

Hippus (Sussita) Excavations 2005 – 6th Season Daily Log + Drawing

Date: ___ 17 July ___ Area: _____ NEC _____ Manager: Schuler

Squares	B0	B/C0	B4		E4
Loci	L565	L564	L557	L572	L567
Baskets	1995	1992	1993	1993b	1994
Walls					
Floors					

- Began work in Square B0 east of W560
 - Starting elevation = 132.12
 - Ending elevation = 131.84
 - Soil is Horizon A
 - Began to remove destructions fill from the presumed room (pastophory?) east of the Middle North chamber. Work focused on identifying wall lines and the northeast corner of the church. W540 extends to the east, but the eastern wall is uncertain.

- Continued work in Square B/C0
 - Starting elevation = 131.27
 - Ending elevation = 130.96
 - Soil is Horizon B
 - Continued to remove destruction fill. A bench may be emerging against the east wall between the blocked doorway and W521. A small Corinthian capital may have been used to help create this bench

- Continued work in Square B4
 - Starting elevation = 131.32
 - Ending elevation = 131.20-130.89 (floor)
 - Soil is Horizon B/C
 - The room is being cleared to floor level from the northwest corner.
 - A bench is emerging next to W559 from the middle toward the southwest corner. Its continuation to the east along W554 is uncertain.
 - There is no doorway in W559 (only a collapse midway). The only entrance to the South Vaulted chamber is from the south aisle of the church. The single

doorway could be locked from inside the chamber, suggesting that the room held items of value and was guarded a night.

- An upside down column base was placed in the northwest corner of the room, next to the doorway, perhaps to display gifts.
- The room seems to be a diakonicon with its east wall overlapping the east wall of the church. The presence of a cistern in such a room occupying a planned place (the northwest corner) suggest that the cistern was necessary for the function of the room (a questions for investigation).
- A small horde of four gold pieces was found just below the floor level behind the cistern. The pieces were at 131.12 and the average floor level so far is 130.89. But the area around the cistern is elevated slightly. Wall plaster in the area of the gold find ends above the level of the find. The find therefore was at or below floor level.
- The following description of the pieces is based in part on the analysis of Jeff Spier, curator at the Kimbell Museum in Fort Worth, TX.:
 - Piece 1 – magical amulet
 - Horizontal 2.23cm
 - Vertical 2.37cm
 - Thickness 0.22cm
 - Ring for chain 0.92cm outside diameter
 - Hanging ring has a smooth inner ridge, both outer ridges are nodules .09cm thick -- 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.
 - Spier writes, "The amulet is a well attested type. It is surely made of haematite (an iron oxide), a material often used for magical amulets. On the front side it shows a phoenix surrounded by pairs of falcons, scorpions, and snakes; it stands on a crocodile and below a winged scarab. The back reads, in Greek, pepte, "digest". It was evidently an amulet to relieve stomach pain (other amulets read "stomach" in Greek). The

symbol below is the so-called "Chnoubis" sign, derived from old Egyptian imagery. There is no Christian content here. A nearly identical amulet is in the British Museum: see Simone Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum* (London, 2001), no. 401.

- The date of the material is also very interesting. The mount of the amulet is clearly Byzantine, sixth or early seventh century. The amulet itself, however, is considerably earlier. 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.
- Piece 2 – Belt tab 1
 - Horizontal – 1.43cm
 - Vertical – 2.23cm
 - Total thickness 0.45cm
 - Metal thickness 0.07cm
 - Obverse
 - Outer decorative border of quarter moons, arrows, triangles, and scrolling
 - An intertwined patten in the center
 - Reverse
 - Light inscribing
- Piece 3 – Belt tab 2 (same as tab 1)
 - Horizontal – 1.43cm
 - Vertical – 2.23cm
 - Total thickness 0.45cm
 - Metal thickness 0.07cm
 - Obverse
 - Outer decorative border of quarter moons, arrows, triangles, and scrolling

- An intertwined patten in the center
 - A protruding nodule on the obverse is part of a 0.47cm small pin through the tab (creating a catch?)
 - Reverse
 - Light inscribing
 - Piece 4 – belt decoration
 - Horizontal – 1.48cm
 - Vertical – 1.61cm (1.74cm with protruding nodule)
 - Total thickness 0.29cm
 - Metal thickness 0.10cm
 - Obverse
 - Outer decorative border of quarter moons, arrows, triangles, and scrolling
 - An intertwined patten in the center
 - A protruding nodule on the obverse is part of a 0.47cm small pin through the tab (creating a catch?)
 - Reverse
 - To eye hook for sewing item to a belt
 - Of these last three pieces, Spier writes: “The belt tabs are entirely Byzantine in style. Very similar examples have been found all over the Byzantine world, from Russia to Italy. A nice gold group from Syria is in Dumbarton Oaks: M.C. Ross, Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, vol. 2 (Washington, 1965), no. 42. A gold buckle (probably from Italy) with a similar entwined pattern is in Berlin.”
 - We presume the pieces were part of an heirloom collection hidden in the church for protection and forgotten.
 - Healing was associated with saints/martyrs. If the proximity of the cistern to the revered woman was for the drawing of sacred water (cp. St. Menas ampullae), a magical amulet could point to a mixed practice.
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- Continued work in Square E4
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- Starting elevation = 130.91
- Ending elevation = 130.69
- Soil is Horizon B
- Exposed a stone floor under the mud/plaster floor. The stones are concentrated around the entrance, as they are in the doorway in W539 into the north lateral chamber.

Observations

- Later domestic/agrarian usage of the north lateral chamber and of the rooms west of the street may be of a similar and later time.

Daily Drawing

