



Figure 1 From the mid-7th century, minted at Scythopolis
Discovered in 2010

Coin Report

Northeast Insulae Project

Fifty-five coins were recovered during the excavations of the Northeast Insulae Project at Hippos of the Decapolis. Of these, forty-five were identifiable.

The earliest coin is from the reign of John Hyrcanus I. The latest coin is Umayyad from the mid 8th century. The coins span the period typically identified with the occupation of the site from its founding after the Battle of Paneion (ca. 199 BCE) either by Antiochus III the Great (222–187 BCE) or by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BCE). No coins date from after the earthquake of 749 CE, when Hippos was abandoned.

A significant cluster of the coins are from the third and fourth centuries, a period of significant Roman activity and prosperity in the Galilee and surrounding areas. It is during this period that the area of the Northeast Insulae Project contained one or more wealthy peristyle homes of which the House of Tyche is the primary example. The late Roman coins along with a worn coin¹ sealed into a mud floor of the northern building confirm this occupation period. This period was disrupted by a major earthquake in 363 CE that destroyed the Roman Basilica immediately to the west. As with other sites, economic activity continued for several decades. But the project area has no coins datable to the fifth century. As with other sites, Hippos experienced decline, if not collapse.²

We posit that the Northeast Church and its related compound were constructed into the ruins of the Late Roman period in the sixth century and was intentionally abandoned prior to the earthquake of 749 CE. A number of 6th- and 7th-century coins were recovered at or near floor level in the southern part of the compound that was the House of Tyche in the Roman period. The triclinium to the east of the peristyle court was rebuilt into two rooms separated by a window wall. The southern of those two spaces yielded a late 6th century coin from the reign of Maurice and an early 8th-century coin from the Umayyad period during the reign of Al-Walid I.³ Immediately to the south is a large, vaulted room with two windows walls separating off spaces to the west and east. We discovered in the east space a coin

¹ Basket 3474.

² Zeev Safrai, *The Missing Century: Palestine in the Fifth Century: Growth and Decline* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 129.

³ Baskets 2489 and 2499.

from 572/3 CE of Justin II.⁴ Fill from the same locus had three coins from the second half of the 4th century CE,⁵ attesting to the two major periods of occupation of the Northeast Insulae.

Citations from the Coin Report

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⁴ Basket 3195.

⁵ Baskets 3444 and 3449.

⁶ British Museum and George Francis Hill, eds., *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Phoenicia*, A Catalogue of the Greek coins in the British Museum (Bologna: A. Forni, 1965).

⁷ Dumbarton Oaks et al., eds., *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, Dumbarton Oaks catalogues (Washington, D.C: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1992).

⁸ Israel Numismatic Society. [from old catalog, ed., *Israel Numismatic Journal* (Tel-Aviv: Israel Numismatic Society, n.d.).

⁹ Leo [from old catalog Kadman, *The Coins of Caesarea Maritima* (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1957).

¹⁰ Philip V. Hill, ed., *Late Roman Bronze Coinage, A. D. 324-498: Reprinted with Additions and Corrections from the Numismatic Circular* (London: Spink, 1960).

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SNAT¹³ 1993: 32. Nos. 339-344

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Walker¹⁵ 1956: 15-16 Nos. 43-51

Walker 1956: 269, No. 898

Walker 1956: 269-270, No. ANS 42

¹¹ Ya'aqov Meshorer, *Otsar Maṭbe'ot Ha-Yehudim: Mi-Yeme Shilṭon Paras Ye-'ad Mered Bar-Kokhba* (Yerushalayim: Yad Yitshak Ben-Tsevi, 1997).

¹² Harold Mattingly et al., eds., *The Roman Imperial Coinage* (London: Spink, 1923).

¹³ Lutz Ilisch, Lorenz Korn, and Universität Tübingen, eds., *Sylloge Numorum Arabicorum Tübingen* (Tübingen: E. Wasmuth, 1993).

¹⁴ Augustus Spijkerman, *The Coins of the Decapolis and Provincia Arabia*, *Studii biblici franciscani collectio maior* 25 (Jerusalem : Franciscan Printing Press, 1978, n.d.).

¹⁵ British Museum and John Walker, eds., *A Catalogue of the Muhammadan Coins in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, printed by order of the Trustees, 1941).

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