Northeast Church Project
2006 Excavation Plan

General Approach

In the 2006 season, the Concordia team will continue to explore the relationship of the Northeast Church (NEC) to surrounding walls, rooms, and or structures, especially to the west and south. Determining the relationship of the complex to the Roman/Byzantine city plan will be secondary concern. A large team will afford us the opportunity to work in several areas at once. We will also devote significant time to the stabilization, cleaning and documentation of the surviving mosaic floors.

Specific Plan for 2006

Major excavation will be conducted by at least four teams in key areas.

The first team will work in the squares to the south of the *domus*, focusing on squares C4 and D4. The discovery of W585 and lines of stone on the surface parallel to W510 points to a structure south of the *domus* and west of the south vaulted chamber. Excavation will assess the position, size, and relationship of this structure to the Northeast Church complex. We will also leave a balk between C4 and D4 to get a soil profile of the fill outside of the church. Work by this team may move south into C5 and D5.

A second team will work along the small street moving south toward the decumanus maximus in squares E5 to E7. Work will clear the street, identify any drainage systems, and assess structures that might face the street.

A third team will expand work west of the south gate of the NEC complex. The team will excavate F4 and F3. The team may also excavate F5. [If we wish to be more aggressive, we might move 5 to 10 meters further to the west to G4 or H4 and excavate at the point where the topography drops off. By so doing, we might be able to identify the western end of the atrium.]

A fourth team will begin its work on the north gate by completing the excavations of E0 and E1 west of the stylobate. Further excavation of squares in Row F may be indicated. During the last two weeks of the season will be deployed to squares E8 and E9.

The Masonry Tomb

A small team will re-open the masonry tomb in B2. After removal of the sarcophagus, the remaining 20-25cm of the chamber will be excavated. Work in 2004 strongly suggested an earlier burial in this space.

Cistern D

The south vaulted chamber is oversized for a *diakonikon*. The careful placement of a cistern in its northeast corner in proximity to the tomb of the revered woman has raised questions about the function of the room and the cult attending the veneration of the woman. The discovery of a healing amulet with a small horde in the corner behind the cistern increases interest in the cistern. We will remove the head of the cistern and

excavate and sift it contents for clues about the usage of the room within which the cistern is located.

Conservation and Documentation of the Mosaics in the Nave and the *Skeuophylakion*

In 2005, we were not able to complete conservation and cleaning of the fragmentary mosaics in the nave. In 2006, we will uncover the nave, further stabilize remaining mosaic, thoroughly clean and document the mosaic. If time permits, we will do the same with the mosaic in the *skeuophylakion* (A0 and B0).