. Ross and Kurt Weitzmann, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, vol. 2, 3 vols., Dumbarton Oaks catalogues (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1962), no. 42.

⁵⁶ Jeffrey Spier, "Belt Tabs and Healing Amulet," July 18, 2005.

⁵⁷ Marvin C. Ross, "A Small Byzantine Treasure Found at Antioch-on-the-Orontes," *Archaeology* 5, no. 1 (1952): 30–32.

⁵⁸ Campbell Bonner lists seventy-one medical amulets. Many are stomachic (77–107) with numbers 102–105 being the closest parallels. Campbell Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets: Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, University of Michigan studies Humanistic series, (Ann Arbor London: University of Michigan Press; Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 1950); see also, Simone Michel et al., *Die Magischen Gemmen Im Britischen Museum*, 2 vols. (London: British Museum Press, 2001), no. 401.

⁵⁹ Galen, "De Simplicium Medicamentorum Temperamentis et Facultatibus," 10.19.

to think that all came from Syria, through the subjects are Egyptian.”⁶⁰ As to dating, Jeff Spier writes: “Most of these amulets are second-third century in date, although I feel that this variety is slightly later, probably fourth century (as Michel also suggests) or even later, but not as late as the sixth century. Old magical amulets were occasionally reused in later times.”⁶¹

To find such an amulet in an ecclesiastical context is noteworthy. While early Christian writers inveighed against the practice of magic,⁶² James Russell’s survey of the archaeological evidence from the early Byzantine period led him to conclude, “Underlying this devotion to the new faith, however, there clearly remained a deeply engrained attachment to practices inherited from some timeless past involving various forms of magic.”⁶³ Chrysostom may condemn amulets,⁶⁴ but Alexander of Tralles, a practicing physician of the sixth century, condones the therapeutic use of amulets.⁶⁵ Whoever hid this horde in the *diakonikon* of the Northeast Church complex likely believed in the power of the amulet as much as in the power of the church to provide a safe hiding place.

The discovery of a healing charm in the *diakonikon* indirectly raises the question of the function of the room in which the horde was hidden. The room is oversized in comparison to the small size of the church. It is wrapped around the corner of the church that houses the tomb of a revered woman. Its only entrance is immediately adjacent to the tomb. The cistern in its northeast corner is in direct proximity to the tomb, prominently placed in the room, and at the same time is an unprecedented feature of a *diakonikon*. Might the room have served some sort of cultic function in the veneration of the sacred woman? Might the waters of the cistern have been

⁶⁰ Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets: Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, 60.

⁶¹ Spier, “Belt Tabs and Healing Amulet.”

⁶² For the views of the ante-Nicene fathers on magic, see Francis CR Thee, *Julius Africanus and the Early Christian View of Magic*, vol. 19 (Mohr Siebeck, 1984), 316–448; for Origen, Chrysostom, and Augustine, consult Norbert Brox, “Magie Und Aberglaube an Den Anfängen Des Christentums,” *Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift* 83 (1974): 157–180.

⁶³ James Russell, “Archaeological Context of Magic,” in *Byzantine Magic: [Papers... Originally Delivered at a Colloquium... at Dumbarton Oaks Feb. 27-28, 1993]*, ed. Henry Maguire (Dumbarton Oaks Res. Library and Collection, 1995), 37.

⁶⁴ John Chrysostom, *In Epistulam I Ad Corinthios*, PG 61, col. 38; John Chrysostom, *In Epistulam I Ad Timotheum*, PG 62, col. 552.

⁶⁵ Theodor Puschmann, *Alexander von Tralles: Originaltext Und Übersetzung Nebst Einer Einleitenden Abhandlung: Ein Beitrag Zur Geschichte Der Medicin; Zwei Bände*, vol. 2 (Braumüller, 1879), 375, 475.

drawn for healing purposes?⁶⁶ Might one who treasured an amulet also seek the solace of sacred waters?⁶⁷ Complete excavation of the cistern may shed greater light on the possibilities.

Chambers west of the portico

Work in 2005 intended to expose further the stylobate of the portico of the Northeast Church complex, the *cardo* to the south, and the walls and framing components surround the column bases at the south end of the stylobate.

A five-meter section of the street was uncovered to the south of the threshold. The initial courses of basalt pavers south of the threshold are irregular, either suggesting that the street was repaired or more likely intimating the later insertion of the threshold into a pre-existing pavement. Subsequently the courses average 40 to 50 cm in width.

On the east side of the street, a corner of a building has been identified (W585). The northwest corner is 1.95 m south of the southwest corner of the church. It protrudes 4-5 cm further west than does the west wall of the church (W511). At least three courses of ashlar are visible above the street level.

⁶⁶ "In late antiquity Christians in search of miraculous healing began to visit the shrines of saints, usually their tombs or another place where their relics were preserved. Examples are Abu Mina in Egypt, dedicated to the martyr St. Menas and functioning by the late fourth century; Sts. Abbakynos and John at Menouthis in Egypt, which flourished between the fifth and seventh centuries; the shrine of St. Thekla in Anatolian Seleukeia (Meriamlik), which is attested between the fourth and sixth centuries; the pilgrimage complex of Qal'at Sem'an near Antioch, at the column of St. Symeon the Stylite the Elder, which was particularly active in the late fifth and sixth centuries; and the shrine of his later homonym, Symeon the Stylite the Younger, at the Wondrous Mountain (sixth-seventh century). These shrines are known through their extensive archaeological remains, through accounts of the posthumous miracles performed by the saints, and through pilgrimage artifacts or 'souvenirs,' such as ampullae, designed as containers for holy oil or water, and clay tokens made from the dust of a holy site." Alice-Mary Talbot, "Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines: The Evidence of Miracle Accounts," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002): 154.

⁶⁷ Alexander of Tralles advocated the use of any means in the interests of the sick. Puschmann, *Alexander von Tralles*, 319, 475.

Figure 46 Street south of the portico

3.95 m south of the threshold, the paving of the street changes. A 1.0 m wide section of paving has a rounded channel cut in it that flows from east to west. The channel is 11 cm wide and 5 cm deep. It flows from under the unidentified building to W552 and proceeds under that wall for 24 cm. The channel empties into a cistern (Cistern C). The oval opening of the cistern is 44 cm east to west and 57 cm north to south. There is no surviving head for the cistern. The cistern was later sealed and covered by W552.

To the west of the street and on the line of the stylobate of the portico runs W552. A doorway in the wall provides access to a westerly room that was partially excavated. The door closed and locked from inside the room. The room is 2.5 m wide (north to south) and is bounded on the south by W569 and to the north by W562. The top surviving course of W562 is constructed with pavers from a plaza, one of which displays the mason marks *alpha* and *eta*. This flat surface suggested that W562 is a window wall.⁶⁸ Three floors were in evidence in this southerly room: F568 is of mud and plaster mix and at a level implying that the wooden door may no longer have been in use; F571 is a floor of larger stones contemporaneous with the threshold and W569; F573 underlays W562.

⁶⁸ Katharina Galor, "Domestic Architecture in Roman and Byzantine Galilee and Golan," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 66, no. 1–2 (March 2003): 48–52.

Figure 47 West of street and Cistern C

To the north is a second similarly sized room bounded to the north by W574. The doorway for this room is inside the threshold to the portico and is constructed between the first two column bases on the stylobate. The threshold is placed on top of the stylobate enabling a door to be locked from inside the room. Several nails were recovered from the fill. Significantly, this room did not have evidence of any stone floor as in the southerly room outside the main gate. Hard packed earth provided the floor.

Further excavation for five meters to the north of these rooms and 2.5 m west of the stylobate revealed no additional rooms. Excavation at the end of the season halted at a hard-packed level that may have been the base for the area west of the portico.

The chambers west of the street and the portico are reminiscent of later chambers built around portions of the atrium at such sites as the north church at Shivta.⁶⁹ These chambers come from a later phase in the history of the Northeast Church. Likewise, the large cistern (Cistern C) was no longer in use, as the draining system to it was covered (W585) and the head was replaced by a wall (W552). The stone floor (F572) may be a remnant of the paving around the cistern.

⁶⁹ Shlomo Margalit, "The North Church of Shivta: The Discovery of the First Church," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 119 (1987): 107.

The cisterns

Three of four identified cisterns were surveyed in 2006

Cistern A is in the northwest corner of the *domus*. The head for this cistern is a piece of pipe from one of the aqueducts of the city. The cistern is roughly bell-shaped. It is fed by a basin that channels water through W521 and then into the cistern. At least two layers of plaster were visible in the throat area of the cistern. The top layer of plaster was pinkish in color. Based on the profile, we estimate the volume of the cistern to be fifteen cubic meters.

Figure 48 Head and catch basin

Figure 49 Cross section of Cistern A

Cistern B is located on the north side of the north lateral chamber. As noted above, the cistern is fed by a basin to its south and east. The basin is plastered in to W555, which framed the cistern opening. Cistern B is also roughly bell-shaped.

But as is indicated by both the floor profile and the cross section, the cistern is irregularly carved. In one place it shows a square corner. Elsewhere stone nodules protrude, especially from the ceiling. One possibility is that the cistern made partial use of a pre-existing fissure in the rock (lava tube?). Plaster recovered from the cistern is grayish in color. We estimate the volume of Cistern B to be just under thirteen cubic meters.

Figure 50 Cistern B

Cistern C is located 4.25 m south of the entrance to the portico and on the west side of the street. It is on a line with the stylobate of the portico.

As noted above, Cistern C was fed by a channel that crosses the street from east to west. The cistern has an oval horizontal profile (2.2 x 4.7 m) and is bell-shaped. It is approximately three meters deeper than the other cisterns and has an estimated volume of almost twenty-nine cubic meters.

The larger size and the location of the neck outside of the gate of the church compound may point to public usage or that Cistern C may have pre-existed the construction of the Northeast Church complex.

Recovered plaster is grayish in color.

Figure 51 Profile of Cistern C

Figure 52 Cistern C

Cistern D is in the northeast corner of the south vaulted chamber. It awaits survey and excavation in 2006.

Assuming Cistern D is of comparable size to Cisterns A and B, the average size of the cisterns in the Northeast Church complex is about 17 cubic meters. By comparison, the average size of the cisterns at Shivta is 46 cubic meters, at Sepphoris the average is 47 cubic meters and, and the cisterns of Hurvat Zikhrin averages 46 cubic meters.⁷⁰ Although its cisterns are smaller than other site on average, the Northeast Church complex has water sources independent of the water system of the city.

⁷⁰ Tsvika Tsuk, "The Water Supply System of Shivta in the Byzantine Period," *Cura Aquarum in Israel* (2002): 73.

Conclusion

Work in 2005 indicates a significantly more complex history to the Northeast Church and its place as part of a larger complex. Future excavation along with more detailed analysis of ceramic, glass and bone fragments may help to clarify the history of this small but fascinating structure.

Conservation work

Conservation work in 2005 was conducted under the direction of Eva Parandowska. The following tasks were completed:

1. A broken column base on the south stylobate of the nave was cleaned and glued back together.
2. A cracked column drum from the portico was lowered, cleaned, and glued back together.
3. Plaster around the doorway from the chancel to the *skeuophylakion* was repaired and sealed.
4. Broken plaster floor from the south vaulted chamber was repaired in several locations: near the entrance and near W512. A shortage of supplies prevented repair to the entire floor.
5. Plaster around the base of the cistern head in the south vaulted chamber was repaired.
6. Significant effort was devoted to stabilizing the edges of mosaic fragments still intact in the nave. Part of this repair was required because of the use of defective materials in 2004.
7. Sample sections of the remaining mosaic floor were cleaned revealing Avi-Yonah pattern B8 in red bordered by a guilloche, Avi-Yonah pattern J3,⁷¹ and a sauvastika (a counter-clockwise swastika) in black. A border of crosslets is in evidence on the east and south sides of the nave. Further cleaning and documentation await the 2006 season.

⁷¹ Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements in Palestine," 138, 141.

Figure 53 Pattern B8

Figure 54 Pattern J3

Figure 55 Sauvastika

Figure 56 Crosslets

Figure 57 Photogrammetric model of the Northeast Church

5.

THE 2006 SEASON

In 2006, excavation continued work on the *domus*, completed work on the masonry tomb, and continued conservation of the nave mosaic (F544).

Figure 58 Top plan for 2006

This report will address work done in the following areas:

- The north gate area
- The southern street
- The south hall and related chambers
- The chambers west of the portico
- Cistern D
- The masonry tomb
- The nave mosaic

Figure 59 Loci for 2006

The north gate area

In the 2004 season, a gate had been identified at the north end of the portico. The relationship of the gate to surrounding structures was clarified in 2006. The gate itself is approximately 1.4 m wide and was closed by two doors on pivots. About 1 meter was exposed to the north of the gate, but there was no evidence of a paved street as at the south gate.

Figure 60 North gate (looking west)

The west end of the gate was bounded by a column base and a substantive Byzantine wall (W553) to the west (80 cm wide). That column base sits on the north end of the stylobate that forms the western border of the church's portico. To date, no indications of a presumed atrium have yet to be unearthed. To the north of this column base is a later wall of poor quality (W594) that floats above the level of the stylobate. It is probably contemporaneous with other floating walls (W513, W541, W586, W592, W593, W1209) that were removed during excavation.

The full extent of the stylobate can now be documented. It is a single course of basalt stones 18 m from north to south and varying between 90 and 110 cm in width. The southwest corner of the *domus* aligned the southern end of the stylobate. Six of a

presumed eight column bases are still *in situ* with an average intercolumniation of 1.96 m.⁷²

A column base protruding from W540 at an approximate right angle (93°) to the north end of the stylobate motivated excavation of a narrow area (1 m) north of W540. The column base is in secondary use as part of the construction of the wall, as it does not sit on a stylobate. Column drums are also used in the wall. The base sits on a crudely paved stone floor of a room to the north of the north lateral chamber. A bench abuts the west wall of the room (40 cm wide and 28 cm high). A broken but relatively complete cooking pot was recovered on the bench. Complete excavation of this room is restricted by an access road to the north.

The southern street

Figure 61 South street exposure (looking south)

⁷² Column diameters and intercolumniations are listed from south to north. Those measurements in parentheses represent missing column bases and assumed intercolumniations. 52 cm, 1.74 m, 54 cm, (2.1 m, 53 cm, 2.1 m), 55 cm, 1.94 m, 53 cm, 2.05 m, 52 cm, (1.92 m, 53 cm, 1.92 m), 53 cm.

Work in 2006 continued the exposure of the small street proceeding from the south gate of the Northeast Church complex toward the *decumanus maximus*. A 5 m section was exposed to the level of the street and significant surface fill was cleared in preparation for exposure of the remaining 25 meters. A junction with the *decumanus* had been previously identified. Comparative elevations indicate a slope of about 8 cm per meter.

The street is 2.2-2.4 m wide and is surfaced with basalt pavers in rows 30 to 50 cm wide. Most pavers are 60 to 100 cm in length. To the east, the street is bounded by W585. The wall is constructed with basalt ashlar on its western face that survives to three and four courses in height. The street abuts the wall and was laid subsequently to the wall's construction. To the west, the edge of the street is less clearly defined. A threshold of a doorway is visible south of W569 and west of the street. The rest of the wall of which the threshold may be a part awaits exposure.

The south hall and related chambers

Initial work exposed three crudely built walls floating above the ruins of the Northeast Church complex (W592, W593, W1209).

Figure 62 Floating walls

These walls were likely part of later agrarian use of the site and were removed. Below were portions of two chambers, a hall, and an antechamber.

The antechamber is 2 x 5 m and provides access to the street from the other rooms. It consists of two sections separated by a low wall (W1219; 24 cm tall and 60 cm wide). The outer section next to the street is 2 x 1.2 m. In the northeast corner of W510 and W1210 and in the south-east corner of W1210 and W1201 are two basins of hard plaster like the one in the north lateral chamber. As with the later example, these basins collected water from the roof and channeled it under the street to another channel running under the western edge of the street to Cistern C. The channels confirm the use of Cistern C during active phases of the Northeast Church complex.⁷³

Figure 63 Catch basins

The inner section of the antechamber is 2 x 3.3 m and has a stone surface (F1213) overlaying an earlier floor of soft ceramic tiles. At its east end is a threshold leading to a chamber (2 x 2.6 m). A lacuna in W510 indicates that the wall (W1217) of which the threshold is a part was constructed at the same time as the south wall of the *domus* (W510). The door for the chamber locked from the inside, suggesting that the chamber served as sleeping quarters for an individual. It is one of three such

⁷³ The drainage channel leading to cistern C on the surface of the street has no apparent function, although it terminates at the mouth of the cistern. While it may have provided a means of catching overflow and runoff from the street, it seems more likely that the pavers here were reused and the channel had an earlier use now unknown due to relocation.

chambers identified this season. Some fill remains to be excavated before reaching its floor.

In the southeast corner of the antechamber is a threshold providing access to a large hall. The hall is bounded on the north by W1201. W1201 runs from the street to W559 of the south vaulted chamber. Again, a lacuna in W559 indicates that W1201 and W559 were constructed at the same time. The lacunae in W559 and W510 are significant, for they confirm that these southerly chambers were part of the original construction of the church. From the beginning, the *domus* was part of a significantly larger complex.

The hall to the south of W1201 has only been partially excavated. But a seam in W585 at 6.1 m from the north line of W1201 suggests that the hall's internal dimension is 4.5 m north to south. The hall is bounded to the east by W1218 yielding an internal dimension east to west of 5.4 m. The hall is only slightly smaller than the south vaulted chamber, but the hall lacks any piers to support such vaulting. Other than destruction fill, the hall was empty. Its floor was packed mud and plaster. A probe next to W1201 traced the cruder foundation stones to a depth of approximately 1 meter.

A threshold in W1218 provides access to another inner chamber between W1218 and W559. The threshold is of poorer quality than those previously mentioned in this section. But this threshold also would hold a door that locks from inside the small chamber. The chamber is 1.5 m wide with an uncertain dimension north to south. It too seems to be a chamber that served as sleeping quarters for an individual. Further excavation to the south will be necessary to clarify the full extent of the complex. The discovery of such quarters may support that theory that the Northeast Church complex was an urban monastic compound. Rooms of similar small dimensions can be seen in the plans of the Kyria Maria Monastery at Scythopolis⁷⁴ and in the plan of the Monastery of St. Martyrius.⁷⁵ Yizhar Hirschfeld points to an internal dimension of about 7 m² for cells in the cenobia at Khirbet et-Tina and Khirbet ed-Deir.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ FitzGerald, *A Sixth Century Monastery at Beth-Shan (Scythopolis)*, Plate 2.

⁷⁵ Magen, "The Monastery of St Martyrius of Ma'ale Adummim," 171.

⁷⁶ Yizhar Hirschfeld, *The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 177.

The chambers west of the portico

In 2005, easterly entrances to two rooms were discovered on the line of the portico's stylobate. The entrance to the southerly room is south of the gate. The internal width of the room is 3.2 m. Just inside the south gate is the entrance to a second larger room 3.9 m wide. The doors from both rooms could be closed and locked from the inside. In 2006 the western extent of both rooms was exposed. A common wall (W591) serves as the westerly demarcation for both rooms, yielding in internal east-west dimension of 5.2 m. The two rooms are separated by W562, a window wall. W562 and W591 allow us to conclude that the southerly room is part of the Northeast Church complex and not merely abutting it. The southerly room had a 20-25 cm plaster floor (F568) overlaying a stone floor (F571) of basalt and limestone pieces. The chamber inside the gate had a similar plaster floor but in poorer condition. Of note is a bench along the western wall of this larger room (40 cm wide and 25 cm tall).

Figure 64 Cistern room (looking northwest)

Figure 65 Incubatio with bench (looking west)

The Northeast Church complex has benches of similar proportions in many its rooms. In the *domus* benches line both aisles. The south vaulted chamber has benches on three walls. The west chamber inside the gate and a partially excavated chamber on the north side of the church have benches on their western walls. Small benches have been found in the north medial chamber and in the *skeuophylakion*. Lacunae for several benches can be seen along the east edge of the portico on the west side of W511. We suspect that the benches may be indicative of the memorial nature of the complex. The entrance hall for the church (L200) of the Monastery of St. Martyrius at Ma'ale Adummim has benches on three sides. At the center of the

hall is a tombstone with the inscription, “Tomb of Paul, the priest and archimandrite.”⁷⁷ Likewise, the mortuary church at Jerash has benches on three sides.⁷⁸

We further suggest that the large room inside the south gate had a particular function. We note, in addition to its size, that this room stands opposite the only entrance to the church kept open after other usage ceased. This entrance provided access to the tomb of the elderly woman, whose ongoing veneration has been previously discussed. Last year we posited that the large *diakonikon* with its cistern may have been part of a healing cult centered at the tomb of the woman. We therefore speculate that this western chamber served as a place for *incubatio* – prayer, fasting and even deprivation of sleep prior to participation in healing rites.⁷⁹

A least one wall has been identified going west from W591. A large pot (45-50 cm) containing several cooking pots and eggshells was retrieved from the area west of W591. To the north of the putative incubation chamber is a north-south wall (W1207) tied in to W574. It is the eastern wall of a small chamber (1.6 x 2.2 m) with a threshold facing west. The door closed from inside this cell and provided access to a paved surface where a hand mill was recovered. To the east of W1207 is a partially exposed fixture of uncertain usage approached by a plaster floor at a level slightly higher than the stylobate.

Figure 66 Shelf with cross

⁷⁷ Magen, “The Monastery of St Martyrius of Ma’ale Adummim,” 178.

⁷⁸ Butler and Smith, *Early Churches in Syria*, 213.

⁷⁹ For a parallel example of a place of incubation, see the discussion of the basilica at Dor along with pertinent citations from Greek and early Christian healing sources in Dauphin, “On the Pilgrim’s Way to the Holy City of Jerusalem. The Basilica of Dor in Israel,” 159–160.

A limestone block that may have been part of a protruding shelf was recovered from the fill. The shelf was inscribed with a flared cross (17 x 17 cm). The full extent of the chambers west of the portico has yet to be revealed.

Cistern D

Figure 67 Cistern D

The cistern in the northeast corner of the south vaulted chamber was excavated and documented in 2006. It is the smallest of the four cisterns so far identified in the Northeast Church complex, measuring approximately 4.77 m³.⁸⁰ It was constructed by digging a pit down and slightly into the bedrock. Crudely worked stone blocks were stacked in layers to construct the cavity and neck of the cistern. The cistern was then sealed with two layers of plaster, the second perhaps being applied later. The initial layer was hard grayish plaster with fine agate particles (1-2 mm; medium sand No. 10-40). The secondary layer was softer and lighter with larger agate (4-7 mm; fine gravel).

⁸⁰ The other cisterns of the Northeast Church are larger: Cistern A is about 15 m³, Cistern B is about 13 m³, and Cistern C is about 29 m³.

Recovered from the top layer of destruction fill in the cistern was a gold belt element likely from the same hoard recovered last year. However, its shape and patterning are distinctly different.

Figure 68 Belt tab

The shape of the obverse is like a tulip flower (2.12 x 2.21 cm). The metal is 1 mm thick. The bent edges yield a thickness of 3.6 mm. The obverse has an outer decorative border interspersed with squares and half-moons. Tiny jewels seem to be impressed into the border. Within the border are outlines of two tears with their upper points turned outwards. Inside each tear are stylistic representations of a young plant coming forth from a bulb. On the reverse are two eyehooks protruding 1.1 cm from the metal. A small repair to one of the tear drops is also visible, marked with a cruciform jeweler's stamp. A dating to the late sixth or early seventh century seems plausible.⁸¹

The topmost part of the fill contained many large pieces of crumbling limestone and basalt. The thinner pieces of basalt (under 10 cm) may be from the broken cistern cover, as the 2005 excavation found no lid. A large concentration of bones was uncovered in the southeast section of the floor. Several pieces of skull, a canine molar and numerous ribs and leg bones were among the pieces removed. Considering the size and shape of the bones, they may come from a dog or jackal. Other pieces of

⁸¹ Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita : Fifth Season of Excavations : September-October 2004*, 69–70.

animal bones were found in the upper fill, including a large tooth (bovine?), several rat or small mammal skulls and some vertebrae (possibly goat or sheep).

Numerous pieces of a roof tile were removed from the southwest section of the cistern. Several large pieces and numerous small pieces of pottery were also taken from the floor. A field reading placed these as Byzantine/Umayyad. As the excavation continued downward, the soil became finer. Fewer pieces of pottery were unearthed, but more pieces of tesserae (some in clusters) were found. The number of bones also decreased, although many tiny bones from a rat or mouse were still brought up. In this middle layer, a heavily oxidized, circular coin was discovered (elevation 128.46 m). Unfortunately, the coin could not be identified.

Several two-to-three-inch narrow pieces of rusted metal were removed from this lower fill layer. At elevation 128.44 m, a layer of highly compact, grayish silt was found (L 1204), likely formed during the cistern's use as a collector of water in Byzantine times. The silt layer was no more than 20-25 cm thick.

The masonry tomb

After work on the masonry tomb in the 2004 season, we speculated that the sarcophagus inside the chamber was perched above an earlier burial. This season, we removed the sarcophagus to excavate the rest of the chamber. The sarcophagus had been placed on rough stones that lined the north, west, and south edges of the masonry chamber. Discoloration of the remaining soil (2.5 YR 5/1) indicates the outline of a decayed wooden box.

Figure 69 Masonry tomb

Twenty-six fragments of iron nails are supportive of this proposal, as is a lead corner bracket (7 x 6 cm) recovered from the fill. Other flat fragments of lead were also recovered, one as large as 20 x 8 cm. However, this lead was not from any identifiable item. It is smooth on one side and speckled with soil and fine to medium sand on the other side, as if it were poured out on soil. We speculate that this lead may have come from the manufacture of the lead pipe used to convey liquid offerings into the sarcophagus.

Numerous bone fragments were recovered in the area beside and under the sarcophagus.⁸² In the collection are three lunate bones of which there are only two in a

⁸² The following field catalogue is courtesy of Drs. Jay Anders and Susan Pratt:

Square/Lo-cus	Date	Basket	
B2 L543	3-Jul-06	2033	Left temporal bone
			8 cm distal tibia
B2 L543	4-Jul-06	2039	4 cm distal radius
			4 cm of scapula (?)
			metatarsal bone
			distal metatarsal
			Upper extremity articular surface (?)
			2 cm rib fragment
			fibula fragment (?) Juvenile
			fibula fragment (?) Juvenile
			skull fragment 3 cm x 2 cm
			24 bone fragments
B2 L543	5-Jul-06	2044	Metatarsal complete (?) adult
			5 cm rib fragment
			6 cm clavicle fragment
			navicular bone (?) complete
			19 bone fragments
B2 L590	5-Jul-06	2047	10 cm long bone fragment
			distal metatarsal
			6 metatarsal bones
			cuneiform bone (?)
			skull fragment
			2 vertebral body fragments

			metatarsal bone large most likely male
			Fibula (?)
			distal fibula
			first cuneiform (?)
			cuneiform bone (?)
			3 teeth
			45 bone fragments
B2 L590	6-Jul-06	2051	7 upper extremity phalanges mixture of adult and juvenile
			1 adult metacarpal
			2 lower extremity metatarsals
			1 lower extremity distal metatarsal
			1 upper extremity distal phalange (?) Juvenile
			6 teeth
			2 partial teeth
			1 first metatarsal
			2 navicular bones
			3 lunate bones of differing sizes (?) Adult and Juvenile
			3 carpal bones type unknown
			partial talus (?)
			56 bone fragments
B2 L590	9-Jul-06	2057	5 metatarsals
			2 distal metatarsals
			7 metacarpals
			3 distal metacarpals
			5 teeth
			2 partial teeth
			1 navicular bone
			1 partial vertebra
			9 bone fragments
B2 L596	10-Jul-06	2064	2 metacarpals
			1 partial metacarpal
			1 distal metacarpal
			1 fragment of a metacarpal
			1 rib fragment
			9 bone fragments

human body. The bones also seem to represent both an adult and a juvenile. A large metatarsal bone likely belongs to a male. We have remains from an adult male and a juvenile of indeterminate sex.

We recovered no major bones, so we surmise that the two burials were removed leaving only fragments and the above listed items. Nevertheless, those who inserted the sarcophagus on top of the remains of a coffin intentionally raised the sarcophagus above the coffin about 20-25cm. That which was below was too revered to be crushed or to be swept away. It is possible that the removal reflects the practice of extracting relics, already observed in the tomb of the elderly women. But we also must consider the possibility that the bodies interred below were mostly exhumed and placed into the sarcophagus along with the last burial. These final burials in the sarcophagus were revered with oil/wine through a lead pipe and no provision was made for ongoing reverence of what was below.

Complete excavation of the chamber also allowed for clarification of its relationship to the Northeast Church complex.

Cross sections and measurements⁸³ show that the gap between F516 and the plaster layer of F517 is 18-20cm. The gap between the plaster layer of F517 and the top course of masonry stones is 13-17cm. The plaster of F517 covers over the top course of the masonry tomb. The thickness of the covering stones is 18-20 cm, the middle surviving stone of which has a piece of *opus sectile* paving adhering to its upper side. We therefore conclude that the masonry tomb was constructed prior to the laying of the original chancel floor (F517).

⁸³ Elevations:

Plaster floor of the chamber east end	129.227
Plaster floor of the chamber west end	129.151
Bedrock lowest exposed level	129.053
Cross section examining floors on west end:	
F516	130.854
Plaster layer of F517	130.650
Top course of masonry tomb	130.521
Cross section examining floors on east end	
F516	130.941
Plaster layer of F517	130.760
Top course of masonry tomb	130.596

Figure 70 End profiles of the masonry tomb

Subsequently, when the sarcophagus was inserted, a later floor (F516) was placed over the top of the tomb, likely reusing some of the *opus sectile* tiles and holding in place the lead pipe used to reverence the burials below. As no previous construction has been discovered around the masonry tomb, we now conclude that the masonry tomb is contemporaneous with the original floor of the chancel and was not part of an earlier Christian installation. As the tomb of the elderly woman in the south section of the chancel is also contemporaneous with F517, the church must have been built to house both tombs. Seemly over time the cult of the woman overshadowed the primacy of position of the masonry tomb.

Nave mosaic

Major conservation and cleaning of the nave mosaic was conducted under the direction of Ewa Radziejowska.

Only small fragments of the upper F589 remain. It seems to have been entirely geometric in design. At the east end along the chancel screen base and next to the southern stylobate was a border of crosswise arrangements (Avi-Yonah patterns F4 and F9⁸⁴) framed by a white field with random tesserae in orange and yellow and by a black square border two tesserae wide with decorative corners. Other major portions of the eastern part were covered with geometric patterns. The square-in-square pattern is like the one previously observed in the north aisle of the Northeast

⁸⁴ Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements in Palestine," 139.

Church and in intercolumnar panel 2 at Kursi.⁸⁵ Western portions of the nave were apparently covered with Avi-Yonah pattern J3⁸⁶ beginning at about 6.8 m west of the base of the chancel screen. A white field some 14 tesserae in width abutted W510. The field is interspersed with randomly placed colored tesserae. A border of two bands of single rows of black tesserae separated by five rows of white tesserae initiate a field of diamond geometrics bordered by black tesserae. Portions of this F589 were lifted to reveal the lower F544.

Figure 71 F589 samples

The late sixth-century date of the mosaics at Kursi suggests a similar date for the geometric floor of the Northeast Church complex. As Karen Britt has discussed in her recent dissertation, geometric compositions and uniform carpet patterns are part of a “stylistic shift in the pavements of the fifth and sixth centuries. The compositional arrangement of fifth century mosaics displays a degree of spontaneity and liveliness that gave way to predictability and repetitiveness during the sixth century.”⁸⁷ The geometric patterns of F589 covered over the complexity and beauty of F544.

⁸⁵ Vassilios Tzafaris, E. Kessin, and D. Urman, “The Excavations of Kursi-Gergesa,” *Antiqot* 16 (1983): I–X, Plate 8.5.

⁸⁶ Avi-Yonah, “Mosaic Pavements in Palestine,” 141.

⁸⁷ Britt, “Mosaics in the Byzantine Churches of Palestine,” 251.

Figure 72 Composite of F544

Only fragments of the western five meters of F544 remain. A complex series of borders surround two rows of six overlapping medallions on the east, south, and west. The outermost border is a band of three black tesserae. Inside is a double band of swastikas, the arms of which are composed of a double row of black tesserae. Fourteen such swastikas would have spanned the width of the nave. A double row of eight swastikas separates the easterly and westerly bands. The swastikas alternate between left- and right-facing, some of which are more complex than others. Lacunae make it difficult to determine a precise pattern of alternation between the four forms (right-facing, left-facing, right-facing complex, and left-facing complex). The

corners of each swastika and the outer borders are linked by diagonals composed of 2 x 2 clusters of black tesserae. In the center of the hexagonal spaces created by the diagonals and the edges of the swastikas are crosswise arrangements in Avi-Yonah pattern F2.⁸⁸ This border is somewhat reminiscent of the field of the south aisle at Shavei Zion which was dated by Avi-Yonah to the beginning of the fifth century.⁸⁹

Inside the band of mosaics are three plain bands: the first consisting of three black tesserae, the second of five white tesserae, and the third of three black tesserae. Moving inward, the next band is Avi-Yonah B8 in red, separated by a bank of four white tesserae from a guilloche (Avi-Yonah B4) with alternating strands of five tesserae.⁹⁰ One strand is black, white, pink, red, black; the other is black, white, yellow, orange, black. A single row of white tesserae separate the guilloche from a band of red triangles (Avi-Yonah A6⁹¹). Two rows of white tesserae and two rows of black tesserae complete the border.

In the main section of the floor, only fragments of up to twelve medallions remain. Each medallion was surrounded by a border of eleven tesserae. The borders overlap neighboring medallions. Some borders were a spectrum of colors (black to blues to whites to pinks to reds to black). Others are a background spectrum (black to pink to red to pink to black) overlain by alternating half circles (white to gray to blue to white). Still others show gold and brown fish on a field of red.

The spaces between the medallions and the external border are filled with birds. Visible between easterly medallions are a duck with raised wings and a walking bird. Between the two southerly medallions, a head of another duck may be detected.

⁸⁸ Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements in Palestine," 139.

⁸⁹ Moshe W. Prausnitz and Michael Avi-Yonah, *Excavations at Shavei Zion: The Early Christian Church; Report of the Excavations Carried out by the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums (in Cooperation with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem)*, Monografie di archeologia e d'arte 2 (Roma: Centro per le antichità e la storia dell'arte del Vicino Oriente, 1967), 51–53; see also the Portico of the Rivers in the House of Porticos in Doro Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements* (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1971) vol. 2, plate 98c.

⁹⁰ Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements in Palestine," 138.

⁹¹ Ibid.

Figure 73 Birds from F544

These birds are strikingly like the birds adorning the floor of the Kyria Maria memorial chapel in a monastery at Scythopolis.⁹² Karen Britt writes that the birds confirm the commemorative function of the space and “should be interpreted as the blessed who take flight to heaven.”⁹³

In the center of the mosaic, the fragmentary borders of four medallions overlap leaving a field of thirteen by nineteen white tesserae bounded by a row of single black tesserae. In the center of the field is a crosswise arrangement (Avi-Yonah F11⁹⁴). The cross is a single row of black tesserae with a white center. Each corner arrangement begins with a white tessera and proceeds outward through yellow to brown.

Figure 74 Lion (?)

Figure 75 Gazelle (?)

The two southerly medallions are partially intact. The westerly medallion seems to be a feline creature, perhaps a young lion, as suggested by the claws in the feet. In the background of the medallion is a palm tree with three branches. The easterly animal has small hoofs. It may be a gazelle. In the background is a palm tree of five

⁹² FitzGerald, *A Sixth Century Monastery at Beth-Shan (Scythopolis)*, Plate XIV.

⁹³ Britt, “Mosaics in the Byzantine Churches of Palestine,” 315.

⁹⁴ Avi-Yonah, “Mosaic Pavements in Palestine,” 139.

or more branches. Likely, the other medallions displayed similar animals. Some calendric function may be implied by the presence of twelve medallions.

While the cleaning of F544 did not reveal inscriptional insight into the church's function, the beauty of the remaining fragments is significant and suggestive of a fifth century date for the floor. Perhaps future probes under the floor will provide sought-for confirmation.

Conservation

Conservation efforts during the 2006 season focused exclusively on the stabilization and cleaning of the floors in the nave of the Northeast Church complex. The work was supervised by Ewa Radziejowska. Unfortunately, the outbreak of the second Lebanon War led to the departure of many volunteers including the conservation supervisor. The floor was recovered with layers of plastic, fine dirt and fabric. Conservation work will resume in 2007.

EXCAVATION OF THE NORTHEAST INSULAE

6.

THE 2007 SEASON

In 2007, excavation work continued on areas surrounding the *domus* of the Northeast Church complex, exposed the west street south to the *decumanus maximus*, continued conservation, cleaning, and documentation of the nave mosaic carpets (F544 and F589), and concluded study of the human remains from the masonry tomb.

Figure 76 Top plan for 2007

The masonry tomb

Previous reports have detailed the discovery⁹⁵ and excavation of the upper⁹⁶ and lower⁹⁷ sections of the masonry tomb, abutting the central axis of the nave to the north. Anthropological work on the human remains from the tomb was concluded in 2007 by Esti Deutsch of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. Her report reads in part:

Methods

The bones and teeth were cleaned, measured, photographed (Plates 1 and 2) and examined for gross pathology. The age estimation of the infant was based on dental development.⁹⁸ The age estimates for the adult individuals were based on the final stages of the skeletal maturation,⁹⁹ the stage of the cranial suture closure, and the degree of the dental.¹⁰⁰ The gender was determined morphologically.¹⁰¹ The metric analysis of the skeletal remains was based on the Standards for Data Collection from Human Skeletal Remains.¹⁰² The

⁹⁵ Arthur Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita : Fourth Season of Excavations : June-July 2003* (Haifa: Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa, 2003), 44–46.

⁹⁶ Arthur Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita Old : Fifth Season of Excavations : September-October 2004 ; and Summary of All Five Seasons : 2000-2004* (Haifa, Israel: Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa, 2004), 83–86.

⁹⁷ Arthur Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita : Seventh Season of Excavations : July 2006* (Haifa: Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa, 2006), 72–75.

⁹⁸ David Whittaker, “Ageing from the Dentition,” in *Human Osteology in Archaeology and Forensic Science*, ed. M. Cox and S. Mays (London: Greenwich Medical Media, 2000), 83–99.

⁹⁹ Which includes the fusion stage of the iliac crest, the ventral rings of the vertebrae, and limb bones.

¹⁰⁰ M. Cox, “Aging Adults from the Skeleton,” in *Human Osteology in Archaeology and Forensic Science*, ed. M. Cox and S. Mays (London: Greenwich Medical Media, 2000), 61–82; Mehmet Yasar Iscan and Susan R Loth, “Osteological Manifestations of Age in the Adult,” in *Reconstruction of Life from the Skeleton*, ed. M. Yaşar İşcan and Kenneth A. R. Kennedy (New York: Wiley-Liss, 1989), 23–40.

¹⁰¹ S. Mays and M. Cox, “Sex Determination in Skeletal Remains,” in *Human Osteology in Archaeology and Forensic Science*, ed. S. Mays and M. Cox (London: Greenwich Medical Media, 2000), 117–130.

¹⁰² Jonathan Haas et al., eds., *Standards for Data Collection from Human Skeletal Remains: Proceedings of a Seminar at the Field Museum of Natural History, Organized by Jonathan Haas*, Arkansas Archeological Survey research series no. 44 (Fayetteville, Ark: Arkansas Archeological Survey, 1994).

pathological examination and analysis was made according to White and Folkens and Lovell.¹⁰³

Description of the remains

The human remains were found in two main areas: the first area (Locus 537) housed the remains of at least nine individuals, while the second area (Loci 543 and 590) yielded three individuals (see table 1). The skeletal remains were fragmentary and incomplete. All the individuals found at these areas were adults, except one infant age 0-1 years which was found in locus 537 and was represented only by teeth and pelvis fragments.

As can be seen in table 1, the age estimation of most individuals was partial, mainly due to the fragmentary state of the remains. As for the gender, Locus 537 yielded the remains of at least three men, three women and one infant and three adults whom gender was undetermined (see table 1).

Discussion

The number of individuals reported here is far too small for any estimates of paleodemography or rigorous evaluation of mortuary practices. As mentioned, the disarticulated remains of at least 12 individuals were found in two areas. The inventory of the human remains is provided in table 1.

<i>Ind'</i>	<i>Locus</i>	<i>Basket</i>	<i>age</i>	<i>sex</i>
1	537	1911, 1933	Adult	Female
2	537	1911, 1933	older adult	Male
3	537	1933	Adult	Female
4	537	1930	Adult	
5	537	1903	Adult	Male
6	537	1914	55+	
7	537	1914	0-1	
8	537	1923	Adult	Male
9	537	1923	Adult	Female

¹⁰³ T. D. White and Pieter A. Folkens, *Human Osteology* (San Diego: Academic Press, 1991); Nancy C Lovell, "Paleopathological Description and Diagnosis," in *Biological Anthropology of the Human Skeleton*, ed. S. R. Saunders and M. A. Katzenberg (New York: Wiley-Liss, 2000), 217–248.

10	543	2039	Adult	
11	590	2047	Young Adult	
12	590	2051	Adult	

Table 1: Inventory of the human remains

Morphometrical Analysis

The morphometrical analysis included the cranial and post-cranial measurements of only three adult individuals whose remains were found in Locus 537, since the individuals buried in Loci 543 and 590 were represented only by tarsals, vertebra and one left patella. The details of these measurements are provided in table 2 (for the cranial measurements), table 3 (for the mandible measurements) and table 4 (for the post - cranial measurements). Stature could only be calculated for three of the nine adults found in Locus 537. The stature was calculated for individual 2 (168 cm), individual 3 (153 cm) and individual 4 (175 cm).¹⁰⁴

Measurement	ind' 1(older adult male)	ind' 2 (adult female)
Cranial Length		178
Cranial Breadth		140.3
Nasal Height	52	48.2
Nasal Breadth	26	22
Minimum Frontal Width	99.3	96
Basion-Bregma		126
Basion-Nasion		93.7
Porion-Bregma		109
Foramen Magnum length		32.5
Foramen Magnum breadth		29

¹⁰⁴ W. M. Bass, *Human Osteology: A Laboratory and Field Manual*, third edition (Columbia, MO: Missouri Archaeological Society, 1987) 22-23.

<i>Mastoid Process breadth</i>	<i>109.2</i>	<i>106.1</i>
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Table 2: Cranial Measurements

<i>Ind</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Mandible length</i>	<i>Ramus breadth</i>	<i>Ramus height</i>	<i>Mandible height</i>	<i>Height at M1-M2</i>	<i>Chin height</i>
8	Adult	Male	96	37.5	66	63.5	29.5	32.9
2	older adult	Male	89.1	33	61			
9	Adult	Female	101.1	36.1	53	70	27	28

Table 3: Mandible Measurements

<i>Femur</i>						
<i>Ind</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Max Length</i>	<i>Phy Length</i>	<i>Min Circ.</i>	<i>Max. Diam. Head</i>
2	Older adult	Male	449		91.8	43.7
4	Adult	Male?			92.3	44
3	Adult	Female	402	396.8	87	42.3
<i>Tibia</i>						
<i>ind</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Max Length</i>	<i>Min Circ.</i>		
2	Older adult	Male	362	88		
3	Adult	Female	328	78		
<i>Humerus</i>						
<i>ind</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Max Length</i>	<i>Min Circ.</i>	<i>Max. Diam. Head</i>	
2	Older adult	Male	341	60	46	
4	Adult	Male?	339	58.7	46.4	
3	Adult	Female	281	59.8	38.7	
<i>Radius</i>						
<i>ind</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Max Length</i>	<i>Phy Length</i>	<i>Min Circ.</i>	<i>Max. Diam. Head</i>
2	older adult	Male			44.8	23
3	Adult	Female	215.2	208	39	20.1

Table 4: Post-cranial Measurements

Summary

The Northeast church complex at Hippos (Sussita) housed the remains of at least 12 individuals in two areas (Locus 537 and Loci 590, 543). All the individuals found at these areas were adults, except one infant age 0-1 years which was represented only by teeth and pelvis fragments. The number of individuals reported here is far too small for any estimates of paleodemography or rigorous evaluation of mortuary practices; therefore, the data shown here can be combined in future research, when the sample size will enable it.

Further Discussion

The Northeast Church project has hypothesized that the church was part of a larger urban monastic complex and that the tombs in its chancel were places of veneration and invention of relics. A previous report offered evidence for the extraction of relics from the sarcophagus holding remains of the elderly woman.¹⁰⁵ This anthropological report on the human remains from the masonry tomb adds supporting evidence to the hypothesis. All the skeletons are disarticulated with some individuals represented by only a few pieces. Even assuming significant decomposition over the centuries due to the low and wet location of the tomb in the ruins of the complex, the partial skeletal remains suggest that relics were extracted from the masonry tomb. The tomb was originally plastered and painted with at least one human figure¹⁰⁶ and held a coffin (Loci 543 and 590).¹⁰⁷ A sarcophagus was crudely placed on stones to hold it above the level of the coffin. The sarcophagus was covered with assorted slabs in secondary use. The diminishing quality of the burials over time supports the hypothesis of relic extraction, as the sale of relics could fund a declining community and complex. Relics were important to the Christians at Hippos, for even after the Northeast Church was abandoned, the veneration of relics continued in the Northwest church until the destruction of the city.¹⁰⁸

The presence of both males, females, and a child furthers the hypothesis that the church was part of an urban monastery. The 15,000 bones in repository 6 of the St.

¹⁰⁵ Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita : Fourth Season of Excavations : June-July 2003*, 47.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 45.

¹⁰⁷ Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita : Fifth Season of Excavations : September-October 2004*, 85.

¹⁰⁸ Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita : Fourth Season of Excavations : June-July 2003*, 26.

Stephens monastery in Jerusalem contained both males and females¹⁰⁹ of which about a third were sub-adult.¹¹⁰ At the Kyria Maria monastery at Bet Shean, the skeletal remains in the sarcophagus from Room E belonged to two males, a female, and one child.¹¹¹

The stature of two of the individuals may also be of note: a male at 168 cm and an undetermined adult at 175 cm. These seem tall for the typical averages from other Byzantine sites: 162 cm at Kursi,¹¹² 163 cm at Ein Gedi and Lavav,¹¹³ 166.5 at St. Stephen's,¹¹⁴ 167 cm at Khan el-Ahmar,¹¹⁵ and 170 cm at Rehovot-in-the-Negev.¹¹⁶ The variance may not be terribly significant since Lawrence Angel reports an average stature for males in the eastern Mediterranean during this period as 169.3 cm.¹¹⁷ An interesting literary note comes from D. Chitty about a group of monks called the Tall Brothers who led the Origenist movement in Egypt at the end of the fourth century CE. They fled Nitria when Origenism was condemned in synod in 400 CE and about 300 monks went with them, many to Jerusalem and others on to Scythopolis.¹¹⁸

¹⁰⁹ Susan Guise Sheridan, "Sex Determination," *Byzantine St. Stephens: A Biocultural Reconstruction of Urban Monastic Life*, accessed June 7, 2021, <https://www3.nd.edu/~stephens/sex.html>.

¹¹⁰ Susan Guise Sheridan, "Biocultural Reconstruction of Byzantine St. Stephen's," *ASOR Newsletter* 50.1 (2000): 14.

¹¹¹ Eliot Braun, "Soundings under a Sixth Century Monastery at Beth Shean.," *Atiqot* 17 (1985): 203. The author notes that the sarcophagus comes from an earlier period and may have been reused by the monastery, although an internment pre-dating the monastery is also possible.

¹¹² Baruch Arensburg, "A Short Review of Paleopathology in the Middle East.," *Mitekufat Haeven* 18 (1985): 21–30.

¹¹³ Baruch Arensburg, "The People in the Land of Israel from the Epipaleolithic to Present Times" (Ph.D., Tel Aviv University, 1973), 22.

¹¹⁴ Susan Guise Sheridan, "Statue Reconstruction," *Byzantine St. Stephens: A Biocultural Reconstruction of Urban Monastic Life*, accessed June 7, 2021, <https://www3.nd.edu/~stephens/sex.html>.

¹¹⁵ Israel HersHKovitz, "The Human Remains from the Byzantine Monastery at Khan El-Ahmar.," *Liber Annuus* 43 (1994): 374.

¹¹⁶ Israel HersHKovitz, "Skeletal Remains from the Northern Church," *Qedem* (1988): 203.

¹¹⁷ J. Lawrence Angel, "Health as a Crucial Factor in the Changes from Hunting to Developed Farming in the Eastern Mediterranean," in *Paleopathology at the Origins of Agriculture*, ed. M. Cohen and G. Armelagos (Orlando, FL: Academic Press, 1984), 51–74.

¹¹⁸ Derwas J. Chitty, *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 58.

Figure 78 Large jaws

The south hall and related chambers

Figure 79 W1219 with threshold

In the 2006 season, an antechamber, two chambers, and a hall were exposed south of the *domus* and west of the *diakonikon*. Rains over the winter clarified that the previously identified “low wall” separating the outer and inner sections of the antechamber (W1219) is in fact a doorway as traces of the pivots and threshold are now visible.

In 2007, the southerly wall (W1231) of the large hall south of and accessible from the antechamber was revealed. The wall abuts W559 to the east but is not a continuation of W554 as it is positioned about 10 cm to the south.

Figure 80 South hall (looking east)

The internal dimensions of the south hall are 3.23 m by 5.30 m. 2.6 m from the southwest corner of the hall is a 90 cm doorway to the south that closed from inside the room. The doorway is blocked by destruction fill. The floor is packed mud and plaster. Next to W1231 at approximately floor level was a substantial deposit of shards. No partial or complete vessels could be reconstructed. The bulk of the shards were cooking pots and casseroles of similar types, along with Late Roman, Cypriot, and ARS shards. No Umayyad shards were recovered. Similar deposits are at approximate floor levels in both small chambers. From the small chamber between W1201 and W510, many of the recovered potsherds were burnt, although no ash pits or cooking areas have been revealed. A blue loom weight was recovered from the fill.

About a meter to the south of W554 and W1231 is a parallel wall (W1224). The foundation of which seems to be at a higher elevation than the walls of the church complex. From its western end another wall (W1249) proceeds in a southerly direction. These walls may have been part of later agricultural use of the ruins of the church complex, as will be discussed below.

The chambers west of the portico

West of the stylobate, we excavated to the level of the mud and plaster floor (F1214). The previously identified W553 continues to the west. To the north is a perpendicular wall (W1232) the base of which floats about 25 cm above the stylobate. W594 floats at a similar height. Three fragments of basalt acanthus leaf were recovered from north of the wall. Two coins were in the fill to the south of the wall. One is from 263 CE, a Roman imperial coin of Gallienus. The other coin was too worn for identification. In addition, the fill was disturbed and contained modern intrusions, including burlap and a 2.86 m iron rake frame. The mud and plaster floor continues to the south to W1216 and suggesting the area was some sort of courtyard.

Figure 81 Polycandelon fragment

At floor level we recovered part of a copper chain of a polycandelon. The medallion had four l-shaped slots cut in it forming a cross. Numerous other metals were recovered from the floor, including a nail bent over to 8 cm length (wood thickness is 7 cm) and another unidentifiable coin. Many loose tesserae were recovered including some elongated pieces of limestone from which small cubes were being broken off or cut.¹¹⁹ Two column drums were in the fill. The position of their fall suggests that

¹¹⁹ Ovadiah and Ovadiah, *Mosaic Pavements in Israel*, 146–150.

they came from a missing column base on the stylobate. Both are 52 cm in diameter. The lower one is 90 cm in length; the upper one is 58 cm.

With the removal of a balk, the line of W1216 was clarified. Consequent to this clarification, L1212 is now classified as a staircase rising from the north on the east side of the room formed by W1216, W1207, W574, and W1208. Three steps are *in situ*. The average tread depth is 28 cm, and the average rise is 24 cm. Since 2.9 m of steps have been robbed out, the staircase could have contained an addition ten stairs, rising to about 2.9 m above the first step and 3.4 m above the threshold of the small room. Such a height suggests that the stair gave access to a second story or roof over the large room to the south.

Figure 82 Stairs west of portico (looking south)

As W1216 extends to the west, the western extent of the Northeast Church compound has yet to be identified.

The western street (*via sacra*) and related buildings

The remaining twenty five meters of the street, the line of which formed the western boundary of the church hall, were excavated in 2007. Designated as Cardo Two

North (2N) on the master site plan, this street may have functioned as a *via sacra* for visitors to the venerated tombs in the Northeast Church complex.¹²⁰

Figure 83 Cardo 2N (looking south)

Its full length of 34.3 m slopes down 2.17 m from the main gate of the church complex to the *decumanus maximus* (elevation 130.83 to 128.66).

Figure 84 Drawing of Cardo 2N

¹²⁰ In a Roman context, one would expect a *via sacra* to follow a route through the necropolis to a central shrine. The practice continued in Christianity. For example, the tomb of St. Crispine of Thebeste is approached by a *via sacra* entered through triumphal arches. Jürgen Christern and Eckhart Müller, *Das frühchristliche Pilgerheiligtum von Tebessa: Architektur u. Ornamentik e. spätantiken Bauhütte in Nordafrika* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1976).

The street narrows over its length from an approximate width of 2.4 m at the gate of the church to approximately 1.75 m at the junction with the *decumanus maximus*.¹²¹

Figure 85 Entrance to Cardo 2N (looking north)

As pavers abut the walls of buildings on both sides of the street, the pavers may have been laid later. The structure of the drain channel 4.2 m south of the gate of the church suggests secondary usage, although the drain does lead to Cistern C.

18.65 m south of the south gate of the church, several large blocks sat on about 20 cm of packed soil on a perpendicular line bisecting the street. Their alignment suggests a crude wall blocking the roadway. Of significance is the intact nature of the street north of the “blockage” and its poor condition (most pavers robbed out) south of the blockage. The blockage came quite late in the occupation of Hippos relatively speaking. The blockage suggests a significant shrinkage in the size of the town, and yet may attest to a memory of the sacred nature of the Northeast Church complex that necessitated some protection.

About 11 meters south of the church gate, the east side of the street is no longer bordered by ashlar. Crude stone walls and destruction tumble form a boundary to

¹²¹ A street of this size might be more properly called a *semita* or an *angipontus*. Daniel Sperber, *The City in Roman Palestine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 103.

the *decumanus maximus*. On the northeast corner of the junction with the *decumanus maximus*, there seems to be a building wall of 4.9 m. But the construction is quite crude.

On the west side of the newly excavated portions of the street are two block buildings. The northern building has a westerly face of 10.9 meters that is preserved to a height of four to five courses in places. It is located 9.75 m from the gate of the church complex. A 1.2 m protrusion of stones approximately 1.4 m from the north corner of the wall seems to be a blocked doorway, as the gap is spanned at its base by a threshold at street level.

The southern building sits on the northwest corner of the junction of Cardo 2 North and the *decumanus maximus*. 12.9 m to the west of the cardo is the southwest corner of the building. The south wall is constructed of ashlar that are three to five courses high, as the *decumanus* slopes down to the west. The easterly face of the building is 11.9 m. Remaining ashlar were tipped dangerously to the east and had to be removed and reset in place.

Figure 86 South face (looking east)

Figure 87 Repaired east face (looking north)

Between the two buildings is a gap of 1.75 m. That gap coupled with possible changes in the patterns of the paving of the street may indicate that an alley or antechamber separated the two buildings. The relationship of these two buildings to the Northeast Church complex is uncertain. The later blockage of the street and the blocked doorway in the northerly building are reminiscent of doorway blockages noted in other parts of the complex.

The eastern street and related buildings

Previous work clearing the *decumanus maximus* had revealed a small northerly cardo (Cardo 3 North) approximately fifteen meters to the east of Cardo 2 North.

Figure 88 Angles from the decumanus

Survey data suggested that the eastern wall of the *domus* would bound that cardo even as the western wall aligned with Cardo 2 North. Cardo 2 North would be a perpendicular of 88.5° to the *decumanus maximus*; Cardo 3 North forms an 88° perpendicular. The *domus* of the Northeast Church complex would be positioned between these two cardines, with the east-to-west dimensions of the church hall limited by the previously existing city plan. The apse would overlay Cardo 3 North, as subsequent excavation confirmed.

W1230 aligns with the eastern edge of Cardo 3 North. It is the eastern side of a building consisting of at least two rooms. About 10 m of the wall were exposed from its southern corner to the point of contact with the external curve of the apse. 3.2 m from the southern corner is a blocked doorway that gives access to a larger room 6.6 m from north to south. W1235 separates this southern room from a northerly room.

A doorway in W1235 closes from within this room. The northern extent of this room and the precise relationship of W1230 to the wall of the apse (W512) will be clarified in subsequent seasons with the excavation. Some remains of a later wall (W1234) float above W1230.

Although W1230 of this building on the east side of Cardo 3 North and W512 of the church form the approximate boundaries for the cardo, the walls are not parallel. At the southern end of the easterly building, the cardo is 1.08 m wide. At the northern end of W512, the cardo is 1.4 m wide.¹²²

Further complicating the picture is a clear seam in W512 on the exact line of the southern edge of W510.

Figure 89 Seam in W512 (looking west)

The northerly section of the wall (W512a) must be distinguished from the southerly section (W512b). On closer examination, W512b has a carefully blocked doorway providing access to the street level of Cardo 3 North. The doorway begins 2.93 m from the south line of W510 and it about 90 cm wide. Plaster on the west side of W512b concealed this doorway from the *diakonikon*. Of note, the thresholds in W1230 and W512b are 3 to 6 cm above the level of Cardo 3 North exposed so far (elevation 131.49). The elevation of the plaster floor in the *diakonikon* is 130.88, requiring a step down of 65 cm from the threshold in W512 to the floor of the

¹²² A small *semita* such as this one may have branched off the *decumanus* between the portico's columns. Daniel Sperber, *The City in Roman Palestine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 104.

diakonikon. An additional step or two would have been necessary, for which there is no surviving evidence.

At this stage of exposure, it is not possible to state with certainty whether parts of W512 came from a previously existing structure or simply displays phases in the expansion or repair of the church. Similarly, more excavation is necessary to clarify whether the building represented by W1230 and W1235 antedated, is contemporaneous with, or postdated the church.

A second building sits atop the southeastern corner of W1230.

Figure 90 Umayyad structure on the corner of W1230 (looking north)

Its northwesterly corner is the junction of W1221 and W1236. The building also has at least two rooms for the portion exposed to date is bisected by W1220. Perpendicular to W1221 is W1224. It proceeds to the west and forms a corner with W1229. The similar elevations of these and other floating walls around the church complex suggest poor village or agrarian usage of the area after the decline of the Northeast Church. A pottery reading of the material from inside the later structure (L1225 and L1223) shows Umayyad shards. The latest pottery from the fill in the earlier building and the last levels of Cardo 3 North (L1226) is Byzantine. Consequently, we identify the building created by W1221 and W1236 as a Umayyad structure (farmhouse?) and suggest that the many poorly constructed floating walls around the Northeast Church may be part of its agricultural complex built employing the ruins of the site after its abandonment and after the earthquake of 749 CE.

The nave mosaics

In last year's report, a photo mosaic of the lower floor (F544) was published. This year, as part of the conservation and documentation of the floors of the nave, we are publishing a color drawing of the upper mosaic floor (F589).

Figure 91 F589 of nave

While only fragments of this floor remain, the floor seems to be entirely geometric.¹²³ While the lower F544 shows a density of 62 tesserae/dm² in the field with the swastikas, the density increases to 115 tesserae/dm² in the decorative banding to 196 tesserae/dm² in the medallions and in the spaces between the medallions that are decorated with crosses and birds. The upper floor has a density of 72

¹²³ Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita : Seventh Season of Excavations : July 2006*, 75.

tesserae/dm². Claudette Dauphin distinguishes three types of Byzantine floors: course pavements (20-60 tesserae/dm²), intermediated pavements (60-110 tesserae/dm²), and fine pavements (more than 110 tesserae/dm²), with some pavements displaying of mixture of intermediate and fine carpets.¹²⁴ Most of the fifth and sixth century pavements of the Middle East show an intermediate or mixed density.¹²⁵ The mosaics of the nave of the Northeast Church are consistent with this trend.

Conservation

Conservation efforts during the 2007 season focused on the stabilization and cleaning of the floors in the nave of the Northeast Church complex. The work was supervised by Ewe Radziejowska.

Several structural items were also addressed. A collapse in W559 at the junction with W1201 was repaired. Courses of stones were reset from the precariously tilting eastern wall of the southern building on Cardo 2 North. And the southeast corner of the same building was also stabilized.

Conclusion

The 2007 season had the goal of placing the Northeast Church complex in the context of the urban plan of Hippos. Identification of surrounding buildings and of two streets provides that context. The Northeast Church complex was situated between two pre-existing streets, interrupting the eastern street (Cardo 3 North) with its apse. The western street (Cardo 2N) was apparently repaved to serve the church. After the abandonment of the church, the church ruins may have been employed for agrarian purposes.

¹²⁴ Claudine Dauphin, "Carpets of Stone: The Graeco-Roman Legacy in the Levant," *Classics Ireland* 4 (1997): 23.

¹²⁵ Britt, "Mosaics in the Byzantine Churches of Palestine," 143.

7.

THE 2008 SEASON

In 2008, excavation work continued on areas surrounding the *domus* of the Northeast Church complex and expanded into areas west of Cardo 2 North. In addition, probes to bedrock were conducted in several areas of the site.

Figure 92 Top plan for 2008

This report will address work done in the following areas:

- Cardo 2 North (*via sacra*) and related buildings
- Structures to the south of the south hall and the *diakonikon*
- The areas west of the portico
- Probe in the nave
- The eastern street and related buildings
- Conservation efforts

Figure 93 Loci for 2008

Cardo 2 North (*via sacra*) and related buildings

With the excavation of the southern half of Cardo 2 North in 2007, the easterly faces of two block buildings were exposed. The report noted: “Between the two buildings is a gap of 1.75m. That gap coupled with possible changes in the patterns of the paving of the street may indicate that an alley or ante-chamber separated the two buildings.”¹²⁶ This year, excavation west of Cardo 2 North revealed a paved surface upon which an L-shaped staircase had been built giving access to a second level or roof of the southerly block building.

Figure 94 Stairs on paved surface (looking south)

The surface is paved with ashlar like those of Cardo 2 North, with some at the entrance having been robbed out (approx. 1 m). The paved surface spans the distance between the two block buildings (almost 6 m).

A staircase sits atop the paved surface. Its northerly face is 2.1 m south of W1250. The staircase is 1.15 m wide and rises to the east. Six stairs remain *in situ*. The treads

¹²⁶ *Hippos* 2007, 86.

range from 18-24 cm in depth (21.8 cm average) and 20-27 cm in height (24.2 cm average). The steps begin 3.42 m from Cardo 2 North.

To the east of the staircase is solid base (1.9 m x 2.3 m) that marks the northeast corner of W1251. The staircase intrudes into the base about 50 cm. We speculate that about four more stairs completed the staircase to a height of more than two meters. One who climbed the staircase would then turn south at the base and walk over the structures below to the second story or to the roof of the southerly block building. Perhaps there was an *exedra*¹²⁷ on the north side of W1252. A column drum and base sit in the corner of the “L” formed by the staircase. The moldings of the base are covered by the paving. Several basalt beams and column drums recovered from the fill may have been part of the *exedra*.¹²⁸ Alternatively, the staircase could continue to climb to the south to a significantly greater height.

Figure 95 Cistern E

1.5 m south of the staircase is a Cistern E. A plastered channel and plastering on the north face of W1252 indicates that water from the roof of the southerly block building was routed to this cistern. The cistern is capped with limestone column base

¹²⁷ Yizhar Hirschfeld, *The Palestinian Dwelling in the Roman-Byzantine Period*, Collectio minor n. 34 (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press ; Israel Exploration Society, 1995), 265.

¹²⁸ For a sample of such an *exedra* in a monastic complex, see Izchak Magen and Rina Talgam, “The Monastery of Martyrius at Maale Adummim (Khirbet El-Murassas) and Its Mosaics,” in *Christian Archaeology in the Holy Land*, ed. G.C. Bottini (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1990), 95, Fig 5.

modified to serve as a cistern head by carving out its center. The head is notched for a 43 x 43 cm lid with a crossbar. Its height is 50 cm. It shows a rubbed area for a rope, and a part of its base is cut to allow water to enter the cistern.

Several nails, a feeding trough, a grinding mill, and various column fragments were recovered in the fill around the cistern.

To the north of the stairs, we revealed the northeast corner of the northerly block building. However, the precarious condition of the walls (tipping to the west and south) and the collapse of the interior of the corner prevented complete excavation.

Structures to the south of the south hall and the *diakonikon*

Excavation work was conducted to reveal more fully the space to the south of the South Hall, especially since a doorway exits through W1231 to the south.

Figure 96 F1258 (looking northeast)

Excavation revealed that the doorway had been intentionally blocked with a flat face to the south, even as many other doorways were blocked in the complex. Within the destruction fill, a glass pendent of a lion was discovered. As it did not come from a sealed context, it does not assist in the interpretation of the Northeast Church complex.

53 cm below the threshold in W1231 is a surface (F1258) crudely paved with basalt and limestone. A small limestone feeding trough was in the fill near the floor. F1258 is 45 cm below the surface of Cardo 2 North, suggesting that the street comes from a later period. The easterly extent of the surface is marked by W1263 through which a doorway gives access to another similarly paved surface (F1265) about 10 cm lower. W1229 marks the eastern limit of this surface. At its northern end, the W1229 sits on bedrock that forms the northeast corner of F1265. W1229 survives to a height of more than 2 m.

Large concentrations of pottery shards were recovered at the floor level next to W1231. Most were dated from the fourth and fifth centuries, with one shard perhaps datable into the early sixth century. Also recovered from the surface of this small room were two mortars, several pestles, and portable bronze brazier. Both mortars were of higher quality than typical pieces found in the destruction fill.

Figure 97 Mortars and brazier

The first is a ring-based mortar 21 cm in diameter. It stands 6.5 cm tall. It is carved from regular gray basalt. Two of its handles have been broken off. The ring base is 4 cm thick and 14 cm in diameter. The handles are about 5 x 2.5 cm and 2 cm thick. The mortar lacks any decoration. A pestle was found 30 cm away.

The second is a tripodic mortar¹²⁹ made from basalt with a finer grain. The mortar was carved from a cube of basalt (28 x 28 x 28 cm). In its finished form it is 34 cm in diameter and stands 28 cm tall. It has four handles that are 8 cm wide. These, and the lack of ash in the fill, rule out the use of this item as a votive stand. Its interior bowl has a ridge around the edge and is 22 cm in diameter. The ridge would help prevent the contents from scattering and so suggest it may have been used for grinding spices or another valuable commodity. However, no wear patterns are apparent. The bowl sits on three legs that are interconnected on the bottom forming a “Y” shape. A fourth leg joins the “Y” from the center of the bowl. The legs are 6-7 cm thick. Again, decoration is lacking.

Figure 98 Tripodic mortar

A portable bronze brazier (*foculus*?¹³⁰) was resting on the same floor. The pan of the brazier is almost square (13.3 x 14.4 cm) with a depth of 3.8 cm. The pan stands on legs (1.1 cm wide) that flair out from the corners adding about 1.5 cm to the height. Each corner is topped with a bulb (6 x 7.9 mm) although one is missing. The thickness of the metal is 3.7 mm. A hollow handle protrudes 14.5 cm from one side.

¹²⁹ For the first appearance of three-legged mortars during the Bronze age, see William Foxwell Albright, *The Excavation of Tell Beit Mirsim*, vol. XVII, Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research (New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, under the Jane Dows Nies Publication Fund, 1937), Plates 38-40; they became more prominent in the Iron Age, according to Harold Liebowitz, “A Unique Worked Stone Mortar from Tel Yin’am,” *Levant* 32 (2000): 129–134.

¹³⁰ Titus Maccius Plautus, *Persa*, 1.3.24; Titus Maccius Plautus, *Captivi*, 4.2.67; compare, Erich Pernice, *Gefässe Und Geräte Aus Bronze, Die hellenistische Kunst in Pompeji Bd. 4* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1925), 5, Abb. 5.

Figure 99 Brazier

The handle is mostly open on the bottom (for heat dissipation) and has a damaged decorative end with bulbs (6.2 x 2.7 cm). The sides are decorated with geometric openings to allow air for the coals. One pattern is six or seven circles forming a triangle. The other is exploded sixths of a pie. On the side facing the handle are a curving row of round circles. Opposite the handle are five pairs of crude triangles. Due to its size, its usage was probably culinary.

As these surfaces are significantly below the level of the street and the threshold in W1231, we dug deeper into the mud floor of the South Hall (F597) and its small anteroom to the east. In the anteroom, we reached bedrock and rough stones resting on bedrock within 20 cm. A 50 cm section of a corroded lead drainpipe rested on the bedrock.

In the South Hall next to W1201 and west of the doorway in that wall, the remains of a large round oven were discovered. Its inside diameter is 1.45 m and it was preserved to a height of about 50 cm. The fill within it was mostly soft ceramic chunks from the top of the oven, although two nail fragments, a pestle, and a button were retrieved from the fill. The oven is similar in dimension to those from the “oven

room” east of the Hellenistic Compound.¹³¹ However, the latest shards were from the fifth century. The surviving top edge of the oven is about 40 cm below the level of the street to the west.

Figure 100 Oven

This oven plus the domestic items and the paved surfaces to the south, all at lower levels, suggest some sort of domestic or industrial use of this space prior to the construction of the church complex. These items antedate the ruins now visible and suggest that the construction of the latter took place no earlier than the late fifth or early sixth centuries.

The areas west of the portico

Balks were removed from the two rooms west of the portico. No additional architectural features were identified.

A 1 m trench was opened perpendicular to and west of the stylobate. The top 35-50 cm of the trench were the mud/plaster layer identified as F1214. At the west end of the trench is an earlier wall (W1246) that runs north and south. Trenching on its

¹³¹ Arthur Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita : Eighth Season of Excavations : July 2007* (Haifa: Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa, 2007), 20–22.

western line reveals that its external surface is to the west and that it proceeds to the north under W553. The wall is 70 cm wide.

Figure 101 Probe perpendicular to the stylobate (looking west)

A level of cobbles appeared about 50 cm below the top of the floor (F1214). Below the cobbles, the soil (L1248) was softer and contained heavy destruction fill. A coin from the reign of Constantius II (355-361 CE) was retrieved from the sifted fill. The decades immediately following the earthquake of 363 CE were the last period of activity at Hippos before the “lost” fifth century.¹³²

¹³² Zeev Safrai, *The Missing Century: Palestine in the Fifth Century: Growth and Decline* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998).

Figure 102 Cross section of probe

At about 1.1 m below the surface of F1214, bedrock was exposed through the length of the trench. Most of the bedrock is a soft marl/limestone, except at the west end, where the limestone is smooth and hard. To the east, the builders cut a foundation trench in the marl, filled it with stones and then laid a single course of stones as a foundation for the stylobate. To the west, the builders erected the wall (W1246) directly on the hard limestone.

Two trenches were dug north of W553 in line with W1246 and with the stylobate. An east-to-west wall was identified forming a corner with W1246 and seemingly forming a corner on the east line of the stylobate. In the westerly probe, bedrock was reached.

Two courses of stone sit on the cut bedrock on a layer of shards and small stones. The fanning of the tumble to the northwest suggests a collapse of earlier (and higher) parts of the wall in an earthquake. W1246, the wall under W553, is likely the surviving foundation of a building that antedated the stylobate and sat on the western side of Cardo 2 North.

Figure 103 Probe north of W553 (looking south)

The pottery collection from these probes is helpful in dating construction. Shards sealed in the plaster floor are late fifth to mid-sixth century material, including LRC form 3C (ca. 460-490 CE) and LRC form 3H (ca. mid-sixth century). From beneath the floor came common wares of the third to fourth century (and one rim of LRC dish/bowl f. 10C, dated to the first half of the seventh century that may be a product of intrusion or mishandling). From the base of the foundation trench came common wares of the fifth century and an ARSW form 91 flanged bowl, probably variant B and dated to 450-530 CE. We conclude that the early building was constructed in the fifth century to be replaced by the church complex (or at least F1214) in the late fifth or early sixth centuries.

Probe in the nave

Figure 104 Cross section of probe in the nave

As mosaic carpets are missing in the northeast corner of the nave, a probe (1 x 2 m) was opened south of the north stylobate and next to the chancel screen base. Under the layer of cobbles was heavier fill, and within about 45 cm came limestone bedrock. The bedrock is about 52 cm below the top of the stylobate. The original cross section would be F589, F544, cobbles, heavier stone and earth, and bedrock. There is no indication of a previously existing structure. The latest datable material from the pottery assemblage is a Khan bowl form 1E (not later than the early fifth century).

The eastern street and related buildings

During 2007, the line of Cardo 3 North was identified to the east and south of the exterior apse of the *domus*. We speculated then that the apse interrupted the line of the street. In the 2008 season, excavation to the east and north of the apse identified additional structures that are part of the church complex. These structures were built along the line of the pre-existing street and may have incorporated elements of previous structures, as was the case to the south of the apse. These large structures, the easterly and northerly extent of which have not yet been identified, suggest that the Northeast Church is part of a much larger complex.

Figure 105 North of the apse

Roughly following the eastern side of Cardo 3 North is W1267 (72 cm wide). As it moves north from the apse, the wall skews slightly to the east from the line of W575 (approx. 15 cm over 10 m). At the south end of this wall is a large, blocked doorway (1.55 m), the southern jamb of which is incorporated into the exterior apse wall.

Figure 106 Doorframe incorporated into the wall of the apse (looking south)

Therefore, we conclude that W1267 is an extension of W1230, both being constructed at the same time as the apse. These walls were parts of buildings to the east that were also part of the church complex. Only the walls of the “Umayyad structure” southeast of the church are later (W1220, W1221, W1224, W1236, W1249). The “alley” between W575 and W1267 allowed passage from the *skeuophylakion* or from areas to the north into the part of the complex to the east through the large doorway. While excavating this space between the two buildings, a large deposit of roof tiles, along with nails and several unidentified lead fragments, were retrieved.

Portions of two rooms to the east of Cardo 3 North have been identified. A smaller room is directly east of the apse. It is bounded on the north by W1261 and on the south by W1235. W1261 has a 1 m doorway, the exterior of which faces north. Half of a doorjamb is visible in W1235 with its exterior to the south, to the west of which is a north-facing niche in the wall (55 x 70 cm). The niche is like that in the *diakonikon* and reinforces the thesis that this room was part of the church complex.

Figure 107 Niche and Cistern F (looking south)

Possibly, this room served as some sort of dwelling or monastic cell, as both doors are locked from within the room. Next to the west wall of the room (W1230) and the exterior wall of the apse (W502) is a small platform. It is 87 cm wide and 1.80 m long and is oriented north to south. It is 1.40 m from W1235 and 1.05 m from W1261. Its surface is 48 cm above the threshold in W1261. The dirt floor in this room would be

at about the same elevation as the later floor in the chancel (F516). The dimensions would suggest it served as a sleeping platform. Its proximity to the apse and to the tomb of a revered woman may also point to the importance of the occupant of this room. A single layer of stones gave a flat east surface to W1230 east of W512, making W1230 a window wall.¹³³

Below the level of the floor in this room is the remnant of a small cistern (Cistern F). The head and neck are missing, leaving only the bell. The opening of the cistern is 1.2 m and its remaining depth is 1.55 m. The plaster of the cistern is grey in color. This cistern likely was inserted into the ruins of the church after the church was abandoned and destroyed. It comes from a later period when occupants of the site were agrarian.

Figure 108 Pilaster and blocked doorway (looking south)

To the north of this room is a large space some 12.5 m in length. The room is bordered on the north by W1266. Entrance to the room is gained through a large doorway at the south end of W1267. Two pilasters are visible on the east side of the wall. The southerly one is next to the doorway.

¹³³ Galor, "Domestic Architecture in Roman and Byzantine Galilee and Golan," 48–52.

The pilaster is 57 cm wide and protrudes into the room 36 cm. Its construction is like the wall. The northerly pilaster is 3.8 m from W1266. It is 70 cm wide and protrudes into the room about 35 cm. However, this pilaster is constructed of finely cut ashlars, four courses of which remain (17, 18, 26, and 18 cm from bottom to top). The pilaster sits on a high-quality stone surface, although pavers north and south of the pilaster have been robbed out. It also intrudes into the wall to an unknown depth. The quality of the pilaster suggests that it comes from an earlier structure on the east side of Cardo 3 North and was incorporated into W1267.

Between the two pilasters are the remains of what may have been a staircase. 1.5 m north of the south edge of the south pilaster is a step that is 23 cm high. 80 cm further north is another step/platform that is 26 cm higher. 1.84 m from the first step is a basalt beam at the midpoint between the two pilasters. It is 47 cm higher than the second step. Two other basalt beams of similar dimensions were removed from the fill (110 x 18 x 40 cm and 110 x 18 x 33 cm).

Figure 109 Remains of stairs (looking north)

Between the south doorjamb and the south pilaster (i.e., east of the blocked doorway) is a stone platform 195 x 50 cm that is 20 cm tall. It sits on a paved surface. The pavers are of similar quality to those in Cardo 2 North and continue to the north to

the staircase. Both the platform and pavers show evidence of having been plastered. A marble Corinthian capital (top is 55 x 45 cm), two column drums (one of which was marble), and a roof roller were recovered from the fill. The latter is 23 cm in diameter and 66 cm long. On each end is a 5 cm drilling that is 3 cm deep. Too little of the hall has been exposed to determine its size or function.

W1267 continues further north from W1266. Plastering on the north side of W1266 and on the east side of W1267 indicates the interior corner of another room. Similarly, W575 continues to the north, with a blocked doorway visible in the wall, beginning 2.10 m north of the *skeuophylakion*. The exterior of this doorway faces the alley which formerly was *Cardo 3 North*. The alley itself is intentionally blocked (L1262). The south face of the blockage has a smooth face. Next to the blockage, a column drum and a plain capital are placed on the surface of the alley; another column drum was placed just north of the blocked doorway to the *skeuophylakion*. As has been seen elsewhere in the complex, systematic blockage of doorways and passages indicates the formal decommissioning of most of the complex prior to the earthquake that destroyed the site.

Figure 110 Blocked doorway (looking east)

To the north of W540 between W575 and W580, large quantities of tesserae and several clusters seemingly *in situ* at floor level indicate that the room was carpeted with mosaic. Further west, a section of mosaic about 1 x 1 m survives in several fragments between W583 and W539, north of W540 and west of the blocked

doorway. It is at a level too high for a floor. A distinct possibility is that these fragments are testimony to a mosaic floor from the second story that collapsed.

Conservation

The primary focus of conservation efforts in the 2008 season were the mosaic carpets in the *skeuophylakion* (F580) and at the east end of the north aisle of the *domus* (F538). The work was supervised by Mrs. Ewe Radziejowska with the assistance of Mrs. Nancy Endicott.

F580 was first revealed and discussed in 2005. Since the pattern is geometric, it was possible to restore several damaged areas. However, a repair done in antiquity next to the door in W575 was preserved. The floor was then covered with alternating layers of sand, felt, earth, cloth, and more earth.

F538 was first revealed in 2004 and was subsequently damaged by moles. Work in 2008 finished repairs and reconstructed some lacunae with tesserae salvaged that year. Two ancient repairs were preserved. The floor was similarly covered with alternating protective layers.

Figure 111 Conservation of mosaics

The south face of W1250 was disassembled and reassembled to give stability to the wall and to prevent erosion of the unexcavated area to the north.

Conclusion

The 2008 season added substantively to our understanding of the Northeast Church complex, especially in terms of the size of the complex and its likely dating.

Work in the northeast section of the complex in 2008 has dramatically altered our understanding of the place of the Northeast Church complex in the urban tissue of Byzantine Hippos. What once appeared to be a small memorial/monastic church situated between Cardo 2 North and Cardo 3 North, now appears to be the northwesterly component of a much larger complex. To the north of the church, we had posited two sets of small rooms. We now entertain the possibility of a two-story structure to the north. Access to the second story would have come via the staircase next to W521 and a balcony over the east end of the room. W555 may have been added to W540 to help support the second story. To the east of the church, we had posited no related structures east of Cardo 3 North. Now it seems that the Northeast Church complex incorporated the space of Cardo 3 North as a hallway or passageway for members of the community to move from the church or from the two-story building to the structure to the east. With another church some fifty meters to the east, we now ask whether these two churches might both be part of a common urban ecclesiastical or monastic complex. Substantive excavation to the east is necessary to answer this question.

Probes beneath the floor levels east of the apse, in the northeast corner of the nave, near and in the South Hall, and west of the portico of the church consistently show ceramic assemblages dating no later than the late fifth or early sixth centuries. Remains under the church are meager and lack any indication of substantive Roman-era construction, at least between Cardo 2 North and Cardo 3 North. The Northeast Church likely was built during the late fifth or early sixth centuries, was still being repaired in the second half of the seventh century, and likely went out of substantive usage by the early eighth century. Veneration of the tomb of a revered woman continued after the church was no longer in formal usage.

8.

THE 2009 SEASON

In 2009, excavation work continued on areas surrounding the *domus* of the Northeast Church complex, areas west of Cardo 2 North, and expanded into areas east of the line of Cardo 3 North. Significant conservation work stabilized and reconstructed weakened walls.

Figure 112 Top plan 2009

This report will address work done in the following areas:

- The paved plaza west of Cardo 2 North
- Between the buildings west of Cardo 2 North
- Spaces east of Cardo 3 North
- West of Cardo 3 North
- Conservation efforts
- 3D digital scan

Figure 113 Loci in 2009

Paved plaza west of Cardo 2 North

With the excavation of the southern half of Cardo 2 North in 2007, the easterly faces of two block buildings were exposed with a gap of 1.75 m between them.¹³⁴ In 2008, excavation revealed a paved surface upon which an L-shaped staircase had been built. We speculated then that the staircase might lead to an *exedra*¹³⁵ on the north side of W1252 of the southern block building.¹³⁶ Excavation in 2009 exposed the remainder of the plaza.

Figure 114 Paved plaza west of Cardo 2 North (looking southwest)

The plaza (F1296) is bounded on the west by a wall (W1285) of which only the foundation course remains. Set in the wall is a threshold providing access to a space to the west. The exterior of the doorway faced east toward the plaza. At this point the space to the west has not been excavated, although a perpendicular wall (W1286, 60 cm wide) proceeds west of W1285 from a point south of the threshold. One course of the north wall of the plaza (W1250) is visible in most places. Numerous

¹³⁴ Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita : Eighth Season of Excavations : July 2007*, 86.

¹³⁵ Hirschfeld, *The Palestinian Dwelling in the Roman-Byzantine Period*, 265.

¹³⁶ Arthur Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita : Ninth Season of Excavations : June-July 2008* (Haifa: Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa, 2008), 41.

architectural fragments were recovered from the destruction fill in the plaza, including three small diameter drums, a plain capital, and a roller that is significantly heavier than the one discovered in 2008 in Cardo 3 North.

The plaza itself is constructed of paved ashlar like those used in Cardo 2 North and extends 6.68 meters to the west of the cardo. The plaza slopes slightly to the east (about 5 cm) and is essentially intact except for some pavers robbed out of a 1 m section next to the cardo. We presume it was constructed at the same time as the cardo. In the second row of pavers east of W1285 is an inscription. It is roughly centered on the plaza but off center to the south of the threshold. The stone is in secondary use. Its first line reads ΑΓΑΘΗΤΥΧΗ (“To Good Fortune”). This inscription is in secondary use and was originally part of an honorific inscription for Tarius Titianus, governor of Syria Palestinae.¹³⁷

Figure 115 Inscription "good fortune"

In the southwest corner of the plaza is a crudely built small room with interior dimensions of 1.6 m x 2 m. It is bounded to the south by W1252, although this wall shows major reconstruction, as its current form lacks any indication of a western door jamb to match the eastern jamb noted in last year's report. A column with two

¹³⁷ Arthur Segal et al., *Hippus-Sussita of the Decapolis: The First Twelve Seasons of Excavations (2000-2011) Vol 1* (Haifa, Israel: The Zinman Inst of Archaeology, 2013), 251.

remaining drums forms the northeast corner of the room, from which W1274 proceeds to the south and W1271 to the west. This column aligns with the column next to the staircase, supporting the theory that there was an *exedra* on the north side of W1252. The doorway has a 64 cm opening and 71 cm door that closed from inside the room. The construction is quite poor as the doorway lacks a western door jamb. The paving of plaza was removed to set the threshold and walls of a small room. On the south side of the room is a sleeping platform (or bench) spanning the room's width. At the west end, the platform is 60 cm wide; at the east end it is 75 cm wide. Several nails, small column drums, and a small mill were recovered from the fill.

The room may have functioned to house a guard for whatever spaces are to the west. More significantly, the construction of this room is characteristic of the Byzantine custom of creating low-status structures by subdividing disused spaces.¹³⁸

Between the buildings west of Cardo 2 North

To the south of the paved plaza (F1296) just described is a block building with an eastern face (W1251) of 7.9 m. To the north of the paved plaza are two block buildings. The east wall of the first (W1239) is 7.95 m and was exposed when Cardo 2 North was excavated. The second building consists of two rooms bounded on the east by W552, on the north by W574, on the west by W591, and on the east by W569. The eastern W552 is 8.9 m in length. The space between these two block buildings is 5.8 m. The width of the paved plaza is 5.9 m. Thus, the west side of Cardo 2 North seems to consist of block buildings with eastern faces of eight to nine meters and with spaces between those buildings of about six meters.¹³⁹ In 2009 we excavated between W569 and W1244 to test the hypothesis that this space was a plaza similar to the paved plaza (F1296) previously described.

¹³⁸ Gilbert Dagron, "The Urban Economy, Seventh-Twelfth Centuries," in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. A. E. Laiou (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2002), 393–461; Simon P. Ellis, "The End of the Roman House," *American Journal of Archaeology* 92 (1988): 565–576; Helen Saradi, "Privatization and Subdivision of Urban Properties in the Early Byzantine Centuries: Social and Cultural Implications," *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 35, no. 1/2 (1998): 17–43.

¹³⁹ A fourth block building may have stood further to the north on the west side of the cardo. Its northern and western faces were identified in probes dug in E0, E1, F0, and F1 in 2008. If we assume a similar space for a plaza of about six meters to the north of W574 (now partially occupied by later structures), this fourth building would have an eastern face of about 9.5m.

To the west we identified a thick (1.2 m) wall (W1269) abutting W569 and proceeding south for 2.2 m where it formed a corner with W1282 to the west. The bases of both walls float at an elevation of 130.40, approximately 30 m above the floor level of the putative plaza. The level of these walls is like the wall (previously removed) that floated above the line of the stylobate of the portico of the church and likely comes from agrarian usage of the site significantly after the earthquake.

Figure 116 Cross pendant

To the west of the wall at its base level a small cross pendant was discovered. The pendant is simply made of a bronze alloy. It is 3.1 cm x 4.1 cm with a 7 mm eyelet (broken) at the top. The design is Type III in Pitarakis' typology,¹⁴⁰ flared cross arms that are extended by disks protruding from the arms. On the obverse are five punched dots seemingly surrounded by circles, one on each of the cardinal points and one at the intersection of the arms, the clearest example being on the upper arm. As there are only five, they likely refer to the wounds of Christ (head, hands, feet and side). However, some Byzantine crosses are covered with such punched dots that have been interpreted as protective "evil eye" dots.¹⁴¹ The reverse is plain. The discovery of such a cross at this level attests to the persistence of some Christian piety well after the destruction of Hippos in 749 C.E. The cross type was particularly popular in the ninth and tenth centuries.¹⁴²

Just to the west of Cardo 2 North, we have tentatively identified a wall (W1273) blocking access to the space. Its construction is very poor, essentially stones and

¹⁴⁰ Brigitte Pitarakis, *Les Croix-Reliquaires Pectorales Byzantines En Bronze*, Bibliothèque des cahiers archéologiques 16 (Paris: Picard, 2006), 30, 32; catalog numbers 102-106, 196, 213, 232, 234, 588.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 131, fig. 81, nos. 1 and 2.

¹⁴² Ibid., 30.

some architectural fragments piled up in a line with only some pieces of the lowest course indicating the line of the wall.

Figure 117 Between the buildings west of Cardo 2 North (looking northeast)

The remaining walls identified on the plan (W1272, W1278, W1280, W1281) survive only to the level of the base of W569 which sits on top of W1278. They attest to earlier structures on the site. However, there is no evidence that the space was paved. Rather, in similar fashion to the space west of the church's portico (F1214), the space had a mud surface mixed with some plaster (F1275).

We propose the following detailed sequence of construction, although we cannot state any firm dates for the phases. Earliest seem to be walls on north (W1278, under W569) and on the east (W1272, 1.60 m from the street). Contemporaneous to these walls is the lower floor (F1280, elevation 129.70). Next were constructed the east/west wall in the south portion of the space (W1281) and a second wall (W1282) proceeding to the south from W1281. The bottoms of both walls are roughly level with F1280. Subsequently, W1278, W1272, W1281 and W1282 were taken down leaving a course of two. F1275 was laid at the level over the top of the reduced walls creating a plaza (elevation 130.10). The base of W569 is at this level. Later, a blocking wall closed the area (W1273). The floating walls (W1269 and W1282) were built on about 30 cm of destruction fill and at significantly later time.

Spaces east of Cardo 3 North

During 2007, the line of Cardo 3 North (*semita*) was identified to the east and south of the exterior apse of the *domus*. In the 2008 season, excavation to the east and north of the apse identified additional structures that are part of the church complex. These structures were built along the line of the pre-existing street and may have incorporated elements of previous structures, as was the case to the south of the apse. In 2009, we expanded the excavation to the east and north. We identified rooms, a paved courtyard, and the floor and columns of a portico. These discoveries require clarification of our current hypothesis that the Northeast Church is part of an urban monastic compound. We will treat the excavated areas from south to north.

Figure 118 East of the apse (looking north)

Work east and southeast of the apse revealed a 70 cm wall (W1270) roughly parallel to W1230 between W1261 on the north and W1236 on the south. W1270 is the eastern side of two rooms: a larger room with a cistern to the south and a smaller domestic space to the north with a sleeping platform next to the apse of the church.

The southerly room is 6.75 m x 3.68 m and is subdivided into two sections by a crude stylobate with a pilaster to the east and a column to the west next to W1230. The room has an exterior door facing the street, and in turn may be entered from spaces to the north and east, the exteriors of the doors of which faced the room.

Figure 119 Cistern room (looking north)

In the southern section of the room, a crude bench about 40 cm tall runs the width of the room next to W1236. On hard-packed floor (F1291) of this part of the room was a heavy deposit of Byzantine common-ware sherds including pieces of the shoulder of a late Roman amphora (form LRA1) with Greek writing (*dipinti*).

In the northern section of the room, the floor was degraded and removed to the level of its stone base. In the southeast of this section next to the pilaster is Cistern G. The head of the cistern seems to be a column drum (approximately 52 cm in diameter), the center of which is carved out. The drum is 48 cm tall. At its widest, the area carved out is 47 cm, and it narrows to a width of 27 cm.

Figure 120 Head, Cistern G, and catch basin (looking east)

The diameter of opening to the cistern is 50 cm. The neck is about 68 cm in diameter. The cistern is about 4.5 m deep and oblong to the north. The cistern bell is some 4 m north to south and 2.5 m east to west. It is similar in construction to other cisterns (bell dug, lined with stones, and plastered). It appears as if a column drum was used by the builders as one of the framing stones. The plaster is grayish and delicate. Plastering on the north face of the pilaster, a drainage hole to the north of the cistern opening and numerous drain tiles in the fill identify how the cistern was filled.

Figure 121 Cistern G

To the north of the room with the cistern is a small room (3.5 m x 4.2 m), partially excavated last year. The room abuts the apse of the church and has a platform (likely for sleeping) next to the apse. There is a niche in the south wall. Doors allow exiting the room to the north or to the south. Both doors were locked from inside the room, suggesting that the room was a domestic space for a prominent member of the community. The floor of the room (F1284) is mud/plaster on cobbles and slopes to the north. The southern threshold is at elevation 130.77. The northern threshold is at 130.41.

W1261 continue to the east. There is a door (1.1 m) in the wall with its exterior to the north. There seems to be a large room in the space bounded to the north by W1261, to the west by W1270 and to the south by W1288. This space and its eastern extent have not yet been excavated. If W1270 is a window wall, the spaces east and west of it are related.

Figure 122 Room east of the apse (looking northwest)

To the north of W1261 is an outdoor courtyard (F1295) with basalt pavers. The courtyard is bounded to the north and south by stylobates. To the west of the courtyard is W1267. The eastern extent has yet to be revealed.

Figure 123 Paved courtyard (looking north)

The courtyard is 5.8 m wide at the west end and narrows to 5.6 m over 3.5 m. Each stylobate has a pilaster at the west end integrated into W1267. A column base sits on both stylobates. The southern column is 2.7 m from W1267; the first column on the northern stylobate is 3.3 m from W1267. The southern stylobate runs parallel to

W1261 about 2 m away. While the pavers of the plaza are laid out in rows running east to west, the surface to the south of the south stylobate has a stone base covered with plaster, suggesting it is a portico.

At the west end of the courtyard next to W1267 are the remains of a staircase around which the pavers are laid. It is slightly off center to the south. If we assume that the stairs ascended toward the south and that the basalt paver in the middle of the staircase was one of the steps (1.07 m above the courtyard), the staircase would reach a height of 2 m at the southern end of the staircase. We therefore surmise that it led to an *exedra* that covered the space between the south stylobate and W1261. This hypothesis is supported by the plastered floor under the *exedra*. The pilaster and column(s) of the south stylobate supported the *exedra*. Assuming this reconstruction, the structures to the south would have been of at least two stories.

From the middle of the staircase to the east is a section of a wall (W1287) that sits on top of the paving of the courtyard. Its current exposure suggests an open doorway (no door jamb) and a continuation to the east.

Two marble Corinthian capitals were recovered from the fill over the courtyard along with broken sections of small marble columns.

The north stylobate is 2.72 m from W1266. The elevation drops 1 m from the north stylobate to the threshold in W1266. That change in elevation is navigated by two stairs down and a surface paved with irregular large flat stones (F1293) that slopes the rest of the way to the threshold. At the west end of the paved surface, an open drainage channel (dimensions 40 cm x 30 cm) runs from under the north stylobate through W1266. The channel is open and is plastered. A row of limestone blocks were plastered to the surface of F1293 to the east of the channel, perhaps to contain overflow from the channel.

The north stylobate is 2.8 m from W1266. As with the south stylobate, its pilaster and column(s) may have held up an *exedra*, although the dimension is significantly wider. It may also have held an extension of the roof of the northerly building, creating the space for a portico. But the drop in elevation is problematic to this hypothesis.

Figure 124 Stairs up to paved courtyard from the north (looking south)

The west section of W1266 is finely built *opus quadratum* 1.08 m in length and penetrating into W1267. An open doorway of 2.32 m in the wall was later closed by a door frame for a 1.72 m door of two sections. The eastern section is wider (1.08 m) than the western section (64 cm).

Two steps down from the threshold is the southeast corner of a paved space. The first step is 25 cm down with a tread depth of 54 cm. The second step is 17 cm down and 28 cm deep. The steps reach a floor (F1294). The floor is *opus sectile*. There is an 11 cm border next to the steps made of re-used local stones and marble. The floor consists of 21.5 cm squares in black and white set on their points (diamonds). About a meter from the stairs is a collapse in the floor. Discernable air flowing through the collapse suggests it is a natural cave or area washed out by water.

There is a plastered bench about 50 cm deep and 55 cm tall bordering the west and the south part of the room. Two larger stone slabs on the floor (F1294) next to the *opus sectile* (on the west) suggest that water at one time flowed from the channel over the bench and onto the floor. The channel was later plastered shut. The western bench runs from the southwest corner to the pilaster in W1267. From the pilaster, a

stylobate runs to the east on which a column base sits visible in the balk 1.32 m from the pilaster. This colonnade likely supported a roof over the *opus sectile* floor forming a small portico. The *opus sectile* floor is 1.5 m below the paved courtyard to the south, likely due to the topography of the hill.

Figure 125 *Opus sectile* floor (looking north)

The paved courtyard and northern portico may seem at first to be inconsistent with the hypothesis that these structures to the east of the Northeast Church are part of a larger monastic compound. Instead they seem to be more characteristic of οἴκοι or αὐλαί, residential complexes set around a courtyard.¹⁴³ Similarities can be seen in the plan of a mansion house at Scythopolis classified as a “peristyle court house,”¹⁴⁴ the form of which is discussed in detail by Hirshfeld.¹⁴⁵ However, Paul Magdalino has argued that “many, if not most, urban and suburban churches and monasteries were converted lay οἴκοι.”¹⁴⁶ A monastery “in more ways than one was the *alter ego* of the secular οἶκος. Far from being a negation of the extended household... the religious foundation was the household’s ultimate fulfillment.... The foundation and endowment of a family monastery was a sound economic investment, capable of bringing materials as well as spiritual benefits to the founder and those of his [or

¹⁴³ Ken R. Dark, “Houses, Streets and Shops in Byzantine Constantinople from the Fifth to the Twelfth Centuries,” *Journal of Medieval History* 30, no. 2 (2004): 85–86.

¹⁴⁴ Ofer Sion and 'Abd al-Salam Sa'id, “A Mansion House from the Late Byzantine-Umayyad Period in Beth Shean-Scythopolis,” *Liber Annus* 52 (2002): 356–357.

¹⁴⁵ Hirschfeld, *The Palestinian Dwelling in the Roman-Byzantine Period*, 85–97.

¹⁴⁶ Paul Magdalino, “The Byzantine Aristocratic Oikos,” in *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX-XIII Centuries*, ed. Michael Angold, BAR International Series 221 (Oxford, 1984), 94.

her] descendants who inherited proprietary rights to the establishment.”¹⁴⁷ If future excavation should demonstrate that the compound containing the Northeast Church was previously a secular household later reaching its “fulfillment” as a monastery, the twelve burials in the masonry tomb of the chancel become more explicable. In addition, a parallel conversion of secular space to sacred usage was identified last year at Hippos in stage B of the public building west of the forum (BLT).¹⁴⁸ The Northeast Church complex may be a substantively larger example.

West of Cardo 3 North

Figure 126 Doorway in W575 (looking south)

We exposed an additional five meters at the north end of Cardo 3 North in 2009. Both W1267 and W575 continue to the north beyond the area excavated so far. A second door with a threshold was discovered at the north end of W575, providing access to a room to the west. Unlike another door to the room located 2 m to the south, this door was not intentionally blocked. The blockage of the southern

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 102.

¹⁴⁸ Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita : Ninth Season of Excavations : June-July 2008*, 32–33.

doorway and the blockage of the street were apparently sufficient to close off this section of the compound.

A significant collection of some twelve nails was recovered from the threshold of the unblocked door in W575. Intentional bending in a number of these nails suggests a door thickness of 9-11 cm. The nails are 10-16 cm in length. To the west of the doorway, a large section of mosaic (44 x 70 cm) was discovered well above floor level in the northwest corner of the square. The fragment was tilting at an angle. Smaller fragments were discovered upside down. These pieces are likely part of a floor from an upper story that has collapsed down from above. With the collapsed mosaic floor discovered in 2008 just north of W540,¹⁴⁹ we now have a second piece of evidence indicating that the structure north of the *domus* had at least two stories.

Conservation

The primary foci of conservation efforts in the 2009 season were the walls of the small rooms to the north of the *domus*. These walls were in a poor state of repair, and some were near collapsing. The work was supervised by Mrs. Ewe Radziejowska and was assisted by volunteers from the Concordia team. Particular attention was devoted to the walls of the *skeuophylakion*, since that room has the best-preserved mosaic floor. Walls were rebuilt and reinforced with a mortar mix. While repairing the bench in the northeast corner of the *skeuophylakion*, we documented that the bench was a later addition, built over the original mosaic floor.

A collapsed wall at the junction of W1201 and W1281 was restored. In addition, the section of W552 over the entrance to Cistern C was rebuilt. Minor repairs were done by a team from the Israel Antiquities Authority to W1239 and to W1251 near the *decumanus maximus*.

3D Digital Scanning

Toward the end of the 2009 season, a survey of the Northeast Church complex was conducted by Wayne L. Mory, PLS, and Mark Wood, PLS, of American Surveying & Engineering, P.C., a privately held, multi-disciplined surveying and engineering firm with offices in Chicago, Dixon and Aurora, Illinois. Data was collected using a Leica ScanStation provided by Mabat 3D Technologies, Ltd., from Tirat-Carmel.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 48.

Essentially, the instrument issues laser pulses the reflections of which are measured with each result recorded in an intelligent x, y, z data point (LiDAR). Millions of data points are gathered from each set up. The survey of the Northeast Church complex consisted of thirteen scan worlds that were registered into a point cloud– a measurable mirror image of reality that can be surveyed virtually.

Figure 127 Point cloud

Point clouds may be rendered with photography or may be used as the basis for highly accurate 3D modeling. The point cloud also serves as a permanent and detailed record of the architectural remains of the Northeast Church complex.

Figure 128 3D model of apse

Conclusion

The 2009 season of work on the Northeast Church complex has advanced our understanding of the complex by revealing remains of earlier structures as well as modifications of later structures west of Cardo 2 North. More importantly, the extent of the complex to the east and the north is more fully although far from completely revealed along with its possible evolution from an earlier peristyle house. Substantive additional work is now required both to the east and the north of the current excavation to understand fully the history, extent, and function of the Northeast Church complex.

9.

THE 2010 SEASON

In 2010, excavation work concentrated on the area east of the *domus* of the Northeast Church between Cardo 3 North and Cardo 4 North.

Figure 129 Top plan for 2010

This excavation area may be the remains of a palatial home of a prominent citizen of the city. If our hypothesis holds true, the house would be some 375 m² plus a terrace to the north.¹⁵⁰ In addition to the architecture revealed in 2010, small finds raise interesting questions about the use of the area and about the religious life of the community in the Byzantine period.

This report will detail work done in three areas and the potential implications of the discoveries:

- A southerly room/*cubiculum* of the residence
- A peristyle court
- A northerly terrace
- Conservation efforts
- Conclusions

Figure 130 Chart of loci

¹⁵⁰ The size would be comparable to the “enlarged normal houses” which make up 24% of the excavated houses at Delos; see Monika Trümper, “Material and Social Environment of Graeco-Roman Houses in the East: The Case of Hellenistic Delos,” in *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, ed. David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2003), 25; Paul Zanker, *Pompeii: Public and Private Life*, Revealing antiquity 11 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998), fig. 11. While significantly larger houses appear at Delos, Pompeii, and elsewhere, topographic constraints likely limited the size of palatial houses at Hippos.

A southerly room (*cubiculum*) of the residence

A five-meter square was opened east of previous work following the lines of W1288 and the later W1236.¹⁵¹ As the north-west corner of W1236¹⁵¹ is slightly offset to the east from the line of W1230, we hypothesized that the southwest corner of W1230 could mark the southerly extent of the building east of the *domus* of the Northeast Church on the east side of Cardo 3 North. Revealed was a small domestic space the structure of which supports but does not yet prove this hypothesis.

Figure 131 Cubiculum (looking northeast)

This room has an interior dimension of 2.20 m from north to south and 3.30 m from east to west. It is bounded on the north by W1288, on the east by W1904, and on the south by W1915. On the west is W1916, a poorly built wall that spanned the gap between W1288 and W1915. W1236 of a later building was constructed over the line of W1915 and destroyed most of the south end of W1916. W1904 has a 77.5 cm doorway closed by a 90 cm door from inside the room. The doorway is 30 cm from W1288. The floor is packed earth with some plaster mixed in. Several nail fragments were discovered near floor level in the room. Stones protruding from the surviving top of the south face of W1288 at the east end of the room may hint at a low roof or platform, although this ledge is located problematically just inside the doorway.

¹⁵¹ W1236 is the northerly wall of a later structure tentatively identified as an Umayyad farmhouse in Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita : Eighth Season of Excavations : July 2007*, 87.

Figure 132 Supporting protrusions/corbels (looking west)

The northeast corner of the later building is 40 cm west of W1904 and is formed by the intersection of W1903 and W1236. W1221 forms the northwest corner with W1236. 2.5 m west of W1903 is another wall of the later building (W1902). It follows roughly the same line as W1270 and W1916.

W1915 seems to continue to the east of W1904, supporting but not confirming the hypothesis that the wall is the southern extent of the house. East of W1904, another wall (W1917) continues roughly on the line of W1288 but may be slanting slightly to the south. Further excavation will clarify its relationship to W1288 and whether W1288 forms a corner to the north at the line of W1904.

The function of this small room may be hinted at by the small finds discovered in and near the room at floor level. Within the locus directly above the floor (L1906) there were some large pieces of Baysan jars, some cooking ware dating from 350-600 CE, and a partially restorable amphora. A coin and a fibula were also retrieved from the floor.

16 cm east of the entrance to the room and 17 cm south of W1917 we recovered a horde of pottery, glass, bronze, and bone on what appears to be a crudely paved surface. The pieces of this horde were hidden behind a worn but restorable storage jar.

Figure 133 Storage jar

The horde included two bottles, a glass lamp or beaker, a figure carved of bone (dancing maenad), a scarab, a glass ring, and a bronze pitcher with an iron handle (see below for a more detailed discussion). The finds are luxury items of a domestic sort. Vitruvius distinguishes between the richly appointed *andronitis* and the more modest spaces for domestic activities called the *gynaikonitis*.¹⁵² We therefore conjecture that the space was a *cubiculum* from that private part of the house, either used for sleeping or storage. Osiek and Balch caution that the “eastern ideal of the seclusion of women expressed in Greek architectural design” is not always exhibited in eastern houses of the later Roman period, “perhaps indicating that social customs were changing in the East as well.”¹⁵³ [Note: later excavation will show that this structure was not part of peristyle house of the Roman Imperial period, nor was it a part of the Late Antique construction of a support building for the monastery.]

Glass items (section authored by Stephen Chambers)

Conical lamp or beaker

Three fragments from the same straight-sided conical vessel were recovered near one another. Their fabric is light aqua¹⁵⁴ in color, and ranges for the most part between 1.1 and 1.3

¹⁵² *De Architectura* 6.7.1-5.

¹⁵³ Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches*, 1st ed., The family, religion, and culture (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 9.

¹⁵⁴ A descriptive range of colors is provided by Robert H. Brill, “Scientific Investigations of the Jalame Glass and Related Finds,” in *Excavations at Jalame, Site of a Glass Factory in Late Roman Palestine*, ed. Gladys Davidson Weinberg (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1988), 269; this particular color corresponds to Saldern’s “fabric 1” in Axel von Saldern, *Ancient and Byzantine Glass from Sardis*, Monograph - Archaeological Exploration of Sardis ; 6 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980), 36.

mm in thickness.¹⁵⁵ All three fragments exhibit a uniform—and unusual—degree of slope,¹⁵⁶ showing that the vessel from which they came was evenly conical in shape all the way from the bottom to the out-flaring rim.

Figure 134 Lamp/beaker fragments

The two rim fragments have the same calculated diameter (110 mm). This, together with the diameter of the base fragment and the slope of all three fragments, produces a calculated height for the complete vessel of approximately 235 mm. Both in height and in rim diameter, this vessel is considerably larger than most other straight-sided conical vessels that have been published to date.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Part of one fragment expands to 2.1 mm in thickness, a common variation arising from the manufacturing process.

¹⁵⁶ Slope = rise/run = 210/65 [mm] = 3.23. Conical vessels from other excavations almost always reflect much lower slope-values (that is, their profile is a wider “V”). A good example is the corpus reported by Véronique Arveiller-Dulong and Jacques Arveiller. The five vessels for which slope can be calculated all have values between 1.7 and 2.4. Véronique Arveiller-Dulong and Jacques Arveiller, *Le Verre d’époque Romaine Au Musée Archéologique de Strasbourg*, Notes et documents des musées de France 10 (Paris: Ministère de la culture, Editions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1985), 146.

¹⁵⁷ For example, Dussart’s Type B.VI.1111b has a (calculated) height of 171 mm, in Odile Dussart, *Le verre en Jordanie et en Syrie du Sud*, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique t. 152 (Beyrouth: Institut français d’archéologie du Proche-Orient, 1998); Arveiller-Dulong reports on five intact conical vessels ranging between 94 and 140 mm in height in *Le Verre d’époque Romaine Au Musée Archéologique de Strasbourg*, 146; another study, covering several variations of conical beakers, reports heights ranging between 115 and 150 mm in C. Isings, *Roman Glass from Dated Finds*, Archaeologica traiectina 2 (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1957), 126–131, nos. 106a-d; the rim diameter of most other straight-sided conical vessels ranges from ca. 60-95 mm, including those in the prototypical study by Grace M Crowfoot and Donald B Harden, “Early Byzantine and Later Glass Lamps,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 17, no. 1 (1931): 196–208, 196-208, especially plate XXVIII, nos. 1-3; see also John W. Hayes, *Roman and Pre-Roman Glass in the Royal Ontario Museum: A Catalogue* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1975), nos. 365, 366, 380, 477; Saldern, *Ancient and Byzantine Glass from Sardis*, nos. 288, 289; Einat Cohen, “Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad Glass,” in *The Roman Baths of Hammat Gader*, ed. Yizhar Hirschfeld (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1997), 406; larger rim-diameters include

The base bears a small pontil-mark, approximately 12 mm in diameter. Together with the fire-polishing of the two rim fragments, this shows that the vessel was first formed on a blowpipe, then transferred to a pontil for further working of its upper edge. This relatively refined manufacturing technique resulted in a conical vessel of higher quality than those that have been found in many other excavations.¹⁵⁸

Studies suggest that pontil-made conical vessels with a fire-polished rim developed from the simpler form with a cracked-off rim that had become popular throughout the Roman Empire in the fourth century.¹⁵⁹ Thus, this vessel could perhaps be dated to the fifth or sixth century.¹⁶⁰

Whether this vessel functioned as a lamp or a beaker cannot be easily determined. Conical glass lamps are verbally described by Paulus Silentianus in his account of the dedication of the Hagia Sophia in 563 CE,¹⁶¹ and graphically portrayed both on a tombstone in Rome and in a fourth century mosaic in the synagogue at Hammat Tiberias.¹⁶² On the other hand, an engraving on a large glass plate from the Beth Shearim catacomb, showing a conical vessel

Dussart's B.VI.1111b and Arveiller-Dulong's nos. 323 and 327, all three of which have exactly the same rim diameter (104 mm) as this vessel, plus four vessels discussed in Gladys Davidson Weinberg and Sidney M. Goldstein, "The Glass Vessels," in *Excavations at Jalame, Site of a Glass Factory in Late Roman Palestine*, ed. Gladys Davidson Weinberg (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1988), 38–102, 91, nos. 404, 405, 406, 408, 410. All 8 of these larger vessels, however, exhibit a smaller slope-value (i.e., they are shorter for their width; their profile is a wider "V").

¹⁵⁸Conical vessels that lack this pontil-mark always feature a rougher, cracked-off rim. Their manufacture is described and illustrated by Weinberg and Goldstein, "The Glass Vessels," 87–89; this simpler type was common in both East and West; they were known already to Crowfoot and Harden "Early Byzantine and Later Glass Lamps," 200; Isings discusses them *Roman Glass from Dated Finds*, 127; see also Dussart, *Le verre en Jordanie et en Syrie du Sud*, groups BVI.1111 a1 and BVI.1111 a2; Hayes, *Roman and Pre-Roman Glass in the Royal Ontario Museum*, nos. 380, 476, 477; Cohen, "Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad Glass"; Arveiller-Dulong and Arveiller, *Le Verre d'époque Romaine Au Musée Archéologique de Strasbourg*, nos. 321–329.

¹⁵⁹Weinberg and Goldstein, "The Glass Vessels," 87–89; Crowfoot and Harden, "Early Byzantine and Later Glass Lamps," 198; Isings, *Roman Glass from Dated Finds*, 127, 130–131; Cohen, "Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad Glass," 408.

¹⁶⁰In Baur's study of glass from Jerash, many conical lamps (= his Type E, including no. 13, which is morphologically like this one) are dated fifth to seventh century. Paul Victor Christopher Baur, "Glassware," in *Gerasa, City of the Decapolis*, ed. Carl H. Kraeling (New Haven, Conn.: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1938), 523–524; note also the strikingly similar vessel shown in Axel von Saldern, *Ancient Glass in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Greenwich, Conn: New York Graphic Society, 1968), no. 61, which is unprovenanced but dated by the author to "late 4th – early 5th century."

¹⁶¹Crowfoot and Harden, "Early Byzantine and Later Glass Lamps," 200, n. 4; Saldern, *Ancient and Byzantine Glass from Sardis*, 50; Cohen, "Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad Glass," 408.

¹⁶²For discussion and bibliography of these images, see Weinberg and Goldstein, "The Glass Vessels," 90, nos. 206, 208.

together with a jug and a pitcher, suggests use as a drinking-cup.¹⁶³ A wooden tripod found near a conical vessel at Karanis in Egypt could support either use.¹⁶⁴ This vessel's smoothly fire-polished rim, unlike a cracked-off rim, would also be suitable for either purpose.

Mold-blown bottle

This vessel's fabric is aqua in color and relatively thick (approximately 2.5 mm at the neck).

Figure 135 Ribbed bottle

Most of its surface is dulled by weathering, although a high gloss remains on two vertical sections of its straight-sided, piriform body.¹⁶⁵ The vessel stands quite squarely on its slightly concave (approximately 1.5 mm) bottom, which features a wide, smoothed-off, slightly off-center pontil mark approximately 33 mm in diameter. The preserved portion of its cylindrical neck is slightly constricted where it joins the body.¹⁶⁶ A small out-turn at the

¹⁶³ Nahman Avigad, *Beth She'arim: Report On The Excavations During 1953-1958. Vol III: Catacombs 12-23*, ed. Benjamin Mazar (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press on behalf of the Israel Exploration Society and the Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University, 1973), 210 fig. 100; the grouping of this vessel with a jug and a pitcher suggests, however, that Avigad is wrong in calling it a lamp (p. 211), for a different section of the same plate portrays a hanging lamp of a different shape; see Weinberg and Goldstein, "The Glass Vessels," 90, no. 212.

¹⁶⁴ Weinberg and Goldstein, "The Glass Vessels," 89-90 and 322, plates 4-17.

¹⁶⁵ Piriform: a globular body having its greatest diameter at the base, in distinction from oval (greatest diameter at center) and ovoid (greatest diameter at shoulder). Saldern, *Ancient and Byzantine Glass from Sardis*, 3.

¹⁶⁶ This style of neck resembles Isings' no. 103, although she notes that "a more or less outspread rim is very rare." *Roman Glass from Dated Finds*, 121.

very top of the neck, right where it is broken off, suggests that it might have had a funnelled mouth.

Its most prominent feature is a set of diagonal shallow ribs on its body. Sixteen parallel lines, each approximately 3 mm wide and approximately 1.5 mm deep, encircle the body. This pattern was probably created in two stages: first by inflating a paraison in a ribbed mold, then rotating (and possibly further expanding) the vessel after removing it from the mold, to create the spiralling effect.¹⁶⁷ The degree of rotation was about 350° and carefully performed, resulting in a pleasingly even pattern.

Similar decorations are common on vessels of approximately the same size and shape: that is, bottles with relatively slender necks and bases between 70-90 mm in diameter. One group of smaller bottles with similar decoration, and another group of substantially bigger ones, have also been reported.¹⁶⁸ Although the shape of the bodies of such bodies varies considerably, this example appears to be one of a very few piriform bottles to have been mold-decorated.¹⁶⁹ The necks of comparably decorated bottles also vary greatly. Some are either significantly wider than this one or conical in shape.¹⁷⁰ Some have a pronounced flare toward the top, resulting in a funnel-mouth—a feature which may have been present here too, judging by a slight out-turn of the neck right at the point of its fracture.¹⁷¹

Mold-decorated bottles of this general type are often associated with manufacturing dates in the late third and early fourth centuries, although many of these assignments seem to have been made on stylistic grounds rather than archaeological context.¹⁷² Examples that

¹⁶⁷ Saldern, *Ancient and Byzantine Glass from Sardis*, 89; Hayes presents a parallel vessel that has vertical ribs, probably indicating a bottle that was not rotated upon extraction from the mold *Roman and Pre-Roman Glass in the Royal Ontario Museum*, 93, no. 311.

¹⁶⁸ Dussart portrays four bigger and more elaborate mold-decorated bottles of varying shapes *Le verre en Jordanie et en Syrie du Sud*, B.X.1111.b.1, B.X.42; B.X.631, B.XIV.4, B.XIV.131; Cohen reports six much smaller ones “Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad Glass,” Type 7.15-20.

¹⁶⁹ Most mold-decorated bases are oval or ovoid. Examples: Hayes, *Roman and Pre-Roman Glass in the Royal Ontario Museum*, nos. 282, 306; Saldern, *Ancient and Byzantine Glass from Sardis*, no. 647; Dussart, *Le verre en Jordanie et en Syrie du Sud*, B.X.1111a.1; Cohen shows one mold-decorated piriform bottle from Hammat Gader “Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad Glass” Type 7.21, although its base is much more globular than this one.

¹⁷⁰ Wider or conical necks: Hayes, *Roman and Pre-Roman Glass in the Royal Ontario Museum*, nos. 300, 327; Dussart, *Le verre en Jordanie et en Syrie du Sud*, B.X.1111.a.2. As noted above, this bottle too might have had a conical (funnel-shaped) mouth.

¹⁷¹ Bottles with funnel-shaped mouths have been published by Hayes, *Roman and Pre-Roman Glass in the Royal Ontario Museum*, nos. 282, 306, 311, 327; Cohen, “Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad Glass,” Type 7.21; Dussart, *Le verre en Jordanie et en Syrie du Sud*, B.XIV.4.

¹⁷² The problem is noted by Weinberg and Goldstein, “The Glass Vessels,” 79; Hayes very consistently reports dates in this range for the numerous vessels of this type in the Royal Ontario Museum—most of which resemble this flask fairly closely *Roman and Pre-Roman Glass in the Royal Ontario Museum*, 78, no. 282; 82, no. 306; 91, no. 300; 95, no. 327.

can be more securely dated include one at El Bassa stemming from the late fourth century and one at Sardis from the sixth or early seventh century.¹⁷³ The latter resembles the present bottle in the size, although not so much the shape, of its body; sadly, its neck is completely missing. A closer morphological parallel apparently came from a tomb in western Galilee but lacks firm dating.¹⁷⁴

No special function is assigned to this type of vessel, beyond the general observation that most glass bottles of this size in the late Roman and Byzantine eras probably saw use in the kitchen or dining room, often as wine flasks.¹⁷⁵ Its decoration does not seem to be associated with a particular use, but simply suggests that it was a relatively expensive vessel.

Small bottle

Figure 136 Small bottle

This bottle is aqua in color but made of thin fabric (approximately 1.2 mm in thickness). Like the spiral-decorated bottle described above, it has a slightly piriform body, although this one is more globular than straight-sided. Its bottom lacks a pontil mark and is slightly concave (approximately 2.5 mm).

¹⁷³ I have not been able to see the discussion of the piece from El Bassa noted in Weinberg and Goldstein, "The Glass Vessels," 79 no.156; for the other, see Saldern, *Ancient and Byzantine Glass from Sardis*, 87; note the many similarly decorated—though considerably larger—items recorded by Dussart and sourced from tombs at Mahayy that are provisionally dated to the late third/early fourth CE Dussart, *Le verre en Jordanie et en Syrie du Sud*, B.X.1111.b.1, B.X.42, B.X.631, B.XIV.131, B.XIV.4.

¹⁷⁴ Donald B Harden, "Tomb-Groups of Glass of Roman Date from Syria and Palestine," *Iraq* 11, no. 2 (1949): 154 item W.1.

¹⁷⁵ Isings, *Roman Glass from Dated Finds*, 122.

The preserved section of its cylindrical neck flares outward more abruptly on one side than the other. Because both flaring sections are broken off just at the point they begin to turn outward, and because the intervening sections are not preserved to this same height, it is hard to say whether this was an intentional feature associated with a particular use. On balance, and especially because this bottle's bottom has no pontil mark, it is probably more likely that this side-to-side variation was an accidental result of the manufacturing process.¹⁷⁶

Small bottles with globular bodies and tubular necks (flaring or cylindrical) were used throughout the Roman and Byzantine empires from the first through eighth centuries. They seem to have been especially popular during the late third and fourth centuries. Several close morphological parallels have been dated to this period.¹⁷⁷ On the other hand, two bottles found in fifth/sixth century tombs at Khirbat al-Karnak, which is not far from this site, also closely resemble this bottle.¹⁷⁸ Accordingly, it could reasonably be dated anywhere between the third and seventh centuries.

Bone-Carved Maenad

A significant find from the hoard outside the *cubiculum* is a maenad carved from bone. Maenads are women inspired to ritual frenzy by Dionysus. Maenadism was integrated into city life and involved inseparable social and religious aspects. The piece is 10.05 x 3.22 cm with a thickness of 7 – 7.5 mm. The piece was likely carved from the tibia of a large animal. After removal of the cancellous material, a slightly convex shaped remained, the outside edges of which were smoothed, suggesting that the item decorated a piece of furniture or perhaps a box.¹⁷⁹

The maenad is carved in medium relief with some vertical tool markings visible and no evident polishing. It is damaged around the edges and quite worn. The maenad stood on a block pedestal, three quarters of which is broken away. Tool markings on the surface of the

¹⁷⁶ Without the vessel having been transferred from the blowing-rod to a pontil, it is hard to imagine how such a specialized rim-contour could have been created.

¹⁷⁷ Hayes, *Roman and Pre-Roman Glass in the Royal Ontario Museum*, 94, no. 320; Dussart, *Le verre en Jordanie et en Syrie du Sud*, B.X.611 (noting parallels at Hanita and Peqin); Arveiller-Dulong and Arveiller, *Le Verre d'époque Romaine Au Musée Archéologique de Strasbourg*, nos. 279-297; Isings goes so far as to say, regarding her Type 104 (which this bottle closely resembles), "It is mainly a 4th century type" in *Roman Glass from Dated Finds*; both she and Arveiller-Dulong deal primarily with examples from the West, not the East. Hayes' and Dussart's examples are more relevant in this respect—as is the close parallel from a third century grave in Samaria reported in John Winter Crowfoot, Grace Mary Crowfoot, and Kathleen M. Kenyon, *The Objects from Samaria*, Samaria-Sebaste; reports of the work of the Joint expedition in 1931-1933 and of the British expedition in 1935 ; no. 3 (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1957), 410, item C665.

¹⁷⁸ Delougaz and Haines, *A Byzantine Church at Khirbat Al-Karak*, 28–29, 49, and plate 50, nos. 6 and 15.

¹⁷⁹ Haim Goldfus and Kimberly Diane Bowes, "New Late Roman Bone Carvings from Halusa and the Problem of Regional Bone Carving Workshops in Palestine.," *Israel Exploration Journal* 50, no. 3–4 (2000): 190.

remaining flat section of the pedestal may be defacing what is there, although some of the tool markings seem to follow the flow of the garment. The right arm was raised and is missing. The left arm crossed the body. It is broken above the elbow as it bends up to the figure's right. Both arms could have been holding a vessel. A portion of the hair by the right ear is missing, as is the nose. Both breaks are quite smooth and may be intentional. Nose-cutting was a practice used both by Jews and Christians as a way of desecrating pagan statues, especially in the seventh century. But the practice was also used to punish women for alleged adultery.¹⁸⁰

Figure 137 Maenad

The head is oversized (1.63 x 1.58 cm). The eyes are large and lack detail. Both are “characteristic features of Oriental art.”¹⁸¹ The hairstyle is difficult to determine as the object is quite worn. But the style seems simple, with the hair parted down the middle and the front sections braided to below the ears.

¹⁸⁰ Frank Richard Trombly, “Destruction of Pagan Statuary and Christianization (Fourth-Sixth Century C.E.),” in *The Sculptural Environment of the Roman Near East: Reflections on Culture, Ideology, and Power*, ed. Yaron Z. Eliav, Elise A. Friedland, and Sharon Herbert, *Interdisciplinary studies in ancient culture and religion* 9 (Leuven ; Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2008), 156–157.

¹⁸¹ Renate Rosenthal-Heginbottom, “Late Roman and Byzantine Bone Carvings from Palestine.,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 26 (1976): 97.

The maenad is fully dressed.¹⁸² She wears a Doric *chiton* in the form of a sleeveless dress. The overfold, called an *apotygma*, displays heavy folding and the motions of a dance. There are significant wear patterns on the outer edges of the overfold. The chiton is likely belted with a *zoster* under the breast ("high-girdled"). The garment flows to ankle level with both knees of the maenad flexed slightly inward, again to indicate motion. The feet are missing.

Articles by Rosenthal and by Goldfus and Bowes both question previous identification of such bone carvings as Alexandrian imports. Instead, they posit that "the carvings were made locally"¹⁸³ and that "Palestine indeed supported some type of bone-carving industry."¹⁸⁴ Precise dating of bone carvings is difficult, especially in view of variations in form. "There is no evidence for an evolution from more 'naturalistic' to more 'abstract' pieces. Those pieces from reliable stratigraphic contexts indicate that both the finely modeled pieces and the schematic renderings appear together among late fourth-sixth century finds."¹⁸⁵ This conclusion accords with the identified stratigraphic context of the hoard found just outside the *cubiculum*.

Bronze pitcher

The pitcher from the hoard is 21 cm tall made from a soft copper or bronze 1.8-2.0 mm thick. The pitcher consists of two pieces. The bottom piece of the body is 3 cm tall and 18 cm wide. The base is concave with a 10 cm basal rim. The body fits inside the base which was hammered to it and presumably soldered. The workmanship is basic and without decoration. The body rises cylindrically with a slight inward contraction to a shoulder that bends into a neck that gradually narrows from 5.5 cm to 3.7 cm. The typical round mouth of such pitchers¹⁸⁶ is pinched to form a spout 4 cm long and 2 cm wide.

¹⁸² Maenads are at times a partially nude, see Ross and Weitzmann, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, 2:24–25, plate XII; Anthony Cutler, *The Craft of Ivory: Sources, Techniques, and Uses in TheMediterranean World, A.D. 200-1400*, Publications / Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection no. 8 (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, Research Library and Collection, 1985), 19, figs. 22–23; other bone figures are often nude as in Goldfus and Bowes, "New Late Roman Bone Carvings from Halusa and the Problem of Regional Bone Carving Workshops in Palestine.," 190, 193, 196, 200–201; Rosenthal-Heginbottom, "Late Roman and Byzantine Bone Carvings from Palestine.," plate 22, cp. plate 23.

¹⁸³ Rosenthal-Heginbottom, "Late Roman and Byzantine Bone Carvings from Palestine.," 103.

¹⁸⁴ Goldfus and Bowes, "New Late Roman Bone Carvings from Halusa and the Problem of Regional Bone Carving Workshops in Palestine.," 198.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 201–202.

¹⁸⁶ George Fletcher Bass and Frederick H. Van Doorninck, *Yassı Ada*, 1st ed., The Nautical archaeology series no. 1 (College Station: Published with the cooperation of the Institute of Nautical Archaeology by Texas A&M University Press, 1982), 270–271, MF5; Frederick O Waagé, "Bronze Objects from Old Corinth, Greece," *American Journal of Archaeology* 39, no. 1 (1935): 89, fig. 9; GRH Wright, "Some Byzantine Bronze Objects from Beycesultan," *Anatolian Studies* 50 (2000): 166, fig. 12a.

Figure 138 Pitcher

The opposite side of the mouth is flattened so that the upper part of an iron handle might be attached with two pins. The rod of the iron handle (found broken) proceeded upward from the attachment at the mouth and then curved sharply downward to the shoulder of the vessel. In this part of the handle the rod is flattened to 7 mm x 1.01 cm.

A bronze or copper strap of 1.5 cm width encircles the neck and the handle and is bonded together by two pins. If this pitcher handled hot liquids, the heat would transfer quickly to the handle. We wonder if some now-lost handle surrounded the metal.

Crossbow fibula

A crossbow fibula consists of a transverse bar (the crossbar), a bow, a pin, and a catch or foot.¹⁸⁷ The fibula from the *cubiculum* is 7.83 cm from the top finial to the bottom of the catch with a 4.56 cm crossbar also capped with finials. The shaft of the crossbar is relatively square in cross section (3.7 mm). Each finial is bulbous (1.04 cm) with a small knob at the top and flaring to a ring at the base. The bow is moderately arched, 3.6 cm long and 2.3 cm high. The bow is triangular in cross section with a rounded front surface (7.8 mm x 4.3 mm). Two decorative bands (rope-like?) run down the length of the exterior of the bow. The pin is 5.87 cm in length and 2.7 mm in diameter. It is permanently hinged to the crossbar and secured in an open slot in the catch. The catch is 3.76 cm long and 9.8 mm thick. Its front surface is flat and decorated with two rows of punched eyelets. Next to the bow there are

¹⁸⁷ Pete Dandridge, "Idiomatic and Mainstream: The Technical Vocabulary of a Late Roman Crossbow Fibula," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 35 (2000): 72, fig. 3.

four eyelets. An intervening bar (1 cm) is followed by six more eyelets. Alignment of the eyelets is imprecise. Overlaps suggest that the eyelets were punched left to right and then from the bow to the tip of the catch. Symbolism is uncertain, but as we have noted previously, such punched dots may be “evil eye” dots.¹⁸⁸

Figure 139 Crossbow fibula

A fibula is a practical item used by both men and women to fasten clothing. But the crossbow fibula “was exclusively a male ornament, created to hold in place the heavy woolen cloak or cape that was the outer garment of a Roman soldier.”¹⁸⁹ Although the first and second centuries C.E. saw a large number of shapes and types, “in the early decades of the third century, the crossbow fibula became the dominant type.”¹⁹⁰ Crossbow fibulae made of precious metals could be worn by officers and came to take on an official nature. The length of the catch and the hinging of the pin to the crossbar suggest that this crossbow fibula is of a style from the early stage of the development of this ornament, namely 240-276 CE.¹⁹¹ However, transition among styles is fluid with fourth century examples betraying “a Byzantine spirit, and later ones ... sometimes so deeply embedded in classical traditions that they suggest an earlier origin.”¹⁹² In addition, crossbow fibulae also appear in non-military contexts and Christian contexts. For example, the Byzantine mosaics in Basilica of San

¹⁸⁸ Arthur Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita: Tenth Season of Excavations: July and September 2009* (Haifa, Israel: Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa, 2009), 66.

¹⁸⁹ Barbara Deppert-Lippitz, “A Late Antique Crossbow Fibula in the Metropolitan Museum of Art,” *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 35 (2000): 41–42.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁹¹ For more detailed discussion of dating, see E. Toth, “Zur Datierung Der Zwiebelknopffibeln,” *Folia Archaeologica* 31 (1980): 146–154; and P. M. Protzel, “Zur Chronologie Der Zwiebelknopffibeln,” *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 35, no. 1 (1988): 347–372.

¹⁹² Deppert-Lippitz, “A Late Antique Crossbow Fibula in the Metropolitan Museum of Art,” 67.

Vitale, Ravenna, depict the Emperor Justinian flanked by three attendants with crossbow fibulae and another has Empress Theodora attended by a chaplain with a crossbow fibula. We are left with ambiguity. The crossbow fibula discovered in the *cubiculum* certainly belonged to a male. Whether he was a soldier or a church leader is uncertain. But the Byzantine context might suggest the latter.

Coin

The final item in the hoard was a worn coin of Diocletian, minted at Antioch (293-295). On the obverse is a radiate, draped, and cuirassed bust of Diocletian facing right. On the reverse, Diocletian, standing right, holds scepter and receives Victory on globe from Jupiter, who is standing on the left and holding scepter. The inscription reads: CONCORDIA MILITVM (“concord to the military”). Three other nearly identical coins were found that season in other parts of the Hippos excavation.

The Peristyle Court

Ten meters to the north of the southerly *cubiculum*, is a three-sided peristyle court.

Figure 140 Peristyle court (looking northwest)

The western portion of the paved surface and a staircase against W1267 were discussed previously.¹⁹³ Including the porticos, the space is 11.24 m from north to south on its east side and 11.48 m from north to south on its west side. The space is 7.5 m from east to west at its southerly end and 7.04 m from east to west at its north end. The exposed surface of the courtyard (F1295, excluding the framing stylobates) is 5.2 m from north to south on its

¹⁹³ Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita: Tenth Season of Excavations: July and September 2009*, 69.

east side and 5.32 m from north to south on its west side. The surface is 5.04 m from east to west at its southerly end and 4.96 m from east to west at its north end.

The peristyle court is bounded to the south by W1261, to the east by W1910, to the north by W1266 and to the west by W1267. There is a major entrance to the south portico from the west through W1267. It is the only entrance to the courtyard the door of which closed from inside the courtyard. That entrance was intentionally blocked, perhaps at the same time as the other blockages in the Northeast Church complex to the west.¹⁹⁴ There are two entrances to the south portico through W1261.

Figure 141 Entrances to the south portico (looking south)

The western entrance was published previously.¹⁹⁵ The eastern entrance is 5.05 m from W1267. The doorway is 1.07 m wide. The door would have been 1.22 m wide and would close from the south, as does the westerly door. 1.35 m to the east there is a catch basin (L1908) in the northwest interior corner of the junction of W1261 with W1910. Many pipe fragments were found in and around the basin and plaster on W1261 hints at a route down from the roof. W1261 continues to the east as does W1910 to the south.

There are three entrances to the peristyle court from the east through W1910, which is on roughly the same line as W1904 of the previously discussed *cubiculum*. The exterior of each of the doorways faced the west.

¹⁹⁴ Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita : Ninth Season of Excavations : June-July 2008*, 45.

¹⁹⁵ Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita: Tenth Season of Excavations: July and September 2009*, 70.

Figure 142 Entrances to the east portico (looking east)

At the east end of the southern portico there is a doorway 67 cm from W1261. The doorway is 1.00 m wide and was closed by a 1.10 m door. To the north and 1.6 m from W1261 is W1911. It is crudely built and goes east from W1910. The room contained by W1261, W1910, and W1911 has a mud/plaster floor (F1912).

3.90 m north of W1261 is a second threshold in W1910. The doorway is 1.70 m in width. Most of W1910 is gone in this area except for the base course. There are large flat stones to the west of the threshold in the east portico suggesting significant traffic through this doorway.

Figure 143 Shelf with lamps (looking east)

Between W1911 and the south side of this threshold, a west-facing shelf was revealed in W1910. Little survives of this poorly constructed space, but two intact oil lamps were discovered sitting on it and another was found in the threshold to the north. There is a similar but better constructed feature facing east behind Cistern G in W1270. South-facing niches in W1235 and in the *diakonikon* may be parallels. We would also note that in Roman houses, the *lararium* could at times be located in the peristyle court.

The remains of W1910 proceeding to the north were tipping severely to the west, so fill was removed and the stones were reset. 8.20 m north of W1261, there is a clear corner, as W1913 proceeds to the east. The function of the space between W1913 and the threshold to the

south is uncertain, although portions of three partially restorable amphora were recovered from the fill. Fragments of one contained *tituli dipinti*. The markings are likely commercial symbols illegible to the modern reader.

Figure 144 *Dipinti*

An extension to W1910 fills the gap between W1913 and W1266. In this section of the wall at the east end of the north portico is the third doorway. It is 72 cm wide and was closed by a 96 cm door. To the east of the threshold is evidence of a later plaster floor at the height of the top of the threshold. The exterior of the doorway is again to the west. There is a catch basin in the portico that partially overlaps the south part of the threshold.

The surface of the porticos (F1290) is a combination of flat stones, mud, and plaster. The north portico slopes downward somewhat from W1910 toward the steps that lead from the north stylobate of the courtyard to the large western doorway in W1266. A crude line of stones set on their points functions to separate the floor from the staircase.

The courtyard itself is paved with rectangular basalt pavers. The pavers are laid out in rows with the longer dimension oriented east to west. A slightly raised stylobate surrounds the courtyard on three sides. There are pilasters at the west ends of the north and south stylobates. At the east ends of these stylobates there are column bases. Both stylobates have one intervening column base. On the south stylobate, the corner column is 42 cm in diameter. The intercolumniation with the central column is 2.04 m. Between the central column and the pilaster the distance is 1.65 m. On the north stylobate, the corner column is 44 cm in diameter. The intercolumniation with the central column is 1.16 m. Between the central column and the pilaster the distance is 3.12 m. The central column on the north stylobate is offset to the east likely because of the staircase to the north. On the east stylobate, there

are two additional column bases between the corners. The intercolumniation between the column base at the south end and the next column to the north is 1.61 m. That next column is 40 cm in diameter. The third column from the south on the stylobate was tipped. Since the intercolumniation between the second and fourth columns is 3.55 m, the remaining intercolumniations would be 1.57 m. We reset the column base on the stylobate in that approximate location.

Figure 145 Three-sided peristyle (looking north)

Cistern H was discovered in the paved plaza. Its head is a column drum that has been hollowed out. The inner diameter of the head is 37 cm with the wall about 6 cm thick. The drum was originally about 50 cm in diameter. The cistern is located 1.2 m from the north edge of the south stylobate and 4.2 m from W1267. Although we did not enter the cistern, the top of the dirt pile in the bell of the cistern is 4.5 m below the top of the cistern head. Both catch basins previously identified likely drain into this cistern.

“The peristyle house has a long tradition in the East going back at least to the fourth century B.C.E.”¹⁹⁶ Despite Roman influence, peristyle houses at Pergamon, Delos, and Ephesus remain essentially Greek-Hellenistic and lack the atriums seen in Italy.¹⁹⁷ In the remaining unexcavated space of this house at Hippos we would be surprised to find an atrium. So, although Romanization can be seen at Hippos, in this house Hellenization seems to prevail.

“The known distribution of the peristyle house in Palestine is quite limited.”¹⁹⁸ Hirschfeld lists four sites from the late Roman and early Byzantine periods (Umm el-Jimal, Sepphoris,

¹⁹⁶ Trümper, “Material and Social Environment of Graeco-Roman Houses in the East: The Case of Hellenistic Delos,” 37.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 41.

¹⁹⁸ Hirschfeld, *The Palestinian Dwelling in the Roman-Byzantine Period*, 86.

Aphek and Jerusalem).¹⁹⁹ At least two others have been subsequently published from Sephoris²⁰⁰ and 'Ein ez-Zeituna.²⁰¹ A three-sided peristyle is particularly characteristic of the evolution of the peristyle house in Roman North Africa,²⁰² although both the House of the Tragic Poet²⁰³ and the House of Sallust²⁰⁴ at Pompeii have three-sided peristyle courts. Ellis has argued that the latest peristyle houses were constructed in the mid-sixth century.²⁰⁵ Although we cannot yet date this structure as we have not excavated under the floors, the likely construction of the church to the west in the early sixth century and its possible connection to this structure suggest a third/fourth century CE date for the house and a sixth century date for construction in its ruins

A typical array of architectural and domestic small finds occurs in the destruction fill of the peristyle court. Several column drums of diameters from 32-47 cm were retrieved in addition to the two marble Corinthian capitals from previous seasons. Some fifty pieces of marble cornice (roughly 10.5 m in combined length) were recovered, the majority of which were found in the south portico. Widths and ornamentation patterns varied with most displaying one to three rounded or v-shaped grooves and occasionally one rib. Some twenty nail fragments were retrieved, many of which were bent. Fragments of wall plaster with some hints of color may point to decorative paintings, especially on the western wall of the peristyle court. Also recovered was a portion of a floor/decorative stone tile with a flared-arm cross. A fragmentary metal cross medallion may have been part of a polycandelon like one found in 2007.²⁰⁶

Typical of a space with significant domestic usage, we recovered two substantive lower or cone portions of hourglass grinding mills, other fragmentary grinding bowls and *mortaria*), two knives (16.5 and 17.5 cm), a cylindrical mount of carved bone, and a small two-headed flask.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Sion and Sa'id, "A Mansion House from the Late Byzantine-Umayyad Period in Beth Shean-Scythopolis.," 353-366.

²⁰¹ David Milson, "Design Analysis of the Peristyle Building from 'Ein Ez-Zeituna," *Atiqot* 51 (2006): 71-75.

²⁰² Yvon Thébert, "Private Life and Domestic Architecture in Roman Africa," in *A History of Private Life*, vol. 1: From pagan Rome to Byzantium (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 357-364.

²⁰³ In this case the peristyle court is against the outside wall of the house. Bettina Bergmann, "The Roman House as Memory Theater: The House of the Tragic Poet in Pompeii," *The Art Bulletin* 76, no. 2 (June 1, 1994): 225-256.

²⁰⁴ Zanker, *Pompeii*, 43.

²⁰⁵ Ellis, "The End of the Roman House," 565.

²⁰⁶ Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita : Eighth Season of Excavations : July 2007*, 85 and fig. 129.

A peristyle court is a strong indication that the structure was an urban house the ruins of which were used in the Byzantine period without the subdivision of space typical of that period.

Cylindrical mount

A hollow cylindrical object fashioned of bone (tibia of a medium sized animal?) was recovered from the peristyle court. It is 3.98 cm tall, 2.54 cm in diameter with an interior hole of 1.4 cm. The surface is smoothed but not polished. Two shallow grooves divide the length of the cylinder into three bands. The middle band (9.8 mm wide) is plain. The top and bottom bands are decorated with a sharper groove around the outside of the cylinder 2.5 mm from each end and by a row of eyelets. One band has twelve eyelets; the other band has thirteen.

Figure 146 Cylindrical mount

Rosenthal suggests that “hollow bones with carving” were “used as handles.”²⁰⁷ According to St. Clair, “surviving evidence documents the use of cylindrical and ring-shaped mounts primarily on furniture legs, which were assembled around an iron rod. Cylindrical members turned from a single length of hollowed bone ... [were] then drilled through to receive the rod. They vary considerably in size and are both undecorated and decorated.”²⁰⁸

Small two-headed flask

Next to the south-east column base of the peristyle court, a small two-headed flask was recovered, sitting on the stylobate. The glass is 2 mm thick and light greenish grey (GLEY 1

²⁰⁷ Rosenthal-Heginbottom, “Late Roman and Byzantine Bone Carvings from Palestine,” 101.

²⁰⁸ Archer St. Clair, *Carving as Craft: Palatine East and the Greco-Roman Bone and Ivory Carving Tradition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 69.

7/5GY). The fabric is translucent with some granularity and small bubbles. The glass is weathered and somewhat calcified. The body is 4.5 cm tall and approximately 4 cm in diameter. The body was blown in a two-part mold with two heads set back-to-back. Seam lines are visible. Two rows of globules indicate long hair on the nearly identical figures. The faces are nondescript with large noses and chubby cheeks. The base is flat and shows some imprecision in the alignment of the two molds. The neck is cylindrical (1.5 cm) although the misalignment makes the neck appear in cross section more like a Cassini oval than a circle. The neck of the flask is broken about a centimeter above the body.

Figure 147 Two-headed ("Janus") flask

The flask is a common type with nearly identical examples in the Museum of Bosra,²⁰⁹ the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston,²¹⁰ and the Royal Ontario Museum.²¹¹ Hayes dates the flask he is documenting to the "late third-fourth century A.D."²¹² Von Saldern dates his example to "about 2nd century A.D."²¹³ Earlier examples of mold-blown flasks with human heads come from Pompeii and Dura-Europas.²¹⁴ Barag claims that the manufacture of vases with two masks probably began in the late Flavian period or slightly later. They were common in the West and East until the end of Roman period. However, Foy believes, "ces pieces n'

²⁰⁹ Dussart, *Le verre en Jordanie et en Syrie du Sud*, BXIII.31.

²¹⁰ Saldern, *Ancient Glass in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, fig. 37.

²¹¹ Hayes, *Roman and Pre-Roman Glass in the Royal Ontario Museum*, 50, no. 94.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Saldern, *Ancient Glass in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, fig. 37.

²¹⁴ Isings, *Roman Glass from Dated Finds*, 93.

apparaissent pas avant le début du V^e s.”²¹⁵ All such dates are prior to the last active period of the house, making the find likely residual.

A northerly terrace

2.8 m north of the north stylobate is W1266. An open doorway of 2.32 m is 1.08m east of W1267. It was later closed by a doorframe of 1.72 m the exterior of which faces south. The elevation of the threshold is 1 m below the north stylobate.²¹⁶ W1266 proceeds 3.94 m to the east to W1910 and then another 5.36 m to W1298. 72 cm from W1298 is a 98 cm doorway in W1266 that was subsequently blocked.

To the east of W1298, we exposed the line of an alley (Cardo 4 North).

Figure 148 Cardo 4 North (looking south)

In the 5 m section exposed, the alley varies in width from 1.55 to 1.32 m. The existence of the alley was predicted in the excavation proposal. At the *decumanus*, the center-to-center measurement from Cardo 3 North to this new Cardo 4 North is 16.65 m. The same center-to-center measurement in the current excavation area (at the north end of the streets) is 16.9 m.

The easterly north-to-south wall of the alley is W1297. We exposed it to the level of the top of the second course. This wall is constructed mostly of limestone ashlar and may make a corner (or doorway) 3.4 m from the south end of the portion exposed.

²¹⁵ Quoted in Dussart, *Le verre en Jordanie et en Syrie du Sud*, 176.

²¹⁶ For a fuller description, see Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita: Tenth Season of Excavations: July and September 2009*, 70.

The westerly wall of Cardo 4 North is the previously mentioned W1298. It is 90 cm wide. This wall also is constructed of ashlar. W1298 was exposed to a depth of about 50 cm on its eastern face, slightly exposing the second course of stones. Fragments of painted plaster are still visible on the western face of W1298. Some fragments have dark red paint and other have yellow.

1.48 m north of W1266, W1922 proceeds west from W1298 for 2.55 m where it terminates at a vertical column, the base of which has not been reached. At the west end of W1922 is a pilaster on the north side of the wall protruding 60 cm to the north with a 30 cm bench on the east and west sides of the pilaster. We surmise that W1922 forms a corner with W1298 and that the space to the north of W1922 was some sort of entrance from the alley to the east. The small doorway in W1266 suggests that the space south of W1922 was an entrance vestibule from the private sections of the house.

Figure 149 W1922 (looking east)

In summary, the large space to the north of W1266 has at least three entrances: a doorway to the north of and below the peristyle court that was later narrowed and fitted with two doors, a doorway at the east end of the same wall from the private area to the south, and some sort of entrance from the alley to the east in the space north of W1922.

A water feature was constructed in the space between W1922 and the blocked doorway of W1266. The pool begins approximately 80 cm below the surviving surface of W1298. The previous walls were surfaced with smaller stones and plaster 20 cm thick. On the north side of W1266, there are at least two layers of plaster. The outer layer is 6 cm thick. North to south, the pool is 1.4 m. East to west, the pool is approximately 1.55 m, as the west wall of the pool was destroyed by a column shaft that fell against it.

Figure 150 Upper pool (looking east)

The pool is about 1.65 m deep. An hour-glass mill sat on the floor of the pool. It is 45 cm in external diameter and 24 cm internally slanting to that diameter over 15 cm. From the sifted fill at the bottom of the pool a dozen olive pits were retrieved.

Figure 151 Olive pits

20 cm west of the probable outside of the pool is the neck for Cistern I. It survives to a height of 28 cm above the floor of the pool. A tape measure showed a depth of at least 4.5 m. The neck of the cistern consists of two additional hour-glass mill stones. We surmise that the hour-glass mill found in the pool was used secondarily as the head for the cistern. When an earthquake toppled a column, that falling column broke the west side of the pool and pushed/toppled the mill into the pool, where it was recovered.

To the north of W1266, some work was done previously at its west end, exposing the south-west corner of an *opus sectile* floor with benches next to W1266 and W1267. Work was expanded in 2010 to the north line of the square.

The north balk provides a soil profile of the excavation area. The top layer (approximately 1.10 m) is fill from previous excavation work dumped on the north cliff, as one can see from multi-colored layers of soil. The second layer is Horizon A (approximately 20 cm) of black soil. The third layer is Horizon B (approximately 35 cm) of tan soil with little heavy fill. The fourth layer is Horizon C (approximately 1.70 m) of tan soil with heavy destruction fill. Approximately 35 cm into this layer, we encountered a pottery dump (mostly large fragments of Baysan jars). The dump is about 1.2 m wide and 50 cm deep. Its northerly extent is uncertain.

Figure 152 Portico with *opus sectile* floor (looking north)

At the west end of this terrace area and in line with the pilaster and column identified last year, we revealed a second column base to the east with an approximate column diameter of 40 cm. Further to the east are the remains of a masonry podium 1.10 m north to south and 60 cm east to west. Only some of its base blocks survive to a height of about 90 cm. The podium has two stairs on either side that rise to the east. The first step of the north stairs has an elevation of 14 cm and a tread of 23 cm. A second step of 20 cm brings one to the level of a floor. The first step of the south stairs is 10 cm with a tread of 41 cm. The second step has an elevation of 20 cm.

From W1267 to the stairs is 4.8 m. The intercolumniation from the west pilaster to the west column is 1.45 m; the intercolumniation between the two columns is also 1.45 m. From the east column to the stairs is 1.1 m.

To the north of the line of the southern end of the two columns, the floor is stone pavement (not *opus sectile*). There is no discernable stylobate. South of the columns, the *opus sectile* is missing east of the second column. The *opus sectile* was likely arrayed only south of the two columns, providing a decorative entrance to the larger space north of W1266. In the southeast corner of this entrance space a small patch of industrial sized tesserae were discovered at a level 2 cm below that of the *opus sectile* floor. It was likely an earlier floor replaced by the *opus sectile* floor. South of the westerly column base, a cavity had developed under the floor that apparently exited out somewhere on the northerly cliff as air could be detected moving through it. For safety's sake, the cavity was filled with stones and earth. Restoration of the damaged floor will be attempted in a future season.

There is a plastered fixture in the north balk extending west of first northerly stair. The easterly edge of the fixture is 3.43 m from W1266. The westerly edge is 3.53 m from the wall. The fixture is 1.43 m from east to west and is plastered with a hard plaster showing only minor damage. The vertical edges curve in toward the north. The plaster shows some slight curving onto the stone paving, on the top of which the fixture is situated. At 35 cm above the floor is a shelf 20 cm deep. The plaster curves down to cover the marble slabs used to make the shelf. The next level is an additional 56 cm higher. The top surface is again faced with marble slabs. 18-20 cm to the north into the structure the plastering curves down on the south and west sides, confirming that the fixture is some sort of basin or small pool. The east side of the fixture overlays the first step north of the podium (17 cm high and 24 cm deep). The second step rises to the level of the first shelf. Plaster from the fixture covers the west face of the second step. This second step is topped by a thin marble slab. The steps continue south to the masonry pedestal.

It is possible that the two columns and the basin standing on a stone floor may be the south edge of a small peristyle court. In North Africa, many courts “were filled with basins and pools.”²¹⁷ In the House of Europa at Cuicul the *peristylum* has three complex basins. Four basins flank the porticos in the House of Castorius. At Bulla Regis in the House of the Fisherman, the peristyle court is given entirely over to water.²¹⁸ Basins could be decorated with marine motifs and, at times, fish were raised in such pools.²¹⁹

The two steps east of the *opus sectile* floor led to another level including a mosaic floor and a fountain. The area extends 2.84 m to the east to a single step which aligns roughly with the line of W1910. A single-niche fountain sits in the southeast interior corner formed by W1266 and a 1.44 m wall segment that roughly extends the line of W1910 north of W1266 with an offset of 40 cm to the east.

²¹⁷ Thébert, “Private Life and Domestic Architecture in Roman Africa,” 362.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 367.

Figure 153 Single-niche fountain and pool (looking east)

The pool below the fountain is semicircular. The niche of the fountain is 55 cm across with a depth of 33 cm. The structure is composed of reused roof tiles and floor pieces that have been plastered. At about 11 o'clock is a ceramic pipe that provides water for the fountain. The pipe has a 9 cm interior diameter and an 11 cm exterior diameter and passes through the wall to the east to a catch basin on the opposite side. The center of the pipe feeding the fountain is 36 cm from the top of the fountain. A decorative spout is missing. The fountain has a stone base 96 cm from the top. The base stone (marble) is broken in three parts and is 4.5 cm thick.

The water to feed the fountain apparently came from the roof of the complex. A pipe brought the water down from the roof, as plaster evidence on W1266 indicates, to a shallow basin that then channeled the water through the extension of W1910 to the fountain.

The water from the fountain flowed into a pool (L1918). The pool is 1.67 x 1.67 m (interior dimension). The south and east faces follow the line of walls. The west face curves into the north face by a semi-circular route. The wall of the pool is 25 cm thick on the west and north. 20 cm of plastering lines W1266. Outside the pool and 54 cm below the top of the pool is a 25 cm "step" paved with stones (some reused marble) set into the plaster. The design is like the design of the water basin in the north balk. Part of the northwest wall of the pool has been damaged by falling debris. There is at least one interior shelf in the pool. It is of similar width and is 77 cm below the top of the pool. We have not yet reached the bottom of the pool. As the season was ending, we stopped excavation work on the pool so that conservators could stabilize the fountain and the pool wall.

Figure 154 Upper portion of the secondary channel (looking southeast)

The pool has a second source of water. Over the top of the north wall of the upper pool previously mentioned (W1922) is an open water channel. It originates in a pipe in W1298 about 30 cm south W1922. The pipe has an internal diameter of 9 cm and runs straight for at least 26 cm inside of W1298. From the pipe the water flows into a channel about 15 cm wide and 12 cm deep. The water flows north along the side of W1298 briefly and then flows west down the centerline of W1922. At the west end of W1922, some of the water is channeled down the west side. Part of the channel turns to the north. The terminus of this section is uncertain as the plaster breaks down.

Figure 155 Lower portion of the secondary channel (looking east)

At the base of the west end of W1922 and 1.65m from W1266 the channel continues, running parallel with W1266. The channel is 9 cm wide and 6 cm deep. It curves away in a north westerly direction when it approaches the extension of W1910. The channel then curves back to the southwest in the form of a question mark. The water then flows through the wall

of the pool into the basin through a 3.5 cm ceramic pipe. This lower channel seems to sit on some sort of low wall, although the area is not completely excavated.

While removing destruction fill from the mosaic floor north of the fountain pool, we removed a 2.91 m monolithic column from the square and balk. Its base and top are quite like parts of a column previously removed in an earlier season from this same general area. After lifting out the column, underneath it we recovered a limestone block (24 x 38 x 22 cm) to which plaster holding a partial face of a woman was attached. It is a fragmentary fresco of a *Tyche corona muralis* (see below).

Figure 156 Mosaic floor next to the fountain (looking north)

A mosaic floor proceeds north from the fountain and pool. Pieces of marble in secondary use form a western border for the floor at the top of the two stairs. The design of the floor is geometric and like other Byzantine floors at Hippo. The concentration of tesserae is 34 per dm². A black border of three cubes parallels the curve of the wall of the pool demonstrating contemporaneous construction. From the west, the floor begins with a black band of three tesserae, then a white band of eight tesserae. Then a guilloche (19 cm wide) runs north to south. It consists of two five-tesserae bands (black, white, double blue, black; and black, white, double orange, black). An identical pattern follows the curve of the pool (black band, white band, guilloche). The two guilloche bands are woven together when they meet in the southern part of the floor. Inside each guilloche is a band of five white tesserae. Between the guilloche bands are triangular geometric patterns that continue under the balk to the north.

In summary, the space to the north of W1266 has three discernable areas. The lowest area is in the west, consisting of an entrance paved in *opus sectile* with a stone floor to the north bounded by two columns and a small above-ground pool. An intermediate area is two steps up to the east with a fountain in the southeast corner and a geometric mosaic floor proceeding north. A third area is one step further up to the east. It has entrances from the

house and from the alley, but also shows some additional phasing with a secondary channel feeding the fountain and a water feature blocking the entrance from the house. Excavation of this area is incomplete.

The area to the north of W1266 is also fed by three distinct sources of water. A channel (L1292) brings water through W1266 from the peristyle court. A second pipe from the roof feeds the fountain. And a third channel brings water to the pool of the fountain from the area of W1298.

These water features, the fountain, the small basin and the stone floor all suggest that the area may be an elaborate garden (*hortus*). Row houses at Pompeii devote significant space to gardens.²²⁰ The House of the Small Fountain at Pompeii places the single-niche fountain in a garden.²²¹ The House of the Moralist has an extensive garden in the form of a sacred grove.²²² Osiek and Balch point to several homes at Pompeii where the owners “placed priority on horticulture and outdoor living, being willing to live rather modestly indoors.”²²³ Examples include the Houses of Diomedes and Epidius Rufus, the House of the Faun, of which the rear third of the property is taken up by a huge peristyle garden, and the House of D. Octavius Quarto of Loreius Tiburtinus, of which two-thirds of the property is occupied by a garden.²²⁴

Tyche corona muralis

The fragment of a fresco of the Roman goddess Tyche, recovered from the destruction fill next to the fountain, preserves the upper right portion of the face and the crown. The left cheek and half of the left eye are missing, as is everything below the upper lip. The wide eyes look off to the left. Such a glance may be imitative of the oft-copied Tyche of Antioch by Eutychides of Sikyon. “Cities throughout the ancient world employed the image of the statue as ... the archetypal representation of a city’s protector.”²²⁵ Figure 157 Fresco of Tyche at discovery

The right eyebrow is prominent. The dark brown hair is pulled back toward the ears, perhaps with plaited braids. Fortifications of a city form the crown. The main gate consists of a Roman arch, as can be seen typically in detail of fortifications from Trajan’s Column. The tops of the towers appear bulbous – a most unusual configuration. We wonder if what look like towers might instead be columns with capitals. The two possible columns next to the gate have identical elevations and the one closest to the gate has a square top (viewed from an

²²⁰ Trümper, “Material and Social Environment of Graeco-Roman Houses in the East: The Case of Hellenistic Delos,” 34–35.

²²¹ Zanker, *Pompeii*, plate 12.

²²² *Ibid.*, 163–165.

²²³ Osiek and Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, 15.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 227, no. 27; Lawrence Richardson, *Pompeii: An Architectural History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 329–343.

²²⁵ Pieter BFJ Broucke, “Tyche and the Fortune of Cities in the Greek and Roman World,” in *An Obsession with Fortune: Tyche in Greek and Roman Art*, ed. Susan Matheson (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Art Gallery, 1994), 39–40.

angle). As mural crowns could reflect actual circumstances of the city to which the Tyche belonged, these standing columns might point to a time when some decline had already come to Hippos.

Detailed photos of the find were examined by Keith Williams, Professor of Art, at Concordia University. In private correspondence, he writes:

The fresco of the head and crown of the goddess Tyche from the Hippos archeological site has many aesthetic characteristics that are worth noting. These may help us suggest dating based on stylistic analysis. Some of these observations include:

The red iron oxide pigment that remains after these years gives us a Tyche that is nearly life-sized. It is three quarters view of the head. It is painted with observational realism and idealism, showing little stylization of proportions or flattening of the shape of the head. The sense of observational perspective of the structures on the crown, although not in strict western perspective, does show the orthogonal lines that are associated with an attempt to give the illusion of depth.

These observations, from the size of the image to its observational realism, make the style of the fresco very similar to the third Roman style of villa painting frozen at Pompeii and Herculaneum--the Architectural Style. This style was common throughout the Roman Empire, but often was practiced in different areas at different times based on remoteness and acceptability within the cultural context.

The context of the Middle East saw a strong disposition toward stylization prior to Roman influence and was an early area in returning to stylization in aesthetics as the Roman Empire gave way to the Byzantine. Jewish frescos remained stylized

throughout the Roman occupation. Early Christian and Byzantine images began to lose their classical Roman observational realism as early as the fourth and fifth centuries.

With these things broadly stated, and due to the remoteness and eastern location of the site, aesthetic observations suggest that this artifact is probably rather early in its date. That this image would have been painted near the end of the activity at Hippos is unlikely. It is more likely that the image was painted in the third or fourth centuries and perhaps repurposed in its meaning and use as the site became Christianized.²²⁶

Tyche played an important role in the self-identification of Hippos. Four of the eleven city-coin types from Hippos enumerated by Spijkerman involve a representation of Tyche, two of which make specific connection by including a horse or a little horse.²²⁷ During last season, an inscription was uncovered beginning with the words ΑΓΑΘΗ ΤΥΧΗ.²²⁸ But Tyche's importance extended far beyond Hippos.

“La référence à la *Tychè* était universelle dans les cités du Proche-Orient romain.”²²⁹ Chance or fortune (*tyche*) was an element of life in Greek culture. Since fortune could be unpredictable and fate seemingly evil, cults devoted to Good Fortune (ΑΓΑΘΗ ΤΥΧΗ) developed. Tyche came to personify the fortune of a city or an individual.²³⁰ As Greek colonists in the wake of Alexander settled in the east, “Tyche appeared in many guises, absorbing traits of other divinities in some cases, becoming simply an aspect of a stronger divinity in others.”²³¹ A head of a Tyche was discovered in the southern temple at Petra.²³² The Tyche of Dura-Europas sits next to the Tyche of Palmyra in a fresco from Dura.²³³ In a limestone cult relief from Dura, the Tyche crowned by Seleukos Nikator is a bearded male.²³⁴ At Caesarea, one statue of Tyche depicts her as an Amazon while also invoking images of Posidon, Demeter and the cult of Roma and the emperor; another statue seems to equate Tyche with

²²⁶ Keith Williams, September 2, 2021.

²²⁷ Augustus Spijkerman, *The Coins of the Decapolis and Provincia Arabia*, Studii biblici franciscani collectio maior 25 (Jerusalem : Franciscan Printing Press, 1978), 169.

²²⁸ Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita: Tenth Season of Excavations: July and September 2009*, 74–79.

²²⁹ Nicole Belayche, “*Tychè* et la ‘*Tychè*’ dans les cités de la Palestine romaine,” *Syria; revue d’art oriental et d’archéologie* 80 (2003): 112.

²³⁰ Susan Matheson, “The Goddess Tyche,” in *An Obsession with Fortune: Tyche in Greek and Roman Art*, ed. Susan B. Matheson and J. J. Pollitt, Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin 1994 (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Art Gallery, 1994), 19.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 23.

²³² Joseph J. Basile, “A Head of the Goddess Tyche from Petra, Jordan. The Seventh Season,” *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 41 (1997): 255–266.

²³³ Broucke, “Tyche and the Fortune of Cities in the Greek and Roman World,” 41.

²³⁴ Matheson, “The Goddess Tyche,” 27–28.

Fortuna.²³⁵ In Spijkerman's catalogue, almost every city has one or more coins types with Tyche. In view of social conditions and the uncertainties of life at the eastern fringe of the Roman Empire, "Fortune became an obsession."²³⁶

"The idea of Tyche as a city goddess and her visual representation in this role developed for the most part in the ancient Near East."²³⁷ The origins of the idea are quite ancient. As Greek towns developed into πόλεις, each city united individuals, a governing system, and a set of religious beliefs into a cohesive whole that was more than just a physical entity. In uncertain times, each city, "hoping for a favorable destiny, came to rely on its Tyche, its protecting goddess."²³⁸ As new Greek cities were founded in the east after the conquests of Alexander, "Tyche assumed a propagandistic role,"²³⁹ uniting disparate peoples especially in view of the vulnerabilities of life on the frontier. Broucke summarizes:

[Tyche's] prominence as a civic deity in these later phases of Antiquity resulted from the fact that populations of these cities were characterized by cultural diversity. Tyche as the city goddess, then, functioned as the point around which all citizens could rally; despite their different cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs, all had an interest in the communal fate of the city. As such, Tyche, the great protector of cities in Antiquity, belonged both to the realm of secular rite and to the religious sphere.²⁴⁰

The fragmentary fresco from Hippos was recovered on top of a Byzantine mosaic floor, having been knocked down by a column collapsing during an earthquake likely late in the major occupational phase of the site. This Tyche becomes another example of the persistence of Tyche into and beyond the time of Christianity's intentional destruction of pagan worship and its images. Evidence for such persistence is widespread.

When Constantine made Byzantium the new Rome as Constantinople, this Christian city held a temple for Tyche with a statue of the Fortuna of Rome.²⁴¹ Various Tychai also appear on fourth-century coins of the city. When Julian visited Antioch in 361/2, few pagan temples remained. Nonetheless, he could still sacrifice to the city's Tyche.²⁴² In the early fourth

²³⁵ Rivka Gersht, "The Tyche of Caesarea Maritima," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 116, no. 2 (1984): 110–114.

²³⁶ J. J. Pollitt, "An Obsession with Fortune," in *An Obsession with Fortune: Tyche in Greek and Roman Art*, ed. Susan B. Matheson and J. J. Pollitt, Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin 1994 (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Art Gallery, 1994), 14.

²³⁷ Basile, "A Head of the Goddess Tyche from Petra, Jordan. The Seventh Season," 259.

²³⁸ Broucke, "Tyche and the Fortune of Cities in the Greek and Roman World," 37.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 38.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

²⁴¹ John Ferguson, *The Religions of the Roman Empire*, Aspects of Greek and Roman life (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1970), 87.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 86–87.

century, Fortune is a topic for speculative discussion by Nemeseius of Emesa.²⁴³ In the fifth century, the “Tyche of Antioch is attested as late as the reign of Theodosius II (A.D. 408–450).”²⁴⁴

Closer to Hippos, at Scythopolis on the west side of Palladius street is the Sigma Plaza, which according to a mosaic inscription was built in the beginning of the sixth century. The mosaic floor of one of the twelve rooms around it has a round frame with a portrait of Tyche.²⁴⁵ The Tyche of Madaba appears on a mosaic floor in the Hall of Hippolytus, an early sixth century mansion, later leveled to make room for the Church of the Virgin.²⁴⁶ In the Church of St. Bacchus at Horbat Tinsmet is a marble medallion of Tyche that is 67 cm in diameter. The frame of the medallion contains two inscriptions beginning and ending with crosses. “The lower inscription reads, ‘In the month of Xanticus Year 654.’ The year mentioned in the inscription probably follows the Pompeian indiction, so that the date corresponds to 582 CE.”²⁴⁷ These examples demonstrate that Tyche persists well into the period of the occupation of the northeast insulae at Hippos.

The sixth-century chronicler Malalas provides some nuance to the persistence of Tyche into the Byzantine period. Having noted the sacrifice of the virgin Aimathe by Seleukos to Tyche at the founding of Antioch and the sacrifice of the virgin Kalliope by Trajan to Tyche at the reconstruction of Antioch following the earthquake of 115 C.E., Malalas emphasizes that Constantine made a Tyche for Constantinople with a “bloodless sacrifice to God” rather than a human sacrifice.²⁴⁸ “In both pagan and Christian hands, therefore, Tyche exercised a very real protective function over a city. In Malalas’s *Chronicle*, the triumph of Christianity expresses itself not through the repudiation of the idea of the personification of fortune, but through differences in ritual.”²⁴⁹ “The risk to the city of ignoring its Tyche appeared to have been too great, even for Christians.”²⁵⁰

But more than “differences in ritual” may be involved in the persistence of Tyche into the Byzantine period. Tsafir posits a distinction between the classical heritage of an aesthetic

²⁴³ Nemeseius of Emesa, *De Natura Hominis*, PG 40, cols. 761b–764a; cited in Glenn Chestnut, “The Pagan Background,” in *The Christian and Judaic Invention of History*, ed. Jacob Neusner, Studies in religion / American Academy of Religion no. 55 (Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1990), 34.

²⁴⁴ Broucke, “Tyche and the Fortune of Cities in the Greek and Roman World,” 46.

²⁴⁵ Rachel Bar-Nathan and Gabriel Mazar, “City Center (South) and Tel Iztabba Area Excavations of the Antiquities Authority Expedition,” *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 11 (1993): 42–44.

²⁴⁶ Michele Piccirillo and Eugenio Alliata, eds., *The Madaba Map Centenary, 1897–1997: Travelling through the Byzantine Umayyad Period*, Collectio maior 40 (Jerusalem: Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, 1999), 246–248.

²⁴⁷ Uzi Dahari, “The Church of St. Bacchus near Horvat Tinsmet,” *Christ Is Here!* (2012): 105–124.

²⁴⁸ Mark Stansbury-O’Donnell, “Reflections of the Tyche of Antioch in Literary Sources and on Coins,” in *An Obsession with Fortune: Tyche in Greek and Roman Art*, ed. Susan B. Matheson and J. J. Pollitt, Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin 1994 (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Art Gallery, 1994), 52–53.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

²⁵⁰ Matheson, “The Goddess Tyche,” 25–26.

object and cultic connotations surrounding that object. The former persists into the late fourth and fifth centuries, even as the later are forbidden and forgotten. Cult centers were closed, but in non-cultic and private locales, the classical heritage continued.

The classical tradition (which cannot be differentiated from its polytheistic origin) remained alive. The population, at least the elite classes, tried to preserve this classical heritage and there were many ways to do so: maintaining the theatre and other spectacles, studying classical Greek literature and philosophy, and keeping alive artistic motifs.”²⁵¹

To discover a fresco of Tyche in the private terrace of a peristyle house at Hippos ought not to be surprising.

In a related way, the aesthetic object -- in this case Tyche figures -- may lack significant religious connotations in the Byzantine period. Pollitt writes of them serving “the same function that flags and state seals do in our own time.”²⁵² Having noted the scarcity of actual places of worship of Tyche in Palestine, Belayche concludes:

En tant que patronne tutélaire en laquelle on plaçait une confiance permanente, sa seule évocation iconographique, omniprésente en public comme en privé, suffisait ... Donc en Palestine, la figure de Fortune semble avoir servi prioritairement de support pour exprimer la participation à un univers gréco-romain reconnaissable à des codes sémantiques. C'est pourquoi nous allons la rencontrer aussi dans des cités à direction juive où, comme dans la majeure partie des cités, elle était convoquée sans être divinisée.²⁵³

Tyche functions as a language or a code. Tyche is not systematically the divine personification of a city. Rather, Tyche in Palestine appears mostly as an artistic expression of the reality of the city, both institutional and cultural. The Tyche expresses loyalty to the empire and civic pride.²⁵⁴ By way of analogy, the discovery of an image of a “blue devil” in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, would not convey religious overtones, but rather identity with and civic pride in the sports program of Duke University. Interestingly, a mosaic sidewalk in front of the entrance of a shop southeast of the ancient city center at Scythopolis has a

²⁵¹ Yoram Tsafrir, “The Classical Heritage in Late Antique Palestine: The Fate of Freestanding Sculptures,” in *The Sculptural Environment of the Roman Near East*, ed. Yaron Z. Eliav, Elise A. Friedland, and Sharon Herbert (Lueven: Peeters, 2008), 212.

²⁵² Pollitt, “An Obsession with Fortune,” 15.

²⁵³ Belayche, “Tychè et la ‘Tychè’ dans les cités de la Palestine romaine,” 125.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 126.

carefully executed Greek inscription which reads, “To the victory of Tyche of the Blues.” The “Blues” were one of two circus factions known from the Byzantine period.²⁵⁵

Based on the discovery of the fresco of Tyche, we now call the area east of the church the “House of Tyche.”

Conservation

Along with annual maintenance on the site (removal of weeds and minor collapsing of balks), conservation efforts focused on three parts of the north terrace. The work was supervised by Mrs. Ewe Radziejowska and was assisted by volunteers from the Concordia team. Specifically, repairs were made to the plaster on the walls in the southwest corner of the terrace to preserve some exemplars. Similarly, plastering on the benches in that corner received attention. The fountain and pool further to the east also received attention. The single-niche fountain was stabilized, as was the damaged wall for the pool. Both were covered with tarps held in place by buckets of earth at the conclusion of the season. Lastly, the edges of the layers of plaster sealing the upper pool were protected. The mosaic floor north of the fountain was recovered with earth.

Conclusions

The excavation of the late Roman house east of the Northeast Church is far from complete. As a result, any conclusions are provisional. But the work in 2010 has significantly advanced the identification of the complex as a house sitting between two of the *cardines* of ancient Hippos. The presence of a peristyle court is the most significant datum.

Two years ago, we noted that the south door jamb in W1267 was incorporated into the wall of the apse and thus constructed at the same time.²⁵⁶ Last year we suggested that the structure east of Cardo 3 North might be a peristyle house that later reached its “fulfillment” as a monastery.²⁵⁷ In terms of the architecture revealed in 2010, we have greater confidence that we are dealing with a house. But its later use as a monastery or part of one remains only a hypothesis.

The appearance of pagan elements among the small finds, especially the Tyche and the maenad, could argue against such a hypothesis. But, as demonstrated above, counter arguments are possible. The maenad may be defaced, depriving it of any numinous power and

²⁵⁵ Danny Syon, “Bet She’an,” *Hadashot Arkheologiyot: Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 116 (2004): 10, fig. 3.

²⁵⁶ Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita: Ninth Season of Excavations: June-July 2008*, 45.

²⁵⁷ Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita: Tenth Season of Excavations: July and September 2009*, 71.

religious significance. The Tyche may be little more than a symbol of civic pride and classical heritage.

The work of 2010, as is often the case in archaeology, raises more questions than it answers and motivates future work.

10.

THE 2011 SEASON

In 2011, work progressed in the northeast and southwest sections of the excavation area, defining the outer limits of the project.

Figure 158 Top plan 2011

The report will detail work done in both areas, specifically discussion the following topics:

- Nomenclature
- Eastern zone
 - Cardio 4 North and the east entrance
 - Entrance hall
 - Fountain pool
- Western zone
 - Building Alpha
 - Eastern storage room
 - Central room with bench
 - Southwest room with niches and bench
 - Northwest room with niches and dividing wall
 - Stylobates
 - Other observations

Figure 159 Loci in eastern zone

Figure 160 Loci in western zone

Nomenclature

As the work of the Concordia team has spread beyond the Northeast Church to assume a responsibility for a fifty by sixty-meter area east of the Roman basilica and north of the *decumanus maximus*, this report begins by subdividing the renamed Northeast Insulae Project (NIP) into zones and then labeling identifiable structures within those zones.

The NIP is subdivided by three narrow cardines (Cardo 2, 3, and 4 North) as identified in previous reports. These cardines provide a convenient way of delineating three excavation zones within the NIP: the Western Zone, the Central Zone, and the Eastern Zone.

Figure 161 NIP zones

The Eastern Zone is bounded to the east by Cardo 4 North, a small section of which was identified in 2010, and to the west Cardo 3 North. In the Eastern Zone are the peristyle house and what may be a Umayyad structure. The Central Zone is bounded to the east by Cardo 3 North and to the west by Cardo 2 North (*via sacra*). The Northeast Church is the most prominent feature of this zone. The Western Zone is bounded to the east by Cardo 2 North (*via sacra*) and to the west by the Roman basilica. Within this zone seemingly are several buildings that we are labeling with Greek letters from south to north. Buildings Alpha, Beta, and Gamma are partially exposed. The foundation of a possible Building Delta was previously identified.²⁵⁸ The existence of a Building Epsilon is posited due to walls proceeding north from the current excavation area.

²⁵⁸ Segal et al., *Hippos-Sussita : Ninth Season of Excavations : June-July 2008*, 44–45.

Figure 162 Major structures

Eastern Zone

2011 work in the eastern zone of the NIP focused in three areas: clarifying more of Cardo 4 to the north and a possible entrance into the terrace to the west; identifying the function of the space east of W1910, south of W1266, west of W1298; and completing the excavation and conservation of the fountain and pool in the northerly terrace.

Cardo 4 North and the east entrance

Excavation of the cardo identified the west wall of a building (W1297) that bounds the east side of the cardo from the north boundary of the excavation area in a southerly direction. The wall was constructed of large but worn limestone blocks, many of which were unstable and removed. The southern corner is yet to be exposed and may be hidden in a balk ten meters from the northern extent.

W1298 bounds the west side of the cardo. At its northerly end, we exposed a formal entrance from Cardo 4 North through a doorway with its lintel stone still intact. The opening of the doorway is 1.16 m wide and 1.95 m tall. The top of the threshold is at 129.39, which is 26 cm above the level of the step next to the fountain (129.13). The lintel stone is 49 cm tall, 22 cm thick, and 1.51 m in length.

Figure 163 East entrance (looking west)

W1298 continues to the south and shows an offset of 15 cm to the west at the south line of W1913, 9.5 m from north side of terrace doorway. The wall continues to the south, forming the eastern boundary of the House of Tyche.

The corner of an unidentified building to the southeast continues the easterly line of Cardo 4 North.

A catch basin was excavated next to W1298. It is elongated north to south (114 x 41.5 cm interior, 150 x 49 cm exterior, depth 14 cm south to 21 cm north). It provides water to the later pipe and channel feeding the fountain pool identified in a previous season.

Figure 164 North section of Cardo 4 North

There is a series of steps in the cardo over which the catch basin was constructed leading down to the terrace entrance as the bedrock drops off from an elevation of 130.70. The top

step has a width 49 cm, a height 22 cm, at elevation 130.55. The second step tread is 43 cm deep, with a width of 53 cm, a height of 27 cm, at elevation 130.35. The third step is constructed of three stones with a tread of 38 cm, a width of 124 cm, a height of 30 cm, at elevation 130.08. The fourth step consists of two stones with a tread of 36 cm, a width of 121 cm, a height of 23 cm, at elevation 129.77. The fifth step is made of two stones with a tread of 32 cm, a width of 121 cm, at elevation 129.53. Further work in the area was closed due to the danger of the balk collapsing.

Figure 165 Cross section of stairs and east entrance

An inscription in *tabula ansata* was discovered inside the threshold facing those entering through the threshold. The Greek is ΕΥΤΥΧΩΣ / ΤΩ ΚΤΗΣΗ. The omegas are lower case formed large. The inscription is 97.5 cm wide counting the dovetail handles with the main frame 67 cm wide. It is 51 cm tall.

Figure 166 Entrance inscription

The letters are 6-6.5 cm tall. The leaf is 11 x 17 cm. There are 41 tesserae/dm². The terrace inscription has parallels at Tell el-Farama²⁵⁹ and Shiqmona near Haifa,²⁶⁰ with the same variant spelling.

Figure 167 East entrance with inscription

Inside the entrance to the terrace on the left (south) is W1922. On its north side is a small staircase rising to the west. The west end of W1922 is a broken column still *in situ*. A similar broken column is *in situ* 1.95 m to the north in the balk and is equidistant from W1298. We therefore speculate that W1922 and its staircase are a later addition. The column at the west end of W1922 and the column in the balk likely provided a covering for the entrance mosaic. As two small Corinthian capitals were recovered from the destruction fill, we presume these columns were so capped.

Entrance hall

A small room (3.70 m north to south and 4.69 m east to west) occupies the northeast corner of the House of Tyche. It is bounded to the east by W1298, to the south by W1913, to the west by W1910 and to the north by W1266. There is a blocked doorway in the north wall (1.03 m wide). In the west wall is a doorway 89 cm in width the exterior of which faces the peristyle court. Interestingly, the pottery profile during the excavation of this area was inverted, with significant deposits of late Roman overlaying the typical Byzantine profiles.

²⁵⁹ *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (Alphen aan den Rijn, the Netherlands: Sijthoff & Noordhoff, 1923ff), 37:1639.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 37:1487.

We speculate that this inversion was caused by the construction of the upper pool and the digging of Cistern I to the north of W1266.

When approaching the floor, three layers were identified. An upper plaster floor is visible in the southern half of the threshold and in the SW corner (elevation 130.14). The original floor is a mosaic carpet and located at elevation 129.85. Between these two is a layer of mud/plaster.

There is a pear-shaped catch basin (24 x 30 cm) next to the east wall 110 cm from the south-east corner of the room. There was a fixture next to the north wall. Only the stone base remains, 110 cm wide and 50 cm from the west wall. Workers identified a thin line of plaster, indicating that the fixture on the north wall had a comparable feature on the south. The features are 78 cm apart offset to the north.

Two ceramic tiles/pipes cross room on top of mosaic floor (12 cm in diameter). One comes through the blocked doorway in W1266 (the bottom elevation of the pipe at the blocked door is 129.92, the bottom elevation in the center of room is 129.90). Its continuance to the north of the blocked doorway is untraceable as the upper pool destroyed it. The other pipe comes from a catch basin next to the east wall. Both direct water to the southwest corner of the room. In the southwest corner is a small sedimentation? pool. It collects water from the two pipes crossing above the remains of the mosaic floor and from the external catch basin west of W1910. A third pipe also enters this area from a lower level. Its origin is unknown. Water from all these sources then flows under W1910 presumably into the Cistern H under the peristyle court. These pipes come from a later phase in the House of Tyche when this portion of the house was converted for more utilitarian usage.

Figure 168 Pipes crossing the entrance hall

The original mosaic carpet (F1939) is intact in many places. Geometric patterns are visible in blue and white. The mosaic was seemingly cut about halfway across the room leaving most of the north side intact. An inscription was discovered just south of the blocked entrance in the north wall (W1266). It is almost intact. The third to last letter is missing and the second to last letter is partially gone. We reconstruct the inscription to read: ΕΙΣΕΛΘΕΕΠΑΓΘΑω “enter for good.” The inscription is 96 cm in length. The letters are 5.5-6.5 cm tall. The inscription was to be read by persons entering through the now blocked doorway from the terrace. The inscription is centered on the doorway. We therefore identify the northeast hall as an entrance foyer for the house. The inscription from the entrance hall has parallels at Pompeiopolis²⁶¹ and Krokodeilon Polis near Caesarea.²⁶²

Figure 169 Inscription in the entrance hall

A geometric band crosses the room from east to west just south of the inscription. The band is 174 x 36 cm. First decorative piece starts with 4 over 3 black block and then a double row of white, a double row of black, a double row of white, a double row of black, a double row of white, a double row of black. The second row of black from the outside forms into a left facing compound swastika the base which forms the frame for the next iteration of the pattern. Other iterations of the pattern have 2 x 2 black in the center, only the left pattern has 4 little and 3 large tesserae.

A repair band goes between the second box and the second swastika and takes out the alpha and part of the theta in the inscription. The repair is 10-16 cm wide. It starts 10 cm below the lambda of the inscription and curves to about 26 cm above the inscription.

In a lacuna in the mosaic (F1939), conservators identified a pot buried into the floor. Someone had cut the mosaic to insert the pot. The pot is Kfar Hananya form C. The pot was located 1.17 m from W1266, 3.24 m from W1298, and 5.7 cm below top of mosaic. Interior mouth diameter of pot is 11 cm. The pot contained a layer of soil like that above it with tesserae and some plaster. At 6 cm down a more ashen soil occurred with greater sand

²⁶¹ Ibid., 40:1177.

²⁶² Ibid., 56: 1891.

content. A harder sloping layer appears at a depth of 10.5 cm into the pot. The soil is quite ashen. At 13.9 cm below the top of the pot a nail and a chunk of burnt wood were recovered. At 14 cm more glass, bone, and perhaps some seeds were found. Subsequently, the lacuna cleaned to a depth of 20 cm high and 30 cm low. The dimensions of the lacuna are 40 cm (north to south) and 42 cm (east to west). The hole is oblong to the northeast with a diagonal of 48 cm. If the pot was used to hide anything valuable, those contents are now missing.

Figure 170 Top plan of the entrance hall with inscription

Two coins were recovered on or near the mosaic floor having been sealed by the fill and floor above. One had a diameter of 2.5 cm. It was heavily effaced. Likely it is a Roman provincial coin of the third century. A second coin was recovered near the west entrance to the room. It is a coin from 382 CE of Gratian, Valentinian II and Theodosius I (bust right on the obverse, on the reverse within a wreath: VOT/ X/ MVLT/ XX). The coins are consistent with the house being abandoned in the decades after the earthquake of 363.

Fountain pool

In 2011 we finished excavation and conservation of the pool of the fountain. The pool is 110 cm deep with an interior shelf 78 cm below the top of the pool. The pool is 144 x 141 cm at the top and 110 x 109 cm at the bottom. The bottom curve to corner measurement is 114 cm. The interior shelf is 32 cm above the bottom. From the top of the marble slab onto which the water splashed from the fountain to the bottom of the pool is 115 cm. The base of the pool is limestone slabs. There is a 54 x 73 cm slab in the corner of the pool. Other slabs seem to go under the pool walls. A 4.5 cm pipe was discovered in fountain in southwest corner on west side. Whether it served as a drain or as a means of keeping a level with the cistern in the peristyle court is uncertain.

Western Zone

2011 work in the western zone of the NIP concentrated on the southern-most building west of Cardo 2 North and east of the Roman basilica. The building is 12.9 m from east to west and 10.96 m from north to south. It is an L-shaped building with a portion of a plaza forming the northeast corner. The building is on the north side of the *decumanus maximus* and is one of at least four buildings in a south-to-north line. The building has been designated Building Alpha. Portions of the lowest level of this multi-storied block building remain.

Building Alpha

Building Alpha consists of four rooms: a storage room to the east separated from the central room by window wall; a central room with a bench against the south wall, a southwesterly room with a southerly bench and two niches on the north wall and a northwesterly room likewise with two niches in the north wall. The only known access to the building is via an L-shaped staircase from the plaza to the north. There are no doorways providing access from the outside to the surviving rooms. One goal of the 2011 season was to identify the structure and function of Building Alpha.

While removing initial layers of destruction fill, we recovered a fragment of a Greek inscription at elevation 129.35. It is the third and missing portion of an inscription previously found by the Concordia team in 2009 and the Haifa team in 2008. The inscription provides the reasons for the honorific given to Tarius Titianus. The stone is basalt with an inscription face that is 29 x 36 cm. There is a large crude *hedera* inscribed horizontally in the lower right corner. Titianus is honored as “patron and *euergetes* of the fatherland.”

3/4 View

Figure 171 Portion of Tarius Titianus inscription

The stone is horizontally 29 cm at top and 30 cm at bottom. Vertically it is 36 cm on the right edge and 36.5 cm on the left edge. At its longest, the stone is 57 cm. Most of the letters are about 5 cm in height. The shortest letter is the delta in the last line. It is 4 cm tall. The tallest letter is the sigma in the last line. It measures 6 cm tall.

Eastern storage room

The easterly storage room is 6.34 m north to south and 2.0 m east to west. It is bounded to the east by window wall (W1926), as columns of stones appear at regular intervals (compare window-wall houses at Qazrin, Capernaum, and Chorazin²⁶³). A few of the topping stones remain. There is a 73 cm doorway from this storage room the exterior of which faces the central room. The doorway is 65 cm from W1252.

Figure 172 East face of window wall (1926)

The floor is extremely crude (F1929) of randomly distributed flat stones. Our hypothesis is that this area served as a storage room, as was supported by high concentration of Baysan jar fragments.

Figure 173 Top plan of the storage room

A five-meter section of W1251 was reconstructed to a height of two courses from its junction with W1252 to the south.

²⁶³ Galor, "Domestic Architecture in Roman and Byzantine Galilee and Golan," 48–52.

Central room with bench

The central room is 6.13 m from north to south and 3.46 m from east to west. There is a bench against the south wall (W1888). The bench is 84 cm wide and 61 cm tall. It proceeds east from W1923 for 2.59 m. On either end of W1923 there is a doorway. The southern doorway has a width of 76 cm. The northern doorway has its lintel stone *in situ*. The width of the northern doorway is 78 cm and its height is 1.61 m. The lintel stone is 20 cm thick, 43 cm tall, and 1.92 m long.

Figure 174 East face of W1923

The stone floor (F1934) consists of irregular flagstones and is somewhat uneven. Numerous nail fragments, hooks, pins, grinding stones and Baysan jar shards were recovered near the floor.

Figure 175 East and central rooms (looking southeast)

Figure 176 Top plan of central room with bench

Southwest room with niches and bench

The western section of the southwest room was previously excavated.²⁶⁴ The 2011 season exposed the rest of the room. The room is 4.69 m from east to west and 2.91 m from north to south. A bench lines the south wall (W1888) for the length of the room. There are two niches in the north wall (W1982) of the room. The west niche is 1.91 m from W1386. It is 60 cm wide and 50 cm deep. Its base is 87 cm above the floor. The east niche is 65 cm wide and 56 cm deep. It is located 32 cm from W1923 and its base is also 87 cm above the floor.

Figure 177. South face of W1892 with niches

The floor (F2009) consists of tightly placed rectangular stones of irregular sizes. A watering bowl sits in the northeast corner the room. The bowl has an internal diameter of 41.5 cm and an internal depth of 15-18 cm. It was seemingly made by modifying an anta of an hour-glass mill. Numerous nail fragments and a hook lock were found near the doorway.

²⁶⁴ Arthur Segal, Mark Schuler, and Michael Eisenberg, *Hippos-Sussita : eleventh season of excavations : July 2010* (Haifa: University of Haifa, 2010), 27–28.

Figure 178 Southwest room (looking southeast)

One stone of the bench near the same doorway had a hole drilled in it, perhaps for tying an animal.

Figure 179 Top plan of southwest room

In its final phase, the room seems to have functioned as a place for storing animals due to the presence of a watering bowl and an animal tie up on the east side of the room. However, the door frame was designed to close and lock the door from inside the room. Such would not be the case for an animal pen, thus suggesting that evidence be sought for a prior function of the room.

Northwest room with niches and dividing wall *Figure 180 Entrance to the northwest room (looking east)*

The northeast room of Building Alpha is 4.69 m from east to west on its south wall (W1892) and 4.76 m on its north wall (W2007). It is 2.84 m from north to south. As with the southwest room, there are two niches in the north wall. The west niche is 1.0 m from the west wall (W1388). It is 72 cm wide and 54 cm deep. The east niche is 34 cm from W1923. It is 57 cm wide and 61 cm deep. The niche contained two nearly complete pots dated to the late seventh or early eighth centuries. In front of the western niche in W2007 and west of W2002, there seems to be a low bench (dimensions 155 cm x 46 cm deep x 24 cm high). The top of the bench is 81 cm below the top of W2007.

Figure 181 South face of W2007 with niches

The northwest room is subdivided by a limestone wall constructed of a single row of blocks set on end (W2002). There is a slight easterly curve in the wall, and it is clearly a later addition. Its function is uncertain. The rest of the floor is compressed earth.

Of note, the Alpha Building has no external entrance to the occupational level represented by the current remains. The most plausible location for a staircase to the level from above is the space between the north-to-south stylobate and W2002. Many limestone blocks were recovered from the area tipped to the east. But there were no clear remains of a staircase.

Figure 182 Northwest room (looking southeast)

Stylobates

Evident in the floor of the central and northwest rooms are remains of the corner of a stylobate that preceded the building. In the central room, the stylobate is on a line with W1892. The stylobate is 89 cm wide, the southern edge of which is 2.29 m from W1952. In the northwest room is a perpendicular portion of the same stylobate (similar dimensions). The stylobate runs north to south and continues under W2007. Its western line is 1.44 m from W1923. This stylobate likely formed a corner with the east-to-west stylobate in the central room. The outward face of the stylobate is to the west and is 4.12 m from the line of the east face of the wall of the Roman basilica. The stylobate is 33 cm thick and sits on a foundation base. Possibly, during the Roman period a substantive public building stood on this location north of the *decumanus*.

Figure 183 Stylobates in floor of the Alpha Building (looking south)

Other observations

We also observe that the south face of W2007 is 3.4 m south of the north face of the wall of the Alpha Building as seen from the west (area of the basilica). Apparently W1286 is the north wall of the Alpha Building. If so, the space between W2007 and W1286 is 1.8m. It is hardly the space for a room, but may be a staircase, as may be indicated by some steps at the east end of the space. A parallel wall runs next to it to the north and forms the south wall of the Beta Building complex. That building extends to the north for 10.5 m on the west side (and perhaps further). The corresponding dimension of W1239 on the east side is 12.5 m.

The surviving portions of the Alpha Building likely served a storage function for whatever floor(s) stood above. The heavy basalt ashlar of the exterior walls suggest something substantive stood above as do the presence of one and possibly two staircases. The building seems to have been in use up to the last days of Hippos, having replaced an earlier Roman structure intimated by the remains of two stylobates. Its function was likely utilitarian or even industrial in view of its plain construction and surrounding installations.

11.

THE 2012-2013 SEASONS

In 2012-2013, work in the eastern zone of the NIP focused in two areas: a room directly east of the peristyle court and the southeast corner of the original structure. Additionally, the westerly entrance to the peristyle court and the cistern of the peristyle court were documented. During the same two years, the Beta building in the western zone was excavated.

Figure 184 Top plan after 2012-2013 with new grid scheme

The report will detail work done in both areas, specifically discussion the following topics:

- Eastern zone
 - Eastern room of the House of Tyche
 - Southeast corner of the House of Tyche
 - House of Tyche – miscellaneous clarifications
 - Conclusion
- Western zone
 - Between the Alpha and Beta Buildings
 - Southern room of the Beta Building
 - Northwest room of the Beta Building
 - Northeast room of the Beta Building
 - Interior courtyard of the Beta Building
 - Conclusion

Figure 185 Eastern loci

Figure 186 Western loci

Eastern Zone

The eastern room

Directly east of the peristyle court and sharing a common southern wall is a room of approximately 8 x 6 that was subdivided by a window wall in a later phase.

The east interior length is 6.94 m; the south interior width is 4.33 m; the west interior wall is 7.45 m; and the north interior dimension is 4.53 m. The south section of the room is 2.03 m wide on the east end and 2.17 m wide on the west end. From the north side of the window wall to the south edge of the shelf is 3.57 at the east end and 3.81 at the west end. The gaps between the three uprights are 0.74 m from the east wall to the first upright, 0.81 m between

the first and second upright, and 0.78 m between the second upright and the westerly most surviving upright.

Window walls have been found at several ancient sites and seem to have served at least a couple different purposes. At Chorazin, where this structure was first discovered, the window wall divided a large multipurpose room from a smaller storage or service area. This same plan was found in three apartments that were all part of a large complex at Tel el-Joukhadar, as well as in two village homes in Qatzrin.²⁶⁵ A similar design was found in an ancient house at Horvat Kanaf.²⁶⁶

The window wall apparently allowed for light and air to flow easily through both rooms. Archaeologists at Qatzrin speculate that the large room was where most family activity took place, including eating. They also believe that a sleeping loft, reached by a wooden ladder, was located above the smaller room.²⁶⁷ At Capernaum, the smaller room functioned as an animal stable with each window acting as a separate stall to which the animals were tied. On cold nights warmth from the animals spread to the sleeping loft directly above.²⁶⁸

The fixture in the northwest corner of the eastern room is 1.98 m on east, 2.09 m on the west, 1.2 on the south, and 1.19 on the north. There is a shelf next to the north wall of the space. The dimensions of the shelf are 3.40 m east to west. Its width varies from 0.67 m on the west to 0.70 m on the east. Its height is 0.65 m on the east and 0.57 m on the west.

A blocked doorway was identified in W1261. The doorway is 0.92 m wide; the west edge of the door is 2.80 m from the west face of W1910. The exterior of the door is to the north.

Along with the typical destruction fill, significant quantities of molded plaster were recovered, especially as we approached the floor. One collection of 9 pieces of molded and painted plaster is typical. The two most prominent pieces have a double bevel near the top, followed by a longer inward bevel and one more outward bevel. One smaller piece may be the same double bevel as the top of the two prominent pieces. Other pieces in the collection appear to be painted, some with a dark color (either blue or black) or with a red color.

Likewise, several pieces of painted fresco were recovered from the fill. They seem to portray portions of a disk or medallion with a gold center crossed by red lines (a sun disk?).

²⁶⁵ A. Killebrew, B. Grantham, and S. Fine, 'A "Talmudic" House at Qasrin: On the Use of Domestic Space and Daily Life during the Byzantine Period', *Near Eastern Archaeology*, Vol. 66, No. 1, 2003, pgs. 59-72.

²⁶⁶ S. Pfann, 'Village', *Surveys and Excavations at the Nazareth Village Farm*, 2002, pgs. 19-21.

²⁶⁷ A. Killebrew, and S. Fine, 'Qatzrin-Reconstructing Village Life in Talmudic Times', *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Vol. 17, no. 3, 1991, pgs. 44-57.

²⁶⁸ L. Stager, 'Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel', *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 260, pgs. 12-17.

Figure 187 Fresco

During the Roman Period, the First Pompeian Style of painting (beginning in the 4th century BCE) introduced colors such as red, yellow, black, green, and purple into wall paintings. These colors continued to be popular for the next several centuries, and well into the Byzantine Period.²⁶⁹ Byzantine Art was primarily religious art, most often depicting religious figures, such as Jesus, Mary, or the apostles.²⁷⁰ However, figures of animals and birds were also common, especially in Syria, Palestine, and Transjordan. These figures were usually isolated and set against a geometric background. Scenes of months, seasons, and the sun and moon were also popular in wall paintings.²⁷¹

As we approached the floor, we began to recover large quantities of tesserae. Most tesserae in the fill are individual of the 1 cm or slightly larger size and white in color. There are also a good number of smaller tesserae. Occasional clumps of tesserae were recovered. One clump of tesserae indicated a merging of two flows of white tesserae. There is a single border of black tesserae. To the border cling a red, yellow, and red tesserae. The colors coordinate with the fresco fragment found in the room.

Portions of a plaster floor (F2119) (or a sublevel to a mosaic floor) survive. However, we never found any tesserae intact in the plaster. The floor survives best next to the northerly shelf and in NE and SE corners. In the middle and toward the west, less of the floor survives. The plaster shows indications of going up the front of the shelf. So, during at least one plastering, the shelf was also plastered. The fixture in the northwest corner of the room sits on the plaster. The window wall is imbedded into the plaster. We did open a 1 x 2 m probe in the northeast corner of the room (L2123), but we shortly reached bedrock. There were

²⁶⁹ Ling, Roger. *Roman Painting*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991. Pgs. 13-25.

²⁷⁰ Hutter, Irmgard. *Early Christian and Byzantine Art*. New York: Universe Books, 1971. Pgs. 64-71.

²⁷¹ Beckwith, John. *Early Christian and Byzantine Art*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986. Pg. 67.

almost no remains in the plaster. Elsewhere in the room, no plaster remained on top of the bedrock.

The ceramic assemblages near the floor level were mostly from the sixth and seventh centuries. Nothing distinctly Umayyad was found.

In its final phases, this eastern room of the House of Tyche underwent the typical subdivision and domestication of larger structures in the time of the Byzantine to Umayyad transition. Its original function in the House of Tyche may have been as a reception hall or triclinium. But all evidence of that function, besides the shape of the room, has vanished.

Southeast Corner of the House of Tyche

A square was opened in the southeast corner of the House of Tyche to identify the intersection of W1298 and W1915.

Initially, we followed the south face of the northern wall (W1917) to a junction with the east wall (W1298). The wall is of poor quality and clearly comes from a later time than the House of Tyche, as it blocks access to the rest of the house. Only the foundation course of the south wall (W1915) of the peristyle house remains. A threshold is in situ in the wall, indicating that there was a door to the south. The threshold is 53 cm wide and begins 2.58 m from W1298. 0.83 m of the threshold is visible. The rest is covered by a plastered basin.

A plastered basin was exposed in the southwest corner of the square overlaying W1915. The basin curves to a flat bottom and continues to the south into the balk. The basin is preserved to a depth of 90 cm next to the wall (W1904). It is 41 cm east to west and more than 65 cm north to south. It is preserved to a height of 26 cm to the north. Two fragments of a threshold are placed, seemingly intentionally, against the north side of the basin. A double headed ax (16.0 x 21.0 x 2.5 cm) missing one of the heads was recovered near the basin along with a large gastropod likely from the Red Sea and indicating importation.

Figure 188 Items from the southeast corner

The entire space is roughly paved with flat basalt pieces, but at an elevation higher than the threshold in W1904. The paving seems to come from the same phase as W1917. These later additions suggest that by the Umayyad period the area consisted of small dwelling that used part of the previous House of Tyche after its southeast corner collapsed.

The ceramic assemblage dated from the 6th century AD to the 8th century. The deposits were heavy, mostly medium sized fragments of cooking vessels and Baysan jars with a large quantity of handles, several LRC wares and an ARS rim. Indicative wares included LRC (Hayes) form 10A from late 6 AD - early 7th AD and form 10C from early 7th AD; Late BYZ - UMM casserole; LRC (Hayes) form 3F from 6th AD; oil lamp made of buff material (parallel to Zusman 1978, pp.105, number 424) from 4th AD – 6th AD. We recovered two restorable Baysan jars next to the north wall.

A full assessment of the southeast corner of the House of Tyche awaits excavation of areas to the north and south. However, some late usage of the corner as a courtyard could have been combined with the cubiculum to the west to be a small domestic space in the ruins of the House of Tyche. The corner was apparently used up until the demise of what little remained of the city.

House of Tyche - Miscellaneous clarifications

Several small projects were carried out in parts of the House of Tyche in 2013.

Previously, we had speculated that the blocked doorway at the west end of the south portico of the peristyle court had provided access to the northern rooms of the Northeast Church after its apse had interrupted cordo 3N and intruded into the western wall of the House of Tyche. Upon removing the blockage, we discovered that the original doorway (1.35 m) had been constricted by limestone door jambs to a width of 0.55 m. This smaller doorway is 30 cm above the previous threshold and off center to the north by 20 cm. Outside the doorway, a plaster platform of about 10 cm has been poured between the doorway and the apse, up next to the apse, proving that the doorway (and thus at least part of the House of Tyche) was used by the monastery associated with the Northeast Church. Similar limestone door jambs narrowed both doorways from the *skeuphylakion* into the street and into the chancel. The step down to the plaster slab is 45 cm. The ceramic assemblage from the blockage dates to the 7th and 8th AD.

Figure 189 Modified doorway in west wall of House of Tyche

Some collapse of the north balk of the terrace area of the House of Tyche allowed exploration of the small, plastered tank/pool previously identified in the balk. First, we cleared the upper width of the tank (140 cm) from east to west to a level of 15 cm., observing the plastered exterior and marble top (12 cm wide) of the tank. We opened a 50 x 50 cm probe in the southeast corner of the tank, to a depth of 70 cm. We found that the interior of the tank and the bottom was sealed with a plaster coating. The first 30 cm of the interior of the probe was baseball sized rock and ceramic shards. From 30 cm to 58 cm the fill was sediment, smaller shards, and smaller rocks. From 58 cm to the bottom, the fill consisted of fine sediment with a few tesserae.

Thirdly, we entered and surveyed the cistern below the peristyle court. Two basalt beams are used, one the east and one on the west, to form the opening and to hold up the paving. We identified a ceramic pipe that brought water from the north to the cistern. The cistern is bell shaped, with at least two layers of grayish plaster. It is about 3.2 m deep with a neck of 34 cm.

Figure 190 Profile of cistern under the peristyle court

Conclusion

Work on the House of Tyche in 2012 and 2013 has more fully defined the dimensions of the house and provided glimpses of its original glory, while also pointing to significant modification and reuse of portions of the house in later phases. Exposure of the remaining unexcavated portion of the house in 2015 should be these matters into greater focus.

Western Zone

Figure 191 Beta Building (looking northwest)

The Beta building complex has a westerly face of 10.9 meters that is preserved to a height of four to five courses in places. It is located 9.75 m from the gate of the church complex.

The Beta building complex is an L-shaped structure that wraps around the northwest corner of the paved plaza.

Figure 192 Top plan of the Alpha and Beta Buildings after 2013

Between the Alpha and Beta Buildings

The Beta Building is set 2.75 m to the north of the Alpha Building. To access the area, we removed W1286, a floating wall with three courses surviving. It likely comes from some pastoral occupation of the site in more recent times. The wall could have fenced in animals, as did other floating walls on the site.

The gap between the buildings was blocked on the west end by a simple wall thrown up between the buildings after the original construction. Likewise, the gap was blocked on the east end by a small room with a bench/bed set onto the pavers of the plaza. Originally, it was possible to pass between the buildings. There seemed to be the remains of a staircase next to the north wall of the Alpha Building, indicated by one surviving basalt beam positioned perpendicular to the wall. The rest of the staircase was robbed out. The staircase would have provided a second entrance to the Alpha Building, perhaps from the west.

We dug a 1.5 x 2.75 m probe in the east end of the gap to a level of cobbles, identified as the base for the stylobate previously seen as running to the north in the Alpha Building. The stylobate is clearly visible in W2007 but has been robbed out to the north. There is no evidence of the stylobate *in situ* in south wall (W1945) of Beta Building, although at least two stones of similar shape were used in the wall as well as multiples in the south wall (W2108) of the northeast room. Two feeding troughs were discovered at the level of the cobbles. We conclude that the Beta Building was built after removal of the stylobate for the purpose of getting building stones for constructing the building. We infer that the Beta Building was

constructed after the Alpha Building. The ceramic assemblage was mostly seventh and eighth CE.

Southern room of the Beta Building

Figure 193 Southern room (looking west)

The southern room of the Beta Building has an interior dimension is about 4.5 x 5 m. The west interior wall is 4.28 m, the east wall is 4.55 m, the north wall is 4.98 m, and the south wall is 5.14 m. 5.62 m from the southwest exterior corner is a seam in the west wall. The seam aligns with the north face of the north wall of the room (W2114). W2114 has a north-facing doorway 87 cm from its east end. The doorway is 95 cm wide and is blocked. The threshold is 65 cm above the floor. There is a 1.20 m doorway to the east that provides access to the paved plaza.

The floor (F2116) of the southern room sits one half meter below the paved plaza to the east and is itself paved with basalt pavers of similar size and orientation. The pavers abut the east, west, and south walls. But the north wall sits on top of the pavers, suggesting that that the space was originally an outdoor plaza. Apparently, a roof was added to the room in this later phase.

The roof was held up by a double arch. The arch spanned from an inverted base (63 x 64.5 cm) next to the south wall that functioned as a pilaster to a central column base (36 cm diameter) sitting on top of the paved plaza to a y-shaped limestone block on the top of W2114 that aligns with the central column and the southern inverted base. Several fragments of the arch were recovered in the fill, as was a small roof roller. We presume that the arch continued to the north over the northwest room.

Figure 194 Arching of southern room (looking south)

In the southwest corner of the room sitting on the floor was a 75 x 173 cm marble panel. It was broken and undecorated on either side. We revealed two limestone column drums and a broken spiral-fluted column in the northwest corner of the room. The fluted column has a square bottom measures 22 x 21 x 6 cm. The square portion has 3 horizontal bands with a total measurement is 10 cm (top band is 3 cm, middle band is 3 cm, and bottom band is 4 cm). The upper portion of the fragment has carved spirals 51 cm long, 16 cm wide at top, and 17 cm at bottom. We speculate that these fragments supported the marble panel and functioned as a table.

Northwest room of the Beta Building

Figure 195 Northwest room (looking south)

The northwest room (4.75 x 5 m) in the Beta Building complex is more poorly constructed and was abutted to the south room perhaps secondarily. The west interior face is 4.77 m; the east interior face is 4.72 m. The north interior face is 4.99 m, and the south is 5.04 m. The exterior faces are basalt ashlar with crude and sometimes undefined interior faces. There was a small doorway (93 cm) without a door jamb from the southeast corner of the room into a courtyard to the east. The floor is of packed earth and was identified by the foundation trench for the south wall (W2114). A coin retrieved at floor level was from the reign of Theodosius I (393-395 CE). The meager pottery assemblage was from the seventh and eighth CE.

Northeast room of the Beta Building

The northeast room (6 x 2.75 m) is of similar construction. The interior face of the north wall is 6.34 m, of the south wall is 6.08 m, of the west wall is 2.81 m, and of the east wall is 2.75 m

It has a single doorway (1.11 m, door is 1.22 m) in its southeast corner that gives access to and interior courtyard to the south. The exterior of the door is to the south.

The floor (F2105) is of pressed earth and is at a similar elevation to the floor in the northwest room. Besides a concentration of pottery shards and small bones at the middle of the south wall, no other distinguishing factors identify the room. The ceramic assemblage consists mostly of medium-sized shards of jars and cooking vessels. Indicative wares include UMM casseroles and UMM grey Baysan jars.

Figure 196 Northeast room and probe (looking northwest)

A probe was dug in the northeast corner of the room. The probe reached bedrock at a depth of approximately 1 m below the floor. The probe also revealed that the lower three courses of W1244 were of earlier and better construction (ashlars). The lowest course rests on

bedrock and runs into the line of W1239. The north section of the Beta Building was constructed on the ruins of a previous structure.

Interior courtyard of the Beta Building

Figure 197 Courtyard (looking west)

Directly south is a crudely paved (F2104) interior courtyard. Most pavers are rectangular in basalt. Some are basalt building stones. In the eastern part of the square, some of the floor is plaster/mud over cobbles.

In the center of the courtyard is a column base upon which there was a drum tilted to the north in the destruction fill. The presence of this column suggests that the courtyard may have been partially roofed. The pavers against the north wall are raised about 15 cm and may have functioned as a low bench.

A wall (W1250) separates the courtyard from the paved plaza to the south. There is a doorway in W1250 located 4.98m from the southeast exterior corner of the building. The exterior of the door is to the south. The opening is 1.28 m; the door was 1.38 m wide.

Figure 198 Staircase in the interior courtyard of the Beta Building

In the southeast corner is a makeshift limestone staircase which rises to the east toward W1239. It led to the roof or a second story. Eight stairs remain. The treads are 15-22 cm; the stairs rise 22-24 cm. Elevations of the steps are: 128.766 (Bottom step); 129.041 (Step 2); 129.214 (Step 3); 129.451 (Step 4); 129.636 (Step 5); 129.881 (Step 6); 130.095 (Step 7); 130.272 (Step 8).

Two basalt bowls were found in the southeast corner of the room next to the west wall. Between was a small crude grinder with a handle. All three were sitting on the floor. At the base of the stairs is an hour-glass mill with two rectangular notches on the sides across from each other for handles.

Conclusion

Remarkable in the excavation of the rooms of the Beta Building was the relative paucity of ceramic finds. No restorable vessels were found. The heavy stone bowls were pushed against a wall and doorways were intentionally blocked. A similar situation was discovered a domestic area and street in the western part of Hippos. It seems that the Beta Building was abandoned prior to the earthquake of 749 CE. The westerly structures not only illustrate the extreme poverty of the Umayyad period, but they also mark a trend notable throughout the excavation area of the Project. This quadrant of Hippos, located as close as it may be to the center of the city, was essentially abandoned well before the earthquake. Such would likely be true of much of the rest of the city. The glories of Antiochia Hippos were in the distant past.

12.

THE 2014 MAINTENANCE SEASON

In 2014, two team members did cleaning and maintenance work on the site. Some small projects were also completed during the shortened season.

Figure 199 Top plan after 2014

Southeast corner of the House of Tyche

After finishing excavation of the later space/courtyard built into the ruins of the southeast corner of the House of Tyche, we exposed a bench along the east wall and believe that the southern wall of the house was either covered or used as a low bench. This space and the previously identified *cubiculum* were not part of the original House of Tyche, but were built into and over the ruins of the southeast corner.

This space has three phases: the original late Roman House of Tyche abandoned in the late fourth century, a small domestic structure of one room and a courtyard and a bench to the east from the Byzantine period, and a later structure (Umayyad or possibly post-749) built on top of the ruins.

Figure 200 Southeast corner and bench (looking northwest)

Against the base of the bench next to the north wall of the courtyard, we recovered a small amphora (9 x 25 cm) nearly intact.

Figure 201 Small amphora

Cistern E

Located to the south of the basalt staircase that gave access to the second story of the Alpha Building, this cistern was surveyed using a laser measuring device set perpendicular to a rod. Measurements were taken every twenty centimeters in four directions from the central rod to produce an east/west profile and a north/south profile. Cistern E is of a size like the others discovered in the project. It is about 4.5 m deep, and the bell has a diameter of 3-4 m.

Figure 202 Profiles of Cistern E

Probe to bedrock east of the apse

A probe was opened in the small room directly east of the apse of the church. The probe identified the first course of a bench against the east wall of the room. There was little pottery in the probe except from a fragment of a Hellenistic drinking bowl.

We encountered bedrock from 15-49 cm below the surface, a depth comparable to the probes dug in the nave, in the space west of the church's portico and in the room west of the *diakonikon*.

Figure 203 Probe (looking north) and bowl fragment

13.

THE 2015 SEASON

In 2015, an area of approximately 10 x 10 meters inside the original boundaries of the House of Tyche remained unexcavated. The plan for the 2015 season was to expose this area to identify its function in its final phase.

Figure 204 Excavation area for 2015

Excavation work in 2015 revealed a large room (4.97 x 8.38 m) southeast of the peristyle court with window walls to the west and to the east. This report addresses:

- A room in three parts
- Floors
- Ceiling
- Ceramics and other small finds
- Speculation on usage

Figure 205 Southern room complex of the House of Tyche with loci and elevations

A room in three parts

Figure 206 Western window wall

The western window wall (W1270) was previously exposed. It has a doorway to the west with its exterior to the west. The base for the windows survives. But only two uprights are *in situ* at the south end.

The eastern window wall (W2132) is intact at its north end. The uprights are approximately 77 cm tall. The first upright is 61 cm from W2161. The upright is 24 cm in width. The second upright is 54 cm to the south and is 24 cm in width. The third upright is 73 cm to the south and is 18 cm in width. However, after about 3 m, the wall seems to have exploded (earthquake damage?). One of the vertical pieces of the window wall has slid down two courses. Another vertical piece lies horizontal on the current surface of the fill. Most of the middle section of the window wall has been destroyed with even the base course showing some shifting.

Figure 207 Eastern window wall

There is a doorway toward the south end of W2132. The doorway is 97 cm in width, and it begins 1.34 m from W1917. The bottom course (all that survives) seems to indicate that the doorway was blocked intentionally in antiquity. The presence of this doorway explains the many limestone doorjambs in the destruction fill.

Next to the southern wall (W1288) of the room is a high (70 cm) and wide (70 cm) bench. A light roof roller sits on its surface, possibly having fallen when the roof collapsed.

To the east of W2132, we excavated the southern portion of a second room. The room is 3.19 m from east to west with presumably the same north to south dimension of the central room (8.38 m).

Figure 208 W1917 collapsing (looking southeast)

Its southern wall (W1917) was in perilous condition and was mostly disassembled. The wall seems to have blocked the space between the east end of W1288 and the west face W1298 which it abuts.

Figure 209 W2143 sitting on W1298 (looking south)

W1298 is the east boundary of the room. We discovered that the original W1298 (about 70 cm wide) has sitting on top of it a later wall (W2143, about 50 cm wide) that seems to be the west wall of a much later building set atop the ruins of the House of Tyche. W1298 survives to an elevation of about 132.35. Approximately 70 cm of W1243 sits above. About 2.55 m of W1243 is visible. At its south end, a wall seems to proceed to the east across the line of the small cardo. There may be parallel walls at the midpoint and at the north end of the exposed section of the wall.

Figure 210: Loci and squares

Floors

Figure 211 Flagstone floors (looking east)

The floor of the central room (F2141) is a mud/plaster combination on top of flat stones or cobbles. Some of the plaster floor remains against the western wall (W1270). The survival of the floor is inconsistent, with gaps and holes. In the southeast corner of the room, flat stones form a flagstone surface near the doorway to the eastern space. Some flat stones continue across the southern end near the bench.

The floor of the eastern room is entirely flat stones. The stones abut W1298 and W1917. As they sit at the same level as the threshold to the space, they may be from a second phase.

Ceiling

We discovered a column base/drum protruding from the plaster floor of the central room at 130.50. The column in the center of the room is 48 cm in diameter. It is 3.87 m from W1261 and 3.78 m from W1288. It is 2.27 m from W2132 and 2.21 m from W1270. Destruction fill suggests that an arch spanned from wall to column to wall. As it would be easier to cover the 2.2+ m gap with branches and mud than a gap of around 3.8 m, we surmised that the arches went from north to south (from W1261 to the column base to W1288). Examination of the walls indicated a crude pilaster in W1261 just to the east of the doorway and there seems to be a notch in W1288 to receive the arch. The pilaster and notch are on a straight line with the column base.

Figure 212 North "pilaster"

Figure 213 South notch

We opened the floor to the south of the protruding column and found that it was a base (not a drum). A 15 cm shaft protruded above the floor. The upper torus is 6 cm, the scotia is 5 cm, and the lower torus is 9 cm. The column base is not from previous construction but was brought to the room from elsewhere as it sits on and is held in place by crude stones.

Figure 214 Protruding column base

Ceramics and other small finds

A heavy concentration of pottery shards was recovered from the middle portion of the central room near the column base about 15 cm above the floor. Most were Baysan jars (some restorable) and cooking pots. The collection included a restorable Byzantine funnel (larger than the Umayyad funnels found south of the Northwest Church in the wine vat area in

previous seasons). Our field reading did not identify any distinctively Umayyad pottery in the collection.

An intact ceramic unguentarium (sixth century?) was retrieved next to the floor just to the right (east) of the north doorway. It is 20 cm in length.

Close by, two oil lamps were recovered intact from a small crevice next to the north doorway in W1261 on the right side. They were 6 cm in width, 9 cm in length, and 3 cm high. Field reading is Byzantine. One has beads around the filling hole. The other has a herringbone pattern on the shoulder and a round decoration between the nozzle and the fill hole. Further investigation suggests that these are so-called “North Jordan” lamps type, dated (mainly on stylistic criteria) to the late fifth and the sixth centuries CE. Their manufacturing center might have been Beit Ras (Capitolias of the Decapolis) where hundreds of them were found.²⁷²

Figure 215: Byz funnel

Figure 216: Unguentarium

Figure 217: North Jordan lamps

In the eastern room, a deposit of glass in layers was discovered next to W1298 about 1.2 m from W1917 at an elevation of 131.39. The layer was very fragile and shattered. After gentle exposure, it appeared to be a crushed bowl (three sections alternating concave and convex).

Lastly, in the central room, an anta for an hourglass grinding mill sits just inside the northerly door. It is like the two that sit outside the room in the peristyle court.

²⁷² K. da Costa, “Economic Cycles in the Byzantine Levant: the Evidence from Lamps at Pella in Jordan.” *Levant* 42 (2010): 70-87.

Speculation on usage

Window walls are a common feature of the final phases of the Northeast Insulae Project.

Figure 218: Window walls (circled in red)

They are characteristic of larger but varied trends in the Byzantine period that “blurred the separation between private and public domains.... Cities were gradually transferred into more complex but lively and developing urban tissue in which various functions were located together in the same area.”²⁷³ Especially in the House of Tyche, window walls mark the remaking of space for more functional purposes. East of the peristyle, the former triclinium (likely) was so subdivided. The space excavated this year, with its large central room and window walls to the east and west is most notable. Here, we do not see subdivision (at

²⁷³ Gideon Avni, ““From Polis to Madina” Revisited—Urban Change in Byzantine and Early Islamic Palestine,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 21, no. 3 (2011): 328.

least not yet), but rather reconstruction. The southeast corner of the House of Tyche seems to be separate from this larger central structure with side rooms to the east and west.

Window walls are characteristic of domestic construction. Katharina Galor writes:

Most houses excavated in the Galilee and Golan (except for those at Sepphoris) include window walls. These walls, fenestrated about seventy centimeters above the floor at regular intervals for their entire length, are characteristic of the building style in the Hauran and Bashan regions. Window walls are usually located in the rooms immediately adjacent to the courtyard, hereby allowing air and light to enter the rear rooms.²⁷⁴

But this construction of the southerly room complex seems to be more than just domestic and very different from the multifamily structures at Chorazin and Capernaum. Room B, the largest room, seems to have been an assembly place. Room C has benches on the east and west with doorways to the north and south. Room D has a cistern and was likely not roofed. It has access to the alley as well as access to Room B. It may have been a kitchen (although it lacks an oven).

Figure 219: Southern room complex

Room E was for storage (amphorae with dipinti were found there). At this point, our ideas are highly speculative, but we do wonder if Room B served as a refectory for the community for which the Northeast Church was its memorial center. Detailed reading of the ceramic

²⁷⁴ Galor, "Domestic Architecture in Roman and Byzantine Galilee and Golan," 53.

finds from Room B as well as complete excavation of Room A may move us beyond speculation.

14.

THE 2016 SEASON

The 2016 season marked the final of fifteen field seasons on the Northeast Insulae Project conducted by Concordia University, Saint Paul. The project area sits north of the *decumanus maximus* and east of the Roman basilica. It is subdivided by three narrow *cardines*. In its later phases, the northern portions may have been part of an urban monastic complex surrounding a small chapel that venerated an elderly woman.

Figure 220 Photogrammetric model courtesy of the University of Haifa

The Eastern Work Zone

During the 2015 season, the team had been working on the southern part of the House of Tyche exposing a structure with an arched central room with window walls to the east and west. During 2016, the team completed excavation of the room east of the easterly window wall.

Figure 221: The eastern work zone

Storage room

The storage room has an interior dimension of roughly 8 x 3.1 m.²⁷⁵ The west wall is a window wall. Three upright pieces of the windows remain at the north end which stand 20-23 cm tall and have spacing gaps of 66, 67, and 62 cm from north to south. The middle section of the wall was severely damaged with only a foundation course remaining. There is a doorway threshold at the south end of the wall yielding access to the storage space.

W1917 to the south is of poor construction. It is a conglomeration of reused stones and architectural items (small column drums, the diameter of one is 56 cm and of another is 40

²⁷⁵ The interior lengths of the walls are:

W1917 is 3.02 m

W2132 is 7.97 m

W1298 is 8.06 m

W2161 is 3.20 m

cm). In the southeast corner, part of W1298 abuts W1917 and part penetrates it. This circumstance is reinforced by the observation that W1298 shows multiple phases of construction/repair, the final of which was the use of the line of the wall by the western wall of a small structure that sat on top of the ruins. The west end of W2151 forms the northwest corner of that late structure. A more detailed description of W1298 will be part of the final report on the 2016 season.

W2161 is the north wall of the structure. It was modified from its earlier use by the blockage of a substantive doorway to the spaces to the north. As this blockage was smooth on both faces, the blockage was functional for the final phase and not part of decommissioning the structure.

The floor of the storage areas is paved with irregular flat stones that fit together loosely. The paving is most consistent and tightly fitting in the center of the room and toward the southwest doorway, reinforcing the idea that the room was used for storage. Large quantities of Baysan jar fragments confirm the hypothesis. An almost complete oil lamp was recovered on the floor near the middle of W2132. It is parallel to a type reported from Bet Shean from 5-6 CE and almost early 7 CE.²⁷⁶

We also cleared about a meter of the line of Cardo 4N east of W1298. In so doing, we identified the western wall of a building to the east (W2150) along with a small perpendicular wall blocking the cardo between W1298 and W2150 on the line of W1261. Its function is uncertain.

The Northern Work Zone

There are several indications in the Northeast Church that a building functioning as part of the compound sits immediately to the north. Previously, we noted the blocked passageway in the north medial chamber, two doorways in W575 and wall fragments proceeding north (now labelled W2153, W2154, and W583). There are also the remains of a staircase next to the south wall of the north lateral chamber that seemed to serve the building to the north, as there was no evidence of a balcony in the church.

We therefore opened a 5 m section paralleling W540. Work further to the north was restricted due to an access driveway along the north edge of the site. We subsequently did cut a trench into the driveway following W2161 to its north end where it formed a corner with W2167 proceeding to the east. Before the close of the season, the trench was refilled, so that the driveway could be restored.

²⁷⁶ Hadad 2002, p.65 Type 25 (n.281).

Figure 222: The Northern Work Zone

Based on our work during the season and assuming W2167 eventually connects to W575. We posit a Northern Building of two stories with an interior dimension of 7.6 m from north to south and 15 m from east to west on the south widening to approximately 15.75 m on the north (W575 and W2153 skew away from each other slightly). The building is subdivided into two sections by a central wall running north to south (W2154) and the westerly section is again subdivided by a wall running east to west (W2156).

Eastern section

We have exposed all the eastern section, except the northern third. The space is 8.8 m from east to west. 3.1 m west of W575 is a pilaster that protrudes 1.7 m into the room. We presume it is matched by something similar next to the still buried W2167. An arch between the two pilasters would hold up the second story.

On the west side of W575 is a crude bench (75-115 cm deep south to north and approx. 40 cm high) that was installed in a second phase after the southern doorway in W575 was blocked. Most of the floor (F2149) is missing in the eastern section of this space. But near the still open doorway are bricks (roughly 20 x 20 cm) remaining from the original flooring. 20 cm from the western line of the arch, the floor rises (F2162) about 10 cm and is paved with irregular flat stones to W2154. A low bench sits next to W2154 (80 cm deep and 34 cm high).

Figure 223 Eastern section (looking west)

3.8 m north of W540 and parallel to it is the remains of a door threshold (55 x 103 cm) from an earlier construction (W2163). The exterior of the threshold is to the north. Opposite it in W540 is the blocked passageway from the north medial chamber. The threshold is 1.4 m above F2162.

Figure 224 Threshold (looking north)

Mosaic fragments

In the destruction fill beginning about 40 cm above the floor we recovered hundreds of individual tesserae, many small clusters, and several dozen fragments that showed evidence of geometric patterns.

Figure 225 Geometric samples

The top two examples on the right in the figure above are reminiscent of the same guilloche pattern discovered in the first layer of the mosaic floor of the *domus*, an example of which is provided in the figure below.

Figure 226 guilloche from floor in nave

In addition, we found a few fragments that indicate an inscription was part of the mosaic from the second story.

The letters identified include an epsilon followed by a space and then a new word perhaps beginning with a lambda, a theta, an epsilon beginning a line with a tau beginning the next line, a second theta, and the bottom of an omega or the top of an upsilon. Of the letters, our epigrapher, Adam Łajtar, wrote, “Unfortunately the fragments are too small to say something certain about the content of the inscription. What seems important to me is that the letters are of two different heights. If so, we probably are dealing with some abbreviated words. Smaller letters were shifted to mark abbreviations.”²⁷⁷

²⁷⁷ Adam Łajtar, “Mosaic Fragments from the Northern Building,” July 9, 2016.

Figure 227 Fragments of an inscription

Northwest quadrant

Due to access limitations, we were only able to excavate a 1.5 m swath of the northwest quadrant to the north of W2156. There are no architectural features from the space and access to the quadrant was either from above or through a doorway currently hidden in the unexcavated area.

We postulate that the area was used primarily for storage. The ceramic assemblage included storage jars and cooking pots (5-6 CE), and the notable find of a fully intact small storage jar.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁸ Roni Ben-Arieh, "The Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad Pottery," in *The Roman Baths of Hammat Gader*, ed. Yizhar Hirschfeld (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1997), plate XIII:9.

Figure 228 Buff ware storage jar (Byzantine/Umayyad)

The layer of fill toward the bottom of the wall was particularly rich in larger animal bones, many chopped. Toward the bottom of the wall we reached a layer of soil relatively lacking in small finds and containing some plaster. It was likely the floor.

We excavated below the level of the foundation trench of the wall to bedrock (40-90 cm). Sitting on bedrock under the wall was the foundation trench of an early wall (W2168), 4.3 m east of W2153. It runs under W2156, through the southwest quadrant, and under the north wall of the church building (W540).

While tracing W2153 to the north, we discovered the top of another wall perpendicular to and running to the west. This 70 cm wall is 4.1 m from the southwest corner of the Northern Building.

Southwest quadrant

Figure 229 Southwest quadrant of the northern building

The southwest quadrant likely served as a food preparation area. On the east side of W2153 is a catch basin for water piped down from the roof (not a bench as previously identified). Although quite damaged, it seems to have held some water and channeled the excess south along and under W540 to the cistern under it. Next to it is a 90 cm taboun. The floor south of the taboun consists of flat stones. To the east of the taboun is a two-level platform/shelf the upper portion of which is composed of architectural fragments. The upper self is 65 cm deep. The lower section is 170 cm deep.

To the east of this working area, the floor was a dense and hard-packed yellowish layer that overtopped the earlier W2168 and abutted the 60 cm bench on the south side of the eastern portion of W2156. We broke through and sifted that layer recovering two coins. Unfortunately, one could not be identified and the other seemed to be a Roman imperial coin of the late fourth century. We then dug an L-shaped trench to bedrock showing that W1268 and the easterly bench on the southern side of W2156 both sat on bedrock.

Figure 230 Blocked doorway from the Northern Building to the North Lateral Chamber (looking south)

Access to this working area was from the North Lateral Chamber. The doorway begins 60 cm from the corner and is 140 cm wide. This blockage in W540 along with the addition of a course of stones (W555) on the south face of W540 sealed off the Northern Building while allowing continued (domestic?) use of the north lateral and medial chambers after the complex and the *domus* were decommissioned.

The ceramic assemblage included many cooking pots and jars from the 5-7 CE and are consistent with the posited usage of the complex from the fifth to early seventh centuries.

The features of the Northern Building would seem supportive of a larger community complex. The lower floor provided for food preparation and storage. The upper floor was more decorative, although its function cannot be determined.

Additional exposure of a Water Feature

Figure 231 Water feature (looking north)

While cleaning up the northerly terrace of the House of Tyche, we exposed a bit more fully a second water feature north of the lower section of the courtyard. The first ledge is 33 cm above the floor and is 16 cm wide. The top of the water feature is 54 cm above the ledge. The feature is 143 cm wide from east to west. The interior measurement is 97 cm. The top ledge is surfaced with reused marble slabs 20-30 cm wide, some of which are decorated with ficus leaves. Inside the feature there is a ledge on the south and west sides of the feature 93 cm below the top ledge, with the bottom of the feature another 19 cm below. We sifted material from the water feature, recovering only small ceramic fragments. After documentation and photography, we refilled this water feature and the fountain to the south to protect them from further damage.

An Early Entrance to the House of Tyche?

After removing a blockage in Cardo 3N between W575 and the House of Tyche to the east, we revealed the top of a blocked doorway in the west wall of the house. The lintel stone (161 x 52 cm) is *in situ* and has double incising, the first being 30 cm and the inner incising is 5 cm. The depth of each incising is 2.5 cm. The lintel stone is flanked on each side by 60 cm stone with 8 cm incising. The door jambs are 25 cm wide. The doorway is 110 cm. There is an incised stone to the north of the north door jamb. Using the height of the doorway to the terrace as a comparison, the threshold for this doorway would sit at the approximate level of the black and white paving of the lower (western) covered courtyard. The current steps and drainage channel from the peristyle court are about 50 cm above that level. This dramatic doorway may be remains of the first phase of the House of Tyche.

Figure 232 Embossed lintel stone (looking east)

Conservation of a connecting doorway

Finally, we note the repair and conservation of the doorway between Cardo 3N and the west wall of the House of Tyche next to the apse of the church. The reconstruction was done by the conservation team onsite and worked to match as closely as possible the photographs of the doorway when it was first exposed. The conservation preserves a key piece of evidence for the hypothesis that the interconnected structures in the Northeast Insula may in their last phase have been an urban monastery.

A small team from Concordia University Saint Paul conducted a study season during July of 2019 at the Northeast Insula Project of the Hippos Excavations.

The purpose of the season was to revisit and document for a second time the excavation area to compose a comprehensive descriptive narrative. Attention was devoted to the relationships between adjoining walls and the reuse of pre-existing phases. Due to the generosity of Wayne Mory, PLS, the team brought to the site a Leica BLK360 digital scanner to assist in the documentation process. 181 terrestrial LiDAR scans were made of various

subsections of the site. In addition, Michael Eisenberg employed a drone to produce a new orthographic photo and DEM image of the Northeast Insulae Project.

Figure 234 Ortho and DEM of NIP

In addition to documentation work, two probes were opened.

Figure 235 Location of Probes

Probe 1 was in the western portico of the church. We sought to determine if additional mosaic survived under the flagstone paving, as well as if there were any earlier phases under the portico.

Mosaic of the Portico

Prior to opening the probe, we cleared three lacunae on the west side of the west wall of the church where benches had previously been located. Fragments of the earlier mosaic paving survive to about 60 cm from the wall in places. The mosaic was geometric. The east border of the mosaic was Avi-Yonah pattern B9.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁹ Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements in Palestine," 139.

Figure 236 Avi Yonah pattern B9

After an additional six rows of white tesserae are a series of half circles consisting of two half circles of red tesserae, three half circles of white, one half circle of yellow, and a central cluster of black tesserae. The half circle is capped by a row of black tesserae and seems to rest on a small stand of three black half tesserae. These half circles form a parallel band to the guilloche, recurring every 54 cm on center.

Figure 237 Band of half circles

Further to the west, after eight rows of white tesserae, there is seemingly a third band of geometric figures, although only one sample survives. This geometric figure is a full circle, with a similar sequence of tesserae circles: two red, three white, one yellow and a black center. On the four compass points are black inserts that extend beyond the circle in a form like the base of the previous half circles.

Figure 238 Band of Full Circles

Probe 1

Probe 1 was located toward the north end of the portico, 1.9 m south of the northern threshold. The probe was 1.6 x 1.15 m. We discovered no additional surviving mosaic carpet. But there was a cobble base, affirming that the portico had been surfaced with tesserae prior to the installation of the surviving flagstone surface.

Figure 239 Cobble base for tesserae

We removed the cobble base and excavated to bedrock, which at its lowest point was 76 cm below the surface. We found no evidence of a previous surface for this small cardo. However, we did find a line of stones running parallel with the stylobate and sitting on the bedrock with a possible perpendicular pattern as well. We presume these stones were so positioned to help stabilize the fill over the bedrock to provide a stable surface for the portico.

Figure 240 Probe of the Portico (looking north)

Probe 2

A second probe was opened in the north end of the small cardo in front of the now blocked west entrance to the House of Tyche, the top of which entrance was revealed in 2016. The purpose of this second probe was to determine earlier phases of the small cardo and to identify the threshold of the doorway.

We opened 4.4 m section of the small cardo and dug to bedrock some 80 cm below and dropping off rapidly to the north. The possible earlier entrance to the House of Tyche turned out to be the reuse of the lintel stone and part of the door frame from another structure as wall stones in the west wall of the house. Limestone blocks below the surface of the cardo sat directly on bedrock.

Figure 241 Lintel stone in secondary use (looking northeast)

We did expose a plastered drainage channel covered with crude stones 45 cm from the west wall of the house and running parallel with it. The drain is 24 cm wide at the south end of the probe and widens about 40 cm at the north end. The source of the drain is unknown. The bottom of the drain is 60 cm below the surface at the south end of the probe and 79 cm below the surface at the north end.

Figure 242 Photogrammetry of the drainage channel

Field readings of pottery identified byzantine fragments in the drain including a fragment of a sixth century oil lamp. The fill at the level of bedrock was exclusively Roman including a fragment of an early Roman oil lamp. We surmise that the foundations set on bedrock date from Roman times with the drain having been added in the Byzantine period.

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