

27 **מִכְמָנִים**
MICHMANIM

December 2017 • כסלו תשע"ח

Hippos of the Decapolis and its Region 18 years of Research



HECHT MUSEUM



UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA



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מוזיאון הכט
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English front page: Mount Sussita, with the Ein-Gev stream flowing below it and the Sea of Galilee to its west.
Looking south (photo by M. Eisenberg)

Hebrew front page: Mount Sussita plateau and the Sea of Galilee to the west (photo by M. Eisenberg)

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Preface

One of the prime objectives of the Hecht Museum is to foster the relationship with the archaeologists working at the University of Haifa and to provide a platform for the fruits of their research. This policy led to the museum's new exhibition, opened in December 2017: **Before the Earth Shook – The Ancient City of Hippos-Sussita Emerges**, curated by Michael Eisenberg of the University's Zinman Institute of Archaeology. The exhibition presents to the general public for the first time some of the finest discoveries to emerge from Hippos-Sussita over 18 years of excavations.

Michmanim 27 is a special issue, published to mark the 18 years of research at one of the key sites of the Classical period in Israel, and in conjunction with the opening of the exhibition. The articles in this volume share with readers the latest research on Hippos, as they also shed light on some of the exhibits.

In the article that opens the English section of this volume, **Adam Pažout** presents his geospatial research on the territory of Antiochia Hippos from the Hellenistic to the Byzantine periods. The goal of the research, which is GIS-based, is to explore a variety of regional phenomena involving the placement of the defense systems in the territory of Hippos, the locations of administrative roads, and other aspects.

The article by **Mark Schuler** highlights the major changes in the ecclesiastical architecture of Hippos in light of the theological transformation that began in the 6th century, when the city's congregation adopted Chalcedonian Christianity.

In his opening article of the Hebrew section, **Michael Eisenberg** summarizes the research on Antiochia Hippos, highlighting the built complexes and the special finds unearthed in recent years on the plateau and the new excavations on the saddle ridge.

Arthur Segal sketches the urban portrait of Hippos-Sussita in the Roman period as a planned city, whose lines were largely influenced by the location of the Hellenistic period sanctuary. At the end of his article, Segal briefly describes the changes in the cityscape during the Byzantine period, when Hippos became a bishopric, in the 4th century CE.

Neta Wechsler and Shmuel Marco present their geophysical research on Hippos-Sussita in light of the architectural evidence of the earthquakes that struck the city. Analysis of the factors involved in damage to the ancient structures enables an assessment of the possible impact of future earthquakes in Israel.

The findings of **Enno Bron and Oren Zingboym's** excavation at the Ruqqad Fortress are published for the first time in this volume. The fortress, which the authors date to the late 3rd–early 4th centuries BCE, is the only Ptolemaic fortress uncovered to date in the Golan Heights. Bron and Zingboym do not rule out the possibility that this is one of the strongholds in the array of Ptolemaic fortresses in the Golan that was built to protect the borders of the Ptolemaic kingdom from the Seleucid kingdom.

In his second article, "A Military Portrait of Hippos – from Ptolemaic fortress to Seleucid Polis", **Michael Eisenberg** examines the theory that pre-urban Hippos began life as a Ptolemaic fortress and thereafter became a Seleucid fortress. Circumstantial evidence of the existence of the fortresses and archaeological finds uncovered each year in the excavations strengthen this theory. According to the author, the history of Hellenistic Hippos will likely grow clearer in the coming years of excavation.

Arleta Kowalewska and Michael Eisenberg present the plan, construction method and design of the Southern Bathhouse at Hippos, one of three discovered so far at the site, and compare it to other bathhouses in the Decapolis cities. The authors conclude that the picture emerging is similar, except for certain unique elements.

Yaniv Schauer surveys in his article the coins minted in the city of Antiochia Hippos (Sussita), whose mint operated for some 300 years, from the end of the 1st century BCE to the 3rd century CE. The coins' designs are an important resource for understanding the religious, cultural and architectural characteristics of the city, and their inscriptions indicate its changing status over the years.

In the article of **Mechael Osband** presents for the first time a broad picture of the pottery of the southern Golan in the Roman period. The analysis of the pottery assemblage from Hippos and its comparison with other assemblages in the Golan and the Galilee help date fairly precisely the public structures in the city, and even to distinguish a sub-period within the Roman-period strata uncovered there. The analytical study of the assemblages of pottery vessels allows us to identify the region where they were manufactured, thus enhancing our understanding of the social and economic ties between Hippos and its surroundings.

Our thanks go to the special issue editor and exhibition curator Michael Eisenberg, who unearthed and brought the remains of ancient Hippos from the heights of the Golan to the heights of Mount Carmel, to the scholars who published their research in this volume, and to the Hecht Foundation, whose generous support made this important exhibition possible.

Shunit Netter-Marmelstein

Director and curator, Hecht Museum

Editor's Foreword

This special issue of **Michmanim** (27) brings together for the first time a series of studies focusing on archaeological, historical and geographical research on the city of Hippos and its territory. Archaeological research on Hippos was launched mainly in the year 2000, when an expedition from the Zinman Institute of Archaeology of the University of Haifa began unearthing the secrets of the city east of the Sea of Galilee. Eventually, the project became one of the major Classical period excavations in our region, concluding its 18th season in the summer of 2017.

Ten articles, eight in Hebrew and two in English, authored by the finest scholars studying ancient Hippos, present readers with an up-to-date picture covering a variety of scholarships and extending from the Hellenistic to the Umayyad periods.

I would like to thank the three scientific editors of this volume, Arthur Segal, Danny Syon, and Orit Peleg-Barkat, the external reviewers, the authors, text editors, graphic designer, the Michmanim team and the Zinman Institute of Archaeology. This task could not have succeeded without them.

Funding for development of Sussita National Park has recently been earmarked by the Israel Nature and Parks Authority and will transform it into one of the key sites in northern Israel. Visitors from Israel and abroad will be able to see firsthand the built complexes and the urban picture of one of the most important cities in Israel from the Classical period.

It is no coincidence that this special issue is published simultaneously with the opening of the first exhibition to showcase Hippos to the public, presented at the Hecht Museum: **Before the Earth Shook – The Ancient City of Hippos-Sussita Emerges.**

Michael Eisenberg

Special issue editor