

MUZEUL NAȚIONAL DE ISTORIE A ROMÂNIEI

**CERCETĂRI
ARHEOLOGICE**

XXXIII

1

**CERCETĂRI
ARHEOLOGICE**

XXXIII

1

BUCUREȘTI

2026

COLEGIUL DE REDACȚIE:

Sorin Ailincăi, Dan Aparaschivei, Mihai Bărbulescu, Nikolaus K.O. Boroffka, Adina Boroneanț, Florin Curta, Dragoș Diaconescu, Stela Doncheva, Gabriel Fusek, Florin Gogâltan, Martin Husár, Sergiu Matveev, Dragoș Măndescu, Ioana A. Oltean, Ioan-Carol Opriș, Constantin C. Petolescu, Zeno Karl Pinter, Stefan Pop-Lazić, Ivan Radman-Livaja, Tudor Sălăgean, Victor Spinei, Agnieszka Tomas, Šimon Ungerman, Boaz Zissu

COLECTIVUL DE REDACȚIE:

Silviu Oța – redactor-șef
Laurențiu Angheluță
Ioana Cortea
Liviu Mihail Iancu
Alexandru Rațiu
Andreea Ștefan
Maria-Magdalena Ștefan
Ovidiu Țentea

Tehnoredactare și coperta: Petru Ureche

Ilustrația de pe copertile 1, 4: Maria Gorea, La stèle funéraire araméenne de Tomis (CIS 3907 = PAT 252). Redécouverte, nouvelle lecture et contexte, *Cercetări Arheologice* 32,.2, 2026.

ISSN 0255-6812

www.cercetări-arheologice.ro

<https://doi.org/10.46535/ca.33.1>

<https://doi.org/10.46535/ca.33.2>

Volum editat de Muzeul Național de Istorie a României
Calea Victoriei 12, București, 030026, România

CUPRINS/CONTENTS

33/1

STUDII/STUDIES

Mykola NIKOLAEV, A New Numismatic Source for Herodotus' "Scythian Logos". A Preliminary Study	11
Nizam ABAY, A Group of Fibulae from the Selçuk University Museum	19
Boaz ZISSU, Eitan KLEIN, Ritual Baths with Double Entrances in the Jerusalem Hills: Architecture and Context	33
Maria GOREA, Note sur un tesson en céramique incisé en lettres araméennes, trouvé dans le castrum romain de Porolissum (colline Pomet), en Dacie	65
Ioan PISO, La garnison romaine de Porolissum	71
Alexandru POPA, Andrea POPA, Dinamică planimetrică și importanță strategică: Noi contribuții asupra castrului roman de la Boroșneu Mare	115
Alexandru RAȚIU, Ioan C. OPRÎȘ, Mihai DUCA, Fine wares from the late Roman <i>Principia</i> at Capidava (III	127
Adrian ADAMESCU, Tudor MANDACHE, Gabriel JUGĂNARU, Necropola tumulară de la Tirighina-Barboși (Galați). Contribuții preliminare în urma cercetărilor preventive recente	145
Liviu PETCULESCU, Roman military equipment in the northeastern part of Moesia Inferior. II. The Noviodunum Cemetery. Tumulus 30.	159
Ioana MANEA, Ovidiu ȚENȚEA, Roman Glass from the Baths at Buridava (Stolniceni): A Typological and Functional Study	183
Alina STREINU, Irina ACHIM, Shadows and Flames: Oil Lamps from the <i>Basilica with Crypt</i> Sector at Histria (2002–2023)	217
İLKNUR GÜLTEKİN GENÇ, Akin TEMÜR, Garland-Decorated Stones in the Museum of Stone Artifacts and Mosaics of the Ancient City of Sebastopolis	241
Alexandra PREDA, Notes on Beads from Richly Furnished Finds in the Tisza Basin. Dating to the D2/D3-D3 period	257
Vlad VORNIC, Vestigii medievale timpurii de tip Penkovka descoperite recent la Bălceana (raionul Hâncești)	277
Erwin GÁLL, Róbert GINDELE, Levente DACZÓ, Analiza preliminară a sitului funerar din secolul al VII-lea de la Vălcani-Vamă și limitele interpretării arheologice (bazată exclusiv pe metodele sale proprii)	287
Maria DARAKCHIEVA, Mariya MANOLOVA-VOYKOVA, Iryna TESLENKO, Crimean Medieval Glazed Pottery in Varna and Its Surroundings, Bulgaria	311
Valerii KAPELIUSHNYI, Mykhailo ORLYK, Ancient and Medieval Numismatics in the Context of Contemporary Methodological Paradigms	371
Vlad VORNIC, Sergiu MATVEEV, Ion URSU, Un mormânt de înhumare medieval timpuriu (secolele X–XI) de la Valea Mare, r-nul Ungheni	381

Michal SCHWARTZ, Changing boundary environment: Geographic impacts on linguistic, religious, and political dominance in Inner Asia	403
Natalia OVCEAROV, Istoricul studierii industriei osului din stațiunile paleolitice reflectat în literatura sovietică	421
Vitalie BÂRCĂ, The Sarmatians on the western edge of the Eurasian steppe. Reading notes on a recently published monograph	427

CA

33/1

RITUAL BATHS WITH DOUBLE ENTRANCES IN THE JERUSALEM HILLS: ARCHITECTURE AND CONTEXT

BOAZ ZISSU
EITAN KLEIN

ABSTRACT

This article presents a group of eleven ritual baths (*miqva'ot*) incorporating double entrances or related separation arrangements, documented at ten sites in the Jerusalem Hills. While such installations are well known from Jerusalem and a limited number of sites in Judea, their occurrence in the mountainous hinterland west of the city has until now remained insufficiently documented. The newly recorded examples, located within a radius of up to c. 20 km from Jerusalem, significantly expand the geographical distribution of this architectural type and contribute to the broader corpus of ritual baths of the late Second Temple period.

Architecturally, these installations are characterized by paired entrances separated by a rock-cut pier, or by internal arrangements designed to regulate movement within the bath. Such features are generally interpreted as enabling the separation of individuals descending in a state of impurity from those ascending after immersion, thereby preventing recontamination. This interpretation finds support in both archaeological parallels and rabbinic sources and has been further refined in recent scholarship to account for graded systems of purity observance and varying social practices.

The article situates the newly identified baths within their local archaeological contexts, which include rural settlements, agricultural installations, and sites located along routes leading to Jerusalem. Attention is given to their association with olive presses and other production facilities, as well as to their proximity to pathways that may have served pilgrims traveling to the city. These contexts suggest that ritual purity was not confined to urban or priestly environments but was deeply embedded in the economic and social life of rural communities. The evidence also provides archaeological context for the broader religious landscape of late Second Temple Judea, from which early Christianity emerged.

The study further explores the relationship between these installations and broader patterns of mobility and infrastructure in the Jerusalem hinterland. It is proposed that some of the larger or more carefully planned baths may have functioned as public or semi-public facilities, serving populations beyond individual settlements, including travelers and pilgrims. At the same time, variation in scale, location, and architectural complexity indicates that no single explanation accounts for all cases.

By integrating architectural analysis, regional survey data, and halakhic sources, this study argues that double-entrance ritual baths should be understood as part of a dynamic system linking rural production, movement toward Jerusalem, and the maintenance of ritual purity. The evidence underscores the widespread and socially embedded nature of purity practices in the late Second Temple period and highlights the active role of the Jerusalem hinterland within this broader cultural and religious landscape.

REZUMAT: BĂI RITUALE CU INTRĂRI DUBLE ÎN MUNȚII IERUSALIMULUI: ARHITECTURĂ ȘI CONTEXT

Acest articol prezintă un grup de unsprezece băi rituale (*miqva'ot*) prevăzute cu intrări duble sau cu alte amenajări de separare funcțională, documentate în zece situri din Munții Ierusalimului. Deși astfel de instalații sunt bine cunoscute în Ierusalim și într-un număr limitat de situri din Iudeea, prezența lor în hinterlandul montan situat la vest de oraș a rămas până în prezent insuficient documentată. Noile exemple identificate, localizate pe o rază de aproximativ 20 km în jurul Ierusalimului, extind semnificativ distribuția geografică a acestui tip arhitectural și contribuie la corpul mai larg al băilor rituale din perioada târzie a celui de-al Doilea Templu.

Din punct de vedere arhitectural, aceste instalații se caracterizează prin intrări pereche separate de un pilon săpat în stâncă sau prin amenajări interne concepute pentru a reglementa circulația în interiorul băii. Astfel de elemente sunt interpretate, în general, ca mijloace de separare a persoanelor care coborau în stare de impuritate rituală de cele care urcau după imersiune, prevenind astfel recontaminarea. Această interpretare este susținută atât de paralele arheologice, cât și de surse rabinice și a fost nuanțată în cercetările recente pentru a lua în considerare sisteme graduale de respectare a purității și practici sociale variate.

Articolul analizează noile băi identificate în contextul lor arheologic local, care include așezări rurale, instalații agricole și situri situate de-a lungul drumurilor care conduceau spre Ierusalim.

O atenție deosebită este acordată asocierii lor cu prese de măslină și alte facilități de producție, precum și proximității față de trasee care ar fi putut fi utilizate de pelerinii ce se îndreptau către oraș.

Aceste contexte sugerează că puritatea rituală nu era limitată la mediile urbane sau sacerdotale, ci era profund integrată în viața economică și socială a comunităților rurale. Dovezile oferă, de asemenea, un context arheologic pentru peisajul religios mai larg al Iudeei din perioada târzie a celui de-al Doilea Templu, din care a apărut creștinismul timpuriu. Studiul explorează, de asemenea, relația dintre aceste instalații și modelele mai largi de mobilitate și infrastructură din hinterlandul Ierusalimului.

Se propune că unele dintre băile de dimensiuni mai mari sau mai atent planificate ar fi putut funcționa ca facilități publice sau semipublice, deserving populații dincolo de limitele unei singure așezări, inclusiv călători și pelerini. În același timp, variațiile de scară, amplasament și complexitate arhitecturală indică faptul că nu există o explicație unică valabilă pentru toate cazurile.

Prin integrarea analizei arhitecturale, a datelor provenite din cercetările de teren regionale și a surselor halahice, acest studiu susține că băile rituale cu intrări duble trebuie înțelese ca parte a unui sistem dinamic care conecta producția rurală, deplasarea către Ierusalim și menținerea purității rituale. Dovezile evidențiază caracterul larg răspândit și profund integrat social al practicilor de puritate în perioada târzie a celui de-al Doilea Templu și subliniază rolul activ al hinterlandului Ierusalimului în cadrul acestui peisaj cultural și religios mai amplu.

KEYWORDS: Ritual baths (miqva'ot); Double-entrance miqva'ot; Ritual purity; Jerusalem Hills; Rural settlements; Pilgrimage routes; Hasmonean and Early Roman periods; Jerusalem hinterland

CUVINTE-CHEIE: Băi rituale (miqva'ot); Miqva'ot cu intrare dublă; Puritate rituală; Munții Ierusalimului; Așezări rurale; Drumuri de pelerinaj; Perioadele hasmoneană și romană timpurie; Hinterlandul Ierusalimului

Introduction

During the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman periods (the late Second Temple period), the laws of ritual purity occupied a central place in Judaism. Beginning in the Hasmonean period, in what has been described as a 'purity revolution' in which 'purity broke out among the Jews' (*Tosefta Shabbat* 1:14), a body of halakhic regulations developed whose purpose was to intensify adherence to the rules of purity.

This heightened concern with the laws of purity and impurity led, *inter alia*, to the establishment of the ritual purification installation—the *miqveh*. The ritual bath was first identified in the excavations at Masada. It was subsequently defined and systematically studied, with particular emphasis on the baths discovered in the excavations in Jerusalem, in Ronny Reich's PhD dissertation¹ and thereafter in David Amit's M.A. thesis on Second Temple period ritual baths in the Hebron Hills.² A comprehensive synthesis of the archaeological evidence was later provided by Reich (2013), whose study has been widely regarded as a foundational overview of the field. It is generally accepted that the discovery of a ritual bath conforming to the archaeological criteria of identification serves as a reliable indicator for identifying a site inhabited by a Jewish population in the late Second Temple period and even thereafter.³

A typical ritual bath is a stepped, rock-hewn and plastered installation extending across the full width of the chamber (Fig. 1). Access to the installation is provided by a hewn, stepped corridor that enabled the bather to descend safely and conveniently. A single entrance to the immersion chamber was installed in one of the walls of the installation, and it was designed to allow the passage of an upright adult. Ritual baths of this standard type have been discovered at numerous sites in the Judean highlands and the Judean Shephelah in general, and in the Jerusalem Hills in particular, and they attest to the Jewish character of the region in the late Second Temple period.⁴

¹ Reich 1990.

² Amit 1997.

³ Zissu 2002; Adler 2011.

⁴ Reich 2013. Typical single-entrance ritual baths are so far known in the Jerusalem Hills at the following sites: Horvat Mešad, Horvat Ha-Moza, Shluḥat Mishlatim, Shluḥat Shayyarot, Binyanei Ha-Umma, Zova, Bait Ve-Gan, Ramat Denya, Qiryat Ha-Yovel, 'Ein Kerem, Sheikh 'Ubeid (Sataf), Manaḥat (Malḥa), Naḥal Refa'im, Rogem Ganim (Rujum al-Tarud), Bet Šafafa, Horvat Tura, Kh. al-Šira, Kh. Sufla, Kh. Jarash, Betar, Horvat Matta, Horvat Geres, and Horvat Sansan (Zissu 2002; Adler 2011), as well as at additional unpublished sites such as Kh. Durban, Kh. 'Adash, and Kh. Sheikh Ahmad Ḥubani.

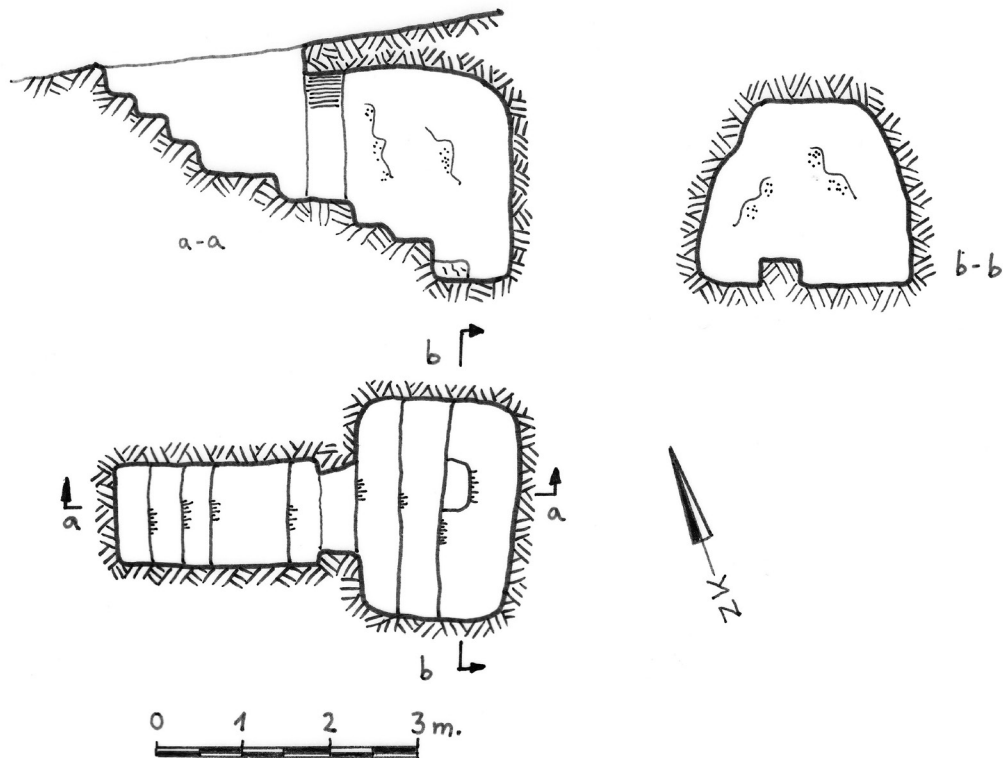


Fig. 1: Plan and sections of a typical single-entrance ritual bath at 'Ein Kerem. The installation was uncovered in the 1940s by Sylvester Saller; at that time, typical ritual baths had not yet been identified, and the installation was therefore interpreted as a "monument" ("The Monument") (after Saller 1946: 65, fig. 17).

A more complex type is an installation that includes some form of separation device, creating separate routes of movement for those descending in a state of impurity to immerse and those ascending from the immersion pool in a state of purity. Usually this consists of a pair of entrances separated by a pier, or a partition installed along the stairway descending into the immersion chamber (Fig. 2). Such a separation device finds an echo in rabbinic sources: "All the vessels found in Jerusalem on the way down to the immersion house are impure; on the way up they are pure, because their ascent is not by the same route as their descent" (*Mishnah, Sheqalim* 8:2). Rashi explains the matter as follows: "They descended to the immersion house by one route and ascended by another route." Saul Lieberman suggested that this halakhic reality is also echoed in two extracanonical sources.⁵ The first is an extracanonical Gospel written on papyrus discovered at Oxyrhynchus (Upper Egypt), which presents a dialogue between the Pharisaic high priest and Jesus. Jesus asks the high priest whether he is pure, and the high priest replies (in Lieberman's translation): "I am pure; I bathed in the Pool of David, and I went down by one ladder and came up by another." The second source appears in the Letter of Aristeas in the description of the Temple Mount in the letter to Philocrates: "There

⁵ Lieberman 1967-1968.

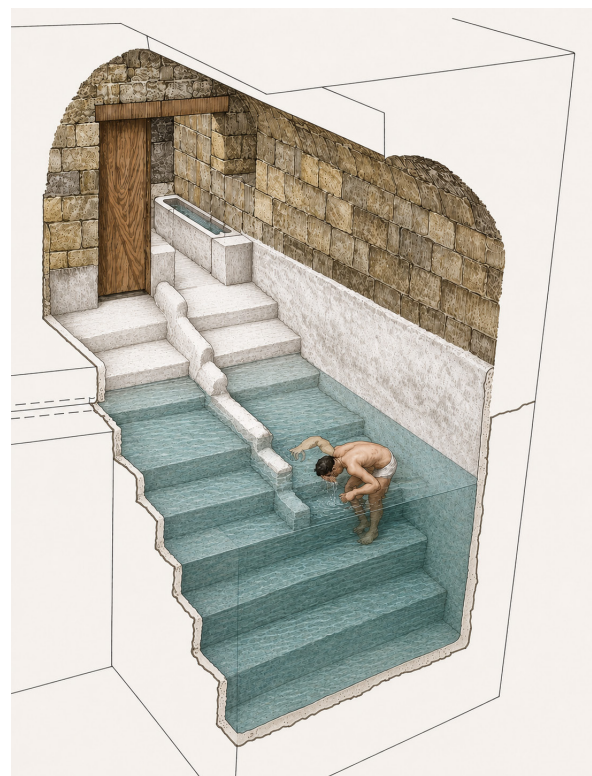


Fig. 2: Reconstruction of a double-entrance ritual bath with a central partition separating the descending and ascending stairways (drawing by B. Zissu).

are steps to the passages, and some people make their way above while others go below. They take care to keep apart from one another in their walking, so that those engaged in purity should not touch anything forbidden” (Letter of Aristeas 106; in Lieberman’s translation). It has already been noted, however, that the latter source does not necessarily refer to our subject, since it is unclear from the text whether it concerns immersion or some other activity carried out within the Temple precincts.⁶

Ritual baths incorporating a double entrance or separation arrangements have been discovered mainly within the city of Jerusalem⁷ and in the northern Hebron Hills.⁸ A few examples of this type have also been found at Jericho,⁹ Qumran,¹⁰ the Benjamin region,¹¹ and the Shephelah of Lod.¹²

Additional examples of installations incorporating either low partitions or double entrances have been reported from sites in and around Jerusalem, including Bethany (el-‘Azariya), Umm el-‘Asafir, the Diplomat Hotel area, Zur Baher, Sde Ro‘im North, and Issawiya, as well as from sites whose main activity dates to the Hasmonean period, such as near the oil press at Har Heret, Sharafat, and Pisgat Ze‘ev D. These examples further illustrate the regional concentration of such features and their chronological depth.¹³

Recent GIS-based studies of the rural hinterland of Jerusalem during the Hasmonean period have demonstrated a marked expansion of small agricultural settlements within a radius of c. 10 km from the city, many of which were integrated into an organized production system supplying Jerusalem and the Temple. Notably, ritual baths occur at a significant proportion of these sites (c. 44%), often in close association with agricultural installations, suggesting that concerns for ritual purity formed an integral component of rural economic life, reflecting the broader diffusion of purity practices beyond the Temple sphere into everyday life rather than being confined to urban or priestly contexts.¹⁴

Beyond their well-documented occurrence within settlements, ritual baths in the Jerusalem Hills should be understood within a broader regional and infrastructural framework connected with movement toward Jerusalem. The recent reexamination of rock-cut water installations alongside the main pilgrimage routes to Jerusalem underscores the integration of hydraulic infrastructure and ritual practice in the late Second Temple period.¹⁵

Rabbinic sources, when read in light of the archaeological record, indicate that public authorities actively maintained roads, water systems, and ritual baths (*miqva’ot*) for the benefit of pilgrims (e.g., M Sheqalim 1:1; T Mo‘ed Qaṭan 1:1). Archaeological discoveries across the Judean Hills corroborate these traditions, revealing a network of cisterns, reservoirs, and ritual baths strategically distributed along major routes leading to Jerusalem.¹⁶ These installations fulfilled multiple functions—supplying drinking water, enabling washing, and, crucially, facilitating ritual purification prior to arrival at the Temple. Their spatial distribution allows for the reconstruction of pilgrimage routes and suggests the existence of organized stopping points, including overnight encampments, often located at intervals consistent with a reduced daily travel range adapted to large, mixed groups of pilgrims.

Within this framework, ritual baths associated with pilgrimage routes display distinctive characteristics that set them apart from domestic *miqva’ot*. These include large dimensions indicative of collective use, placement in open areas or at road stations outside settlements, and architectural features such as double entrances or stairways designed to regulate movement and maintain separation between impure and purified individuals. In several cases, such installations are situated near cemeteries, suggesting a functional link with concerns over corpse impurity and the need for purification immediately after passing burial grounds.¹⁷ While many of these facilities likely served local populations as well, their location, scale, and architectural features strongly support their interpretation as public installations intended, at least in part, for pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem. This convergence of textual and archaeological evidence highlights the structured and institutionalized nature of pilgrimage in the late Second Temple period, in which ritual purity was materially embedded within the landscape through purpose-built installations. This perspective provides an essential framework for interpreting the double-entrance installations discussed below, some of which may reflect not only local practice but also participation in this broader system.

⁶ For this issue, see Regev 1996; Amit 1997.

⁷ See, for example, Reich 1980.

⁸ Amit 1993; Amit 1997.

⁹ Netzer 1978.

¹⁰ Reich 1998; Reich 2013; Galor 2002; Galor 2003.

¹¹ Yetah 2002; Zissu and Klein 2014.

¹² Reich 1982; Reich 2013; Zelinger 2010, fig. 65.

¹³ Spiezer, Zelinger and Zissu 2026, 80-121.

¹⁴ Spiezer 2024; Spiezer, Zelinger and Zissu 2026.

¹⁵ Raviv and Zissu 2018, 146-153; Safrai 1964; Grossberg 1997; Adler 2011; Gurevich 2017.

¹⁶ Raviv and Zissu 2018, 146-153.

¹⁷ Adler 2009.

It is noteworthy that until recently no ritual baths incorporating double entrances or separation arrangements had been discovered in the mountainous region west of Jerusalem. In this article we wish to present a group of ritual baths with double entrances that have been discovered in recent years at various sites located in the Jerusalem Hills, at distances of up to c. 20 km from the city (Fig. 3).¹⁸

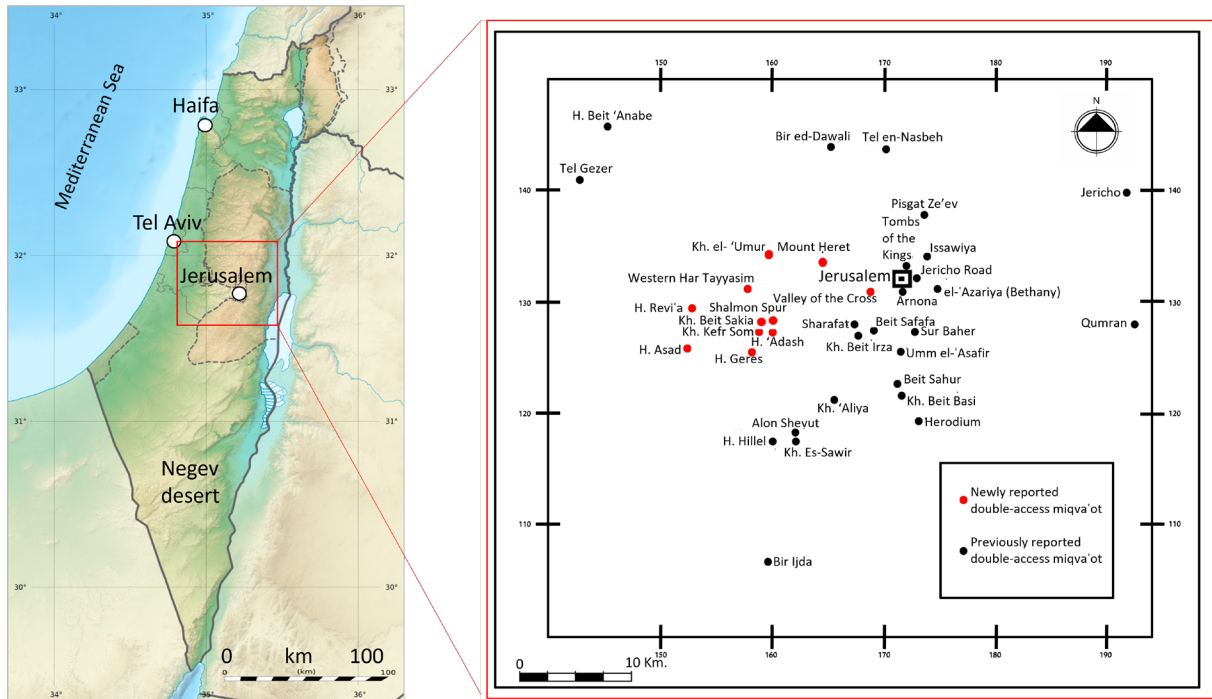


Fig. 3: Distribution map of ritual baths with separation arrangements (drawing by B. Zissu).

The Ritual Baths

The group of ritual baths with double entrances (in some cases a separation arrangement is also discernible) discovered recently in the Jerusalem Hills comprises 11 baths cut within 10 different sites.¹⁹ The baths are described below.

Valley of the Cross (Grid Ref. 169640/131027)

The ritual bath is situated on a gentle slope descending eastward from the hill on which the Israel Museum stands toward the Rehavia streambed (Fig. 4). Other cavities and installations were found in the vicinity of the bath, including a Byzantine-period winepress,²⁰ a columbarium cavity, and a Second Temple period burial cave.²¹ No ancient settlement remains were discovered nearby that might be associated with the ritual bath.

¹⁸ Some of the ritual baths discussed here were discovered during supervision activities of the Israel Antiquities Authority while others as part of the Sha'ar Ha-Gay map survey. The present study was conducted with the generous support of the Jeselsohn Epigraphic Center for Jewish History at Bar-Ilan University and the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture. We extend our gratitude to Prof. Eyal Regev, Dr. Yosef Spiezer, the late Dr. David Amit, Alon Klein, Shemesh Ya'aran, Tal Tutka, Yotam and Tamara Zissu, Avigail Gan Sinclair and Deborah Stern for their valuable assistance in data collection and analysis.

¹⁹ An additional double-entrance ritual bath was exposed following antiquities robbers' activity at Horvat 'Adash, within Begin Forest in the Jerusalem Hills (Grid Ref. 1600/1266; on the site, see Zissu 2023). Unfortunately, the looters blocked the entrance to the bath before it could be documented (pers. comm. Amir Ganor).

²⁰ Rahmani 1991, 97–106. The winepress, located c. 6 m south of the ritual bath, was excavated by L. Y. Rahmani in 1955 and published in 1991. The winepress was dated to the Byzantine period, and no earlier phase from the Early Roman period was identified. Rahmani's excavation report focuses on the description of the winepress and does not provide information on the adjacent ritual bath or on the relationship between the two installations. It should be noted that a channel, originally roofed with stone slabs, connects the winepress with the continuation of the façade of the ritual bath. It seems that this channel carried rainwater drained from the treading floor of the winepress into the ritual bath when the latter was converted into a cistern, during the Byzantine period or later.

²¹ Kloner 2003, 118, Site 142.

The bath was hewn into the bedrock of the slope, and its general orientation is north–south. The entrance and the floor of the immersion chamber are covered with soil and stones, making it difficult to identify the steps of the installation.

Access to the immersion chamber was possible through two entrances installed in the rock façade. The entrances have arched ceilings and are separated by a square pier hewn from the rock. The entrances are c. 0.9 m wide, and their maximum height above the alluvial accumulation on the floor of the installation is c. 1.5 m. At present, the eastern entrance is completely blocked by a wall of large fieldstones, while the western entrance is partially blocked by two ashlar. The ceiling of the installation slopes slightly downward. The exterior rock façade of the ritual bath rises an additional 1.4 m above the upper part of the entrances, up to the top of the rock step into which the bath was hewn.

The immersion chamber is rectangular in plan (3.3 × 5.5 m), with rounded corners. Its precise outline, however, was dictated by the natural form of the rock. The walls were coated with white plaster.

A circular shaft c. 0.4 m in diameter was cut at the center of the ceiling. This shaft most likely belongs to a later phase of use, when the ritual bath was converted into a cistern.

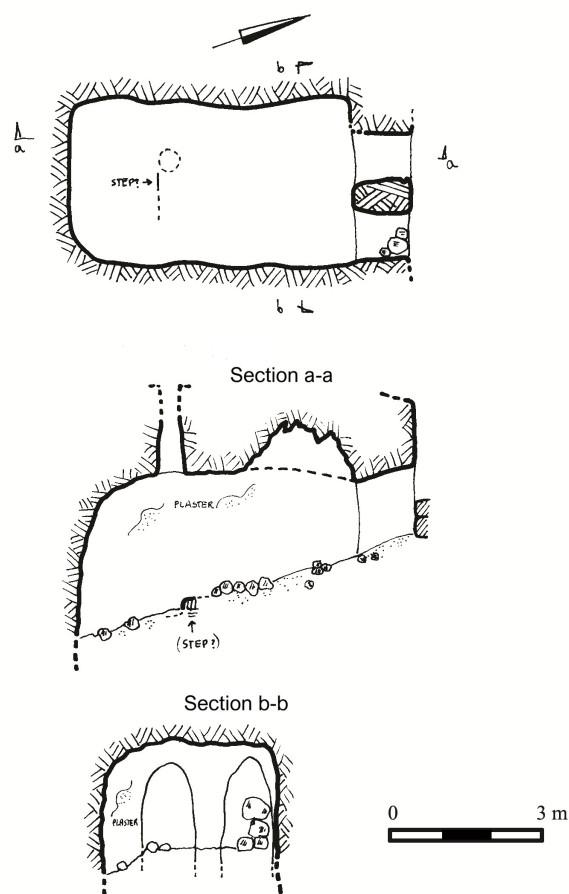


Fig. 4: Plan and sections of a double-entrance ritual bath in the Valley of the Cross (drawing by B. Zissu).

Western Har Tayyasim (Grid Ref. 1578/1309)

This is a small site located on the summit of trig point 778, east of Ramat Razi, at an elevation of 778 m above sea level. The summit affords a panoramic view in all directions. The hilltop preserves wall foundations—some built of ashlar—as well as cuttings, pits, and installations, indicating the presence of a small settlement whose area did not exceed 5 dunams.

The site was surveyed by the authors as part of the survey of the Sha‘ar HaGay map, following damage caused by antiquities robbers to a hewn and plastered subterranean installation composed of three spaces: C, B, and A (Fig. 5). It became clear that the installation had served as a typical ritual bath with a double entrance, associated with two water cisterns. The floors of all three installations are largely covered with earth mixed with building stones, including large ashlar. One of these stones is carefully dressed and bears a projecting boss in its center.

Ritual Bath A

The bath is located at the summit of the hill (Grid Ref. 157879/130990), in the center of the built-up area of the ancient settlement, as indicated by the foundation of a built wall near the installation, oriented in the same direction, suggesting that the installation was integrated into buildings that have not survived. The installation was roofed with a built ceiling, which has not survived. No access corridor to the installation is currently visible, and it is doubtful whether one existed in the past.

In the leveled rock surface south of the installation, transverse steps were cut descending to a double entrance into the immersion chamber. The two entrances are unequal in size, apparently because of the nature of the rock (widths 0.9 and 1.5 m). The doorjambes of the entrances and the jambs of the pier between them, which were apparently built, were removed together with the roof of the installation after it went out of use. The lower part of the pier, connected to a massive built partition wall, remained in situ, enabling the original form of the installation to be reconstructed.

The immersion chamber is rectangular in plan (c. 3×2.5 m; total depth from the rock surface 2.55 m). The walls are coated with three layers of light hydraulic plaster, indicating maintenance and repairs. Three or four transverse steps were cut in the floor of the chamber, descending into an immersion pool over 1 m deep. Two steps are visible, while the others are covered by sediment. In the northwestern corner of the immersion pool, two openings were cut leading to two plastered chambers.

Chamber B

An opening c. 0.7 m wide and c. 1.2 m high, serving as a passage to Chamber B, was cut at the bottom of the northern wall of the ritual bath. This opening was blocked at a later stage in the use of Bath A by a wall built of fieldstones and gray mortar and was coated on both sides with light hydraulic plaster.

The subterranean Chamber B is trapezoidal in general plan: its maximum width at the northern wall is c. 4.9 m, and its width along the entrance wall is c. 2.8 m. Its length is c. 3 m. The ceiling slopes downward. The walls and ceiling were coated with gray plaster and carefully smoothed. The plaster accommodates protrusions and irregularities in the rock and envelops them. A shaft was cut in the ceiling of the chamber (depth from the surface c. 2.3 m). Its section is rounded in the lower part and square in the upper part, and its walls were plastered.

A hole c. 0.1 m in diameter was cut in the upper part of the southeastern corner of Chamber B in order to connect it to the immersion pool of the ritual bath. The hole is blocked with gray mortar, and without excavation its full course cannot be examined.

The plan of subterranean Chamber B resembles that of a typical ritual bath, but it lacks access steps. It seems that the installation was intended to serve as an *'otzar* (water reservoir) for Bath A. In our opinion, the hewn opening connecting the two was intended to facilitate the excavation of Chamber B. Once the cutting was completed, the opening was sealed and the reservoir was filled through the shaft cut in its ceiling. The connection between the two bodies of water—"mixing of the waters" (*'eruv mayim*; "Anything connected to a miqveh is like a miqveh," *Mishnah Miqva'ot* 6:1)—was made possible by means of the plastered hole connecting the two installations. It therefore appears that Chamber B served as an *'otzar*, thereby enabling frequent replacement of drawn water in the adjacent Bath A. It seems that the arrangement of the two adjacent installations and the hole between them may well explain the statement in the Tosefta: "Two purification baths, one above the other: he removes the stopper between them and joins them, and then returns the stopper to its place" (*Tosefta 'Eruvin* 8:8).²²

Chamber C

An opening c. 0.8 m wide was cut in the western wall of the immersion pool, leading to subterranean Chamber C, which is currently covered by heavy sediment and collapse debris. Its general plan is trapezoidal (maximum width in the inner part 2 m, length c. 2.8 m). Its walls were coated with gray plaster. The purpose of this installation—whether a ritual bath or an additional water reservoir—is unclear.

Horvat Revi'a (Grid Ref. 152930/128980)

The ruin is situated on the summit of a prominent hill, 552 m above sea level, on the ridge south of Naḥal Sorek in the western Jerusalem Hills, near "Absalom's Cave," and commands a broad view of the surrounding landscape. Surveys conducted at the ruin documented remains of structures built of ashlar, and nearby the remains of a

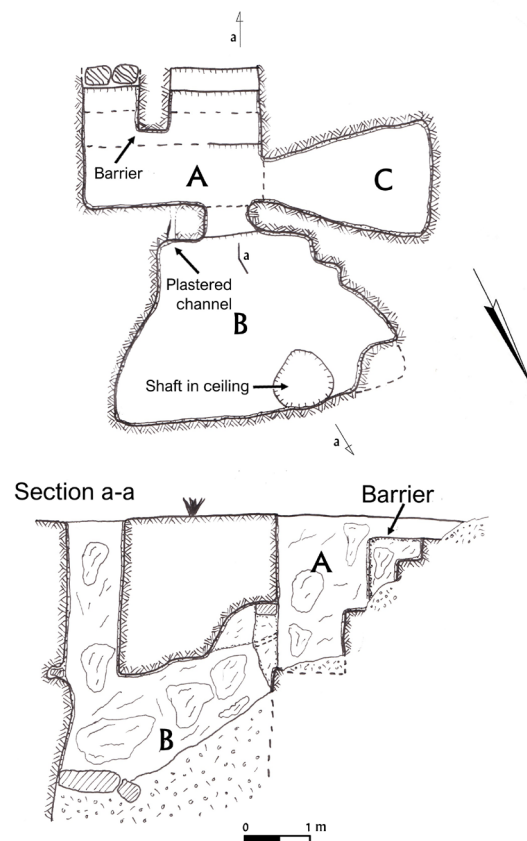


Fig. 5: Plan and section of a double-entrance ritual bath at Western Har Tayyasim (drawing by E. Klein).

²² Lieberman 1967-1968, 97-98.

rectangular tower (10 × 7 m). Among the building remains were thresholds, lintels, columns, and other architectural elements. Rock-cut cisterns and the base of a crushing stone belonging to an ancient olive press were found at the site and in its vicinity.²³

A rock-cut installation was discovered by Shemesh Ya'aran on the south-eastern margin of the site (Grid Ref. 152930/128980) (Fig. 6). Access to the installation was through a narrow, elongated entrance facing south (Entrance 1). The entrance is c. 1.2 m wide and c. 1.7 m long. It leads to a trapezoidal chamber measuring 5.5 × 6 m. An additional entrance (Entrance 2) was installed adjacent to Entrance 1, and between them a separating rock pier was preserved *in situ* (width 1.20 m). This entrance was blocked by a stone wall covered with plaster (Fig. 7). The floor of the installation is covered by sloping sediment, leaving a chamber height of 1.1 m near the entrance and 1.65 m in the area farther from it. The walls of the installation and the pier are coated with five layers of plaster: the first and second layers are whitish; the third includes a layer containing ribbed potsherds; above these are two layers of gray hydraulic plaster characteristic of the late Second Temple period.²⁴ The nature of the plaster coating the walls of the installation, together with the pair of entrances separated by a pier, allows this installation to be identified as a double-entrance ritual bath of the late Second Temple period.

This ritual bath is located on the edge of the ruin, apparently outside the residential area. Its location, as well as its dimensions, may indicate that it functioned as a public installation serving a broader community, particularly during late summer and early autumn, when many private ritual baths became less convenient or even unusable because the quality of their stored water had deteriorated over the course of the dry season.²⁵

Khirbet Kefr Som (Grid Ref. 1588/1266)

Khirbet Kefr Som is situated in the Jerusalem Hills on the summit of a hill (735 m above sea level), bounded to the north and south by deep ravines draining into Naḥal Sorek and Naḥal Refa'im. The ruin lies west of the ruins of Betar (Khirbat al-Yahudi) and Khirbat Kobi, and about 1 km north of the line of the Roman road connecting Jerusalem and Beth Guvrin. The site preserves the remains of an Arab village built over the ruins of an ancient settlement, and in its southern part is an ashlar-built structure that served as a shaykh's tomb. The remains of the ancient settlement include structures, pits, hewn installations, and a large pool.²⁶

During November 2011 and January 2012, two rock-cut and plastered ritual baths were documented (Fig. 8).

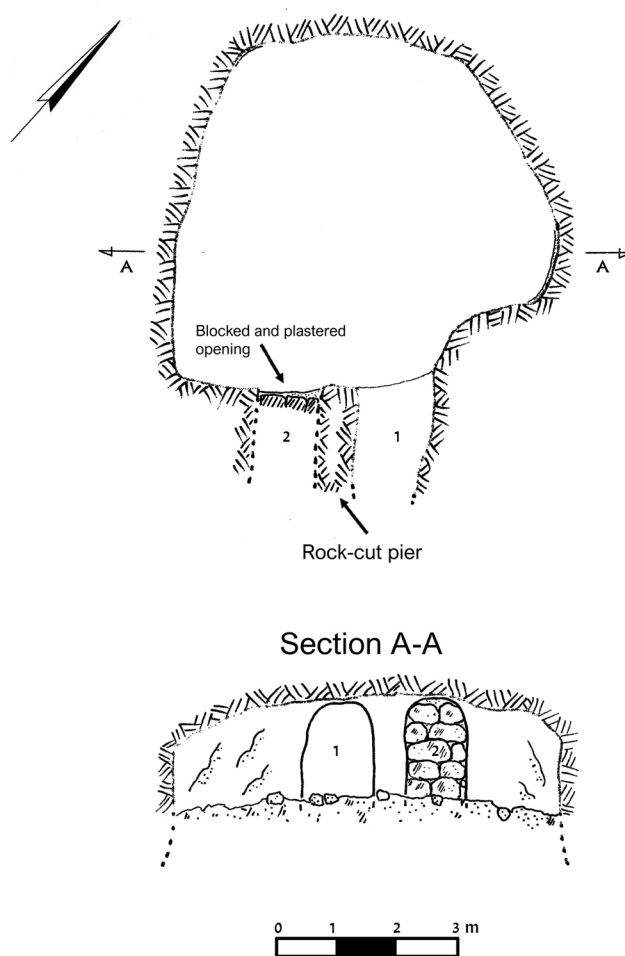


Fig. 6: Plan and section of a double-entrance ritual bath at Horvat Revi'a (drawing by B. Zissu).

²³ Conder and Kitchener 1883, 123; Weiss, Zissu and Solimani 2005, 21.

²⁴ van Zuiden and Asscher 2021.

²⁵ Zissu and Amit 2008.

²⁶ Conder and Kitchener 1883, 25; Weiss, Zissu and Solimani 2005, 54.



Fig. 7: Double entrance separated by a rock pier in the ritual bath at Horvat Revi'a; note the orderly blocking of Entrance 2; view to the south (photograph by B. Zissu).



Fig. 8: Aerial view of Kh. Keفر Som to the east, showing the location of Ritual Bath Nos. 1 and 2 in relation to the site (photograph by B. Zissu).

Ritual Bath No. 1 (Grid Ref. 158777/126653)

The bath (Fig. 9) was cut into a rock outcrop c. 2 m high on the northwestern edge of the site. A hewn approach c. 2.7 m wide leads to the bath. This approach is presently filled with sediment and therefore its precise outline is unclear, but it seems to have served to collect runoff water (Fig. 10). The bath has two arched entrances separated

by a rock pier of irregular outline. The dimensions of the entrances (western entrance: width 1 m, height c. 1.5 m; eastern entrance: width 1.5 m, height c. 1.4 m) allow the entry of a crouching person. Two hewn steps were installed across the full width of the installation, allowing descent to the immersion pool. The pool is rectangular in plan (width 2.8 m, length 3.8 m, height c. 1.75 m), and its floor, ceiling, and walls were coated with two layers of gray hydraulic plaster containing small pebbles. Such plaster is characteristic of water installations of the late Second Temple period.²⁷

In the upper step, at the center of the threshold of the eastern entrance, a channel measuring 0.1 m in depth and 0.1 m in width was cut, through which runoff water flowed (Fig. 11a, b). Above this step and channel are the remains of a wall that blocked the opening. Traces of grayish plaster preserved between the stones suggest that the blockage dates to antiquity. A similar channel was cut into one of the stones incorporated into the blocking wall, possibly indicating the presence of an improvised device intended to filter silt from the runoff water before it entered the bath.

The blocking of one entrance suggests that the need for a secondary access point had ceased, most likely while the installation was still in use during the late Second Temple period.

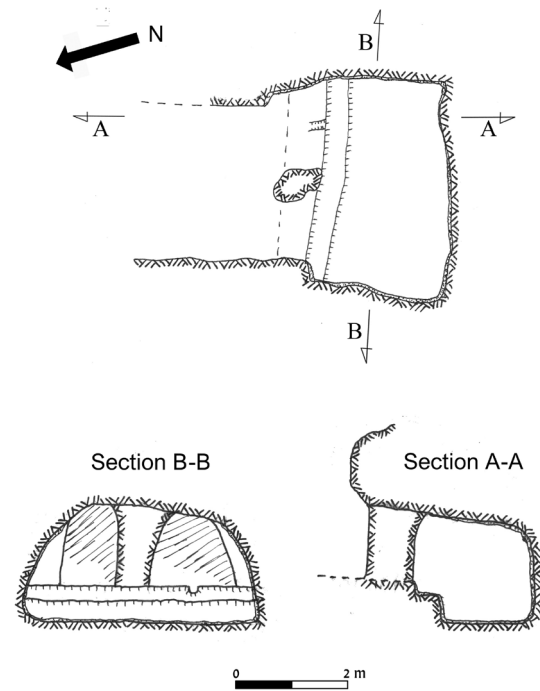


Fig. 9: Plan and section of Ritual Bath No. 1 at Kh. Kefr Som (drawing by E. Klein).



Fig. 10: Approach to the entrances of Ritual Bath No. 1 at Kh. Kefr Som, looking south (photograph by B. Zissu).

²⁷ van Zuiden and Asscher 2021.



a.



b.

Fig. 11: (a) Entrances of Ritual Bath No. 1 at Kh. Kefr Som, looking north; (b) detail: remains of the blocking wall above the channel, including traces of plaster and a secondary channel possibly associated with silt filtration (photographs by B. Zissu).

Ritual Bath No. 2 (Grid Ref. 158807/126603)

This bath (Fig. 12) was installed in a rock outcrop located c. 60 m east of Ritual Bath No. 1. A hewn approach c. 2 m wide leads to it, now covered with soil and sediment. This bath too has two adjacent entrances separated by a rectangular rock pier 0.9 m long and 0.3 m wide (Fig. 13). After the installation went out of use, both entrances were blocked by a stone wall. The upper part of the wall that sealed the western entrance was dismantled by antiquities robbers, and the installation can now be entered through it. The width of the western entrance is 0.8 m and that of the eastern entrance 0.7 m. Their height is unknown because of sediment accumulated at their base. In a few places a single rock step c. 0.35 m high could be discerned, installed in a straight line with the southern end of the rock pier. This step allows descent to the immersion pool. The pool is rectangular in plan (width 1.3 m, length 2.2 m, height c. 2 m), and its floor, ceiling, and walls were coated with gray hydraulic plaster (containing small pebbles) identical to that in Bath No. 1.

Although no finds were recovered that might date the installations, examination of their form and the plaster coating their walls indicates that they were cut and used during the Early Roman period.

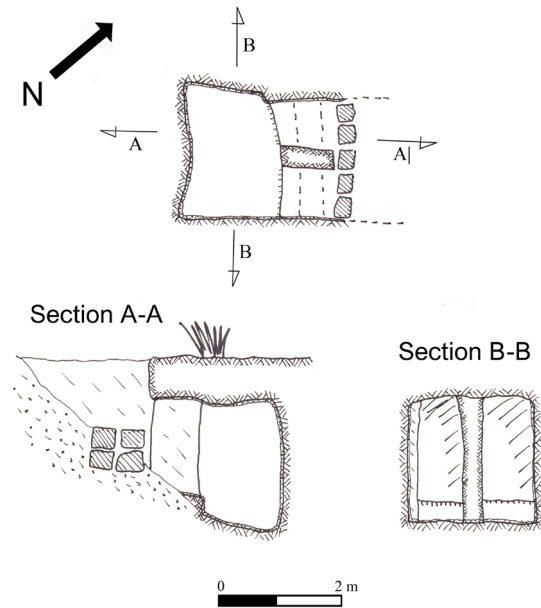


Fig. 12: Plan and section of Ritual Bath No. 2 at Kh. Kefr Som (drawing by E. Klein).



Fig. 13: Double entrance separated by a pier in Ritual Bath No. 2 at Kh. Kefr Som; view to the north (photographs by B. Zissu).

Horvat Asad (Grid Ref. 152939/125811)

The site is situated on a hilltop (524m above sea level) in the western Jerusalem Hills, bounded by Nahal Ozen to the south and Nahal Ha-Me'arah to the north. The site contains the ruins of an abandoned Ottoman-period village built over earlier structural remains. Ancient building stones are incorporated in secondary use in the walls of later buildings. In the vicinity of the site, five rock-cut tombs, stone fences, and agricultural terraces were discovered.²⁸

At the summit of the hill, near ancient walls built of large ashlars, some with drafted margins and a central boss, two rock-cut and plastered installations were discovered (Fig. 14). Installation No. 1 is rectangular in plan and includes a rock-cut corridor and a rectangular immersion chamber (3 × 5 m). The approach is currently blocked by a later wall composed of fieldstones and ashlars. From the corridor, two adjacent entrances with flat ceilings and a slightly trapezoidal section were installed, separated by a pier (Fig. 15). The walls of the installation and the rock pier separating the entrances were coated with a single layer of white plaster mixed with small gravel fragments.

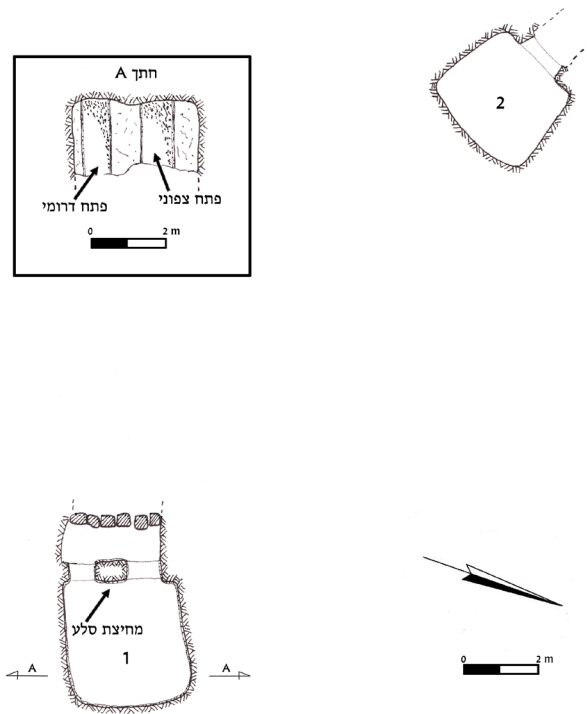


Fig. 14: Plan and section of the ritual bath at Horvat Asad (drawing by B. Zissu).



Fig. 15: Double entrance separated by a rock pier in the ritual bath at Horvat Asad; view to the west (photograph by E. Klein).

²⁸ Conder and Kitchener 1883, 107; Weiss, Zissu and Solimani 2005, 60-61.

Owing to the large quantities of sediment covering the floor, no steps were identified. On the basis of its plan, the installation is identified as a double-entrance ritual bath.

Approximately 15 m west of the entrance to the bath described above lies the entrance to another rock-cut installation (Grid Ref. 152927/125820). This installation is trapezoidal in plan and preserves traces of white plaster on its walls (dimensions of the main chamber 3×3.5 m). A short vestibule leads to the installation. Judging by its plan, it appears to be a typical ritual bath, but the sediment filling its floor prevented us from identifying steps and additional details.

Horvat Geres (Grid Ref. 158098/124698)

The ruin extends over c. 40 dunams on the summit of a hill (751 m above sea level). The site is located at the head of the Roman road ascending to Jerusalem from the Elah Valley, near the junction with another route rising from the Shephelah via Naḥal Nativ (Fig. 16). The site was first explored by the SWP team²⁹ and by Ze'ev Safrai, who proposed identifying it with "Gerasa," a settlement destroyed during the conquest of the Jerusalem region in the Jewish War of 66-70 CE.³⁰ The site was surveyed as part of the Nes Harim map survey.³¹ Finds from the Second Temple period discovered there attest to the existence of a Jewish settlement. Particularly notable are four single-entrance ritual baths, all hewn in the central, elevated sector of the site and discussed extensively in a previous publication.³²

On the upper eastern slope of the ruin (Grid Ref. 158098/124698), a hewn and plastered subterranean installation was documented and identified as a ritual bath incorporating a double-entrance arrangement. The bath was installed adjacent to a massive wall built of large, roughly dressed fieldstones, preserved to a height of five courses. This wall apparently served as the eastern boundary of the ancient settlement (Fig. 17).

The bath includes two adjacent entrances (Nos. 1 and 2) separated by a central rock pier (Fig. 18). The entrances were installed in the eastern wall of a rectangular immersion chamber (Space A; length 3.6 m, width 2.7 m, visible height 1.6 m). An additional entrance (No. 3) was installed in the northern wall of the chamber. The walls of the installation, the entrances, the rock pier, and the ceiling were coated with two layers of hydraulic plaster: a first



Fig. 16: Aerial view of Horvat Geres to the west, showing the location of the site, ritual bath, and Roman road (photograph by B. Zissu).

²⁹ Conder and Kitchener 1883, 116.

³⁰ Safrai 1981, 327-329.

³¹ Weiss, Zissu and Solimani 2005, 77-79.

³² Zissu 2007, 219-225.



Fig. 17: Horvat Geres—wall of large dressed fieldstones that apparently served as the eastern boundary of the settlement. The figure stands above the ritual bath (photograph by B. Zissu).

layer of gray plaster mixed with gravel, and above it a whitish plaster layer. At present the bath can be entered only through Entrance 1, located in the northern part of the eastern wall. This entrance is 0.6 m wide; because of sediment accumulated at its base, its height cannot be determined. The sediment layer also covers the floor of the installation and therefore does not permit identification of additional ritual-bath features such as steps and an immersion pool. In the ceiling above Entrance 1, a shaft was cut that served to drain runoff water into the installation; the date of this shaft is uncertain.

Entrance 2, c. 1 m wide, was installed at the center of the eastern wall of the immersion chamber; its currently visible height is c. 1.4 m. The jambs of this entrance were coated with a thick layer of gray hydraulic plaster. The entrance was blocked by a stone wall coated with gray hydraulic plaster (Fig. 19). This plaster covers parts of the plaster layer on the entrance jambs; it is therefore clear that the blocking postdates the use of the installation as a double-entrance ritual bath. Nevertheless, in view of the character and color of the plaster, it cannot be ruled out that this blocking took place already in the late Second Temple period. These data, together with the differences in the widths of the entrances and the off-center position of Entrance 1, may hint at several stages in the functioning of the installation in the Second Temple period:

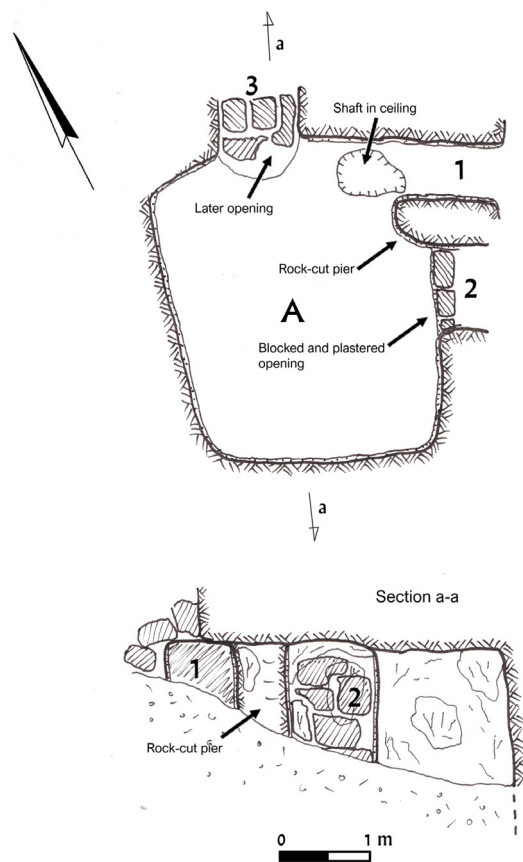


Fig. 18: Plan and section of a double-entrance ritual bath at Horvat Geres (drawing by E. Klein).

1. The cutting of a single-entrance ritual bath in the center of the eastern wall (Entrance 2).
2. The addition of Entrance 1, perhaps as a result of increased strictness among the inhabitants of the settlement in observing the laws of purity and impurity.
3. The blocking of Entrance 2 for some reason, perhaps for religious or functional considerations.

At the same time, it is possible that Entrance 1 was installed off-center in the wall of the bath for functional reasons or because of spatial constraints.

Entrance 3 was installed at the center of the northern wall (width c. 0.9 m). The jambs of this entrance are not covered with plaster, and it cuts through the plaster on the walls of the installation. It is therefore clear that this entrance was installed after the Second Temple period and belongs to a later phase of the installation—perhaps as a subterranean storeroom. The entrance is currently blocked by soil and stones. Several indicative pottery sherds were observed within the bath. Most date to the late Second Temple period and a few to the Late Roman–Early Byzantine period.



Fig. 19: Double entrance separated by a rock pier in the bath at Horvat Geres; note the blocking of Entrance 2; view to the east (photograph by B. Zissu).

Shalmon Spur (Naḥal Refa'im) (Grid Ref. 16037/12766)

The site is in the Jerusalem Hills, c. 6 km west of Jerusalem, on the northern bank of Naḥal Refa'im, and near a system of ancient roads leading from the Judean Shephelah to the city. Its position at a topographic bottleneck overlooking the wadi and adjacent routes conferred strategic and logistical significance (Fig. 20).

The site extends over an area of c. 40 dunams, with archaeological remains dispersed across a broader zone of approximately 170 dunams. The remains include towers, rock-cut installations, quarries, rock-cut tombs, cisterns, and two ritual baths. Pottery collected on the surface indicates activity from the Iron Age II through the Early Islamic period, with a substantial component dating to the late Second Temple period.³³

³³ Zissu, Bickson and Raviv 2023.

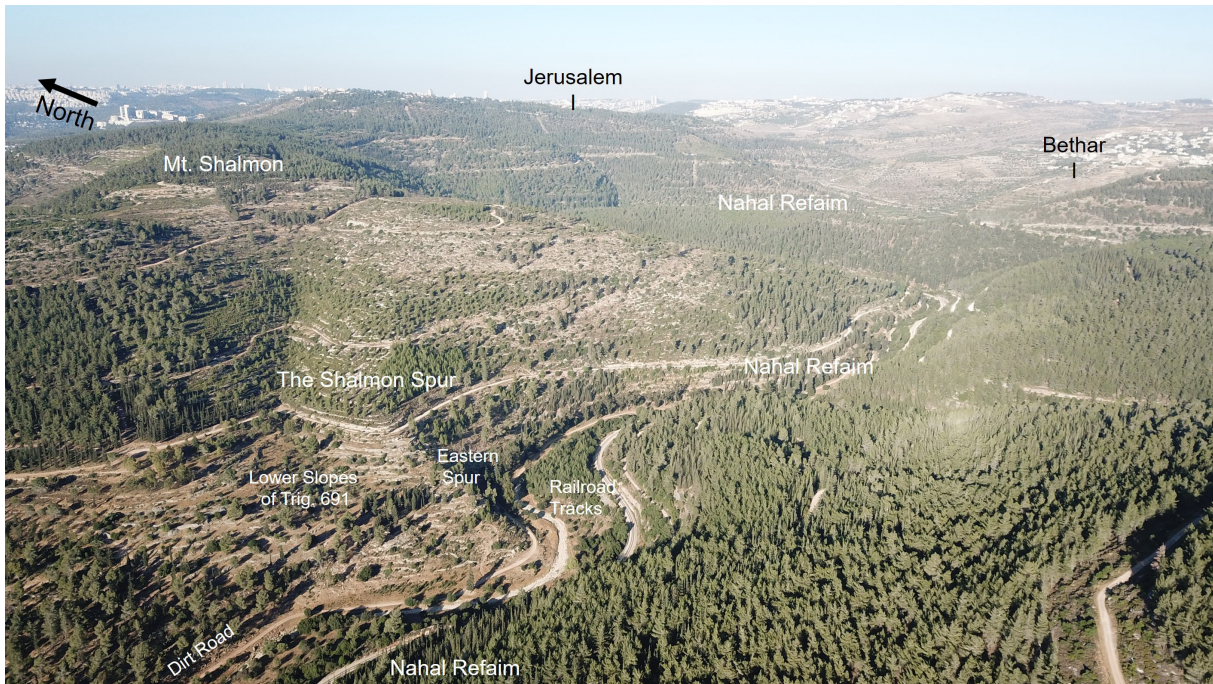


Fig. 20: Aerial view of the Shalmon Spur site and Nahal Refa'im, view to the northeast (photograph by B. Zissu).

The settlement appears to have been located on the more moderate slopes of triangulation point 691, while the steeper spur itself hosted installations and control features, including two towers overlooking the route. The combination of settlement remains, agricultural installations, and rock-cut tombs clearly identifies the site as a rural settlement rather than a temporary way station, although its location suggests that it may also have provided services to travelers or pilgrims *en route* to Jerusalem.

Ritual bath 118 is located on the north-western slope of the Shalmon spur, c. 35 m north of a smaller ritual bath (No. 119) and was hewn into the bedrock of the Kesalon formation at the base of a stepped rock scarp. To the

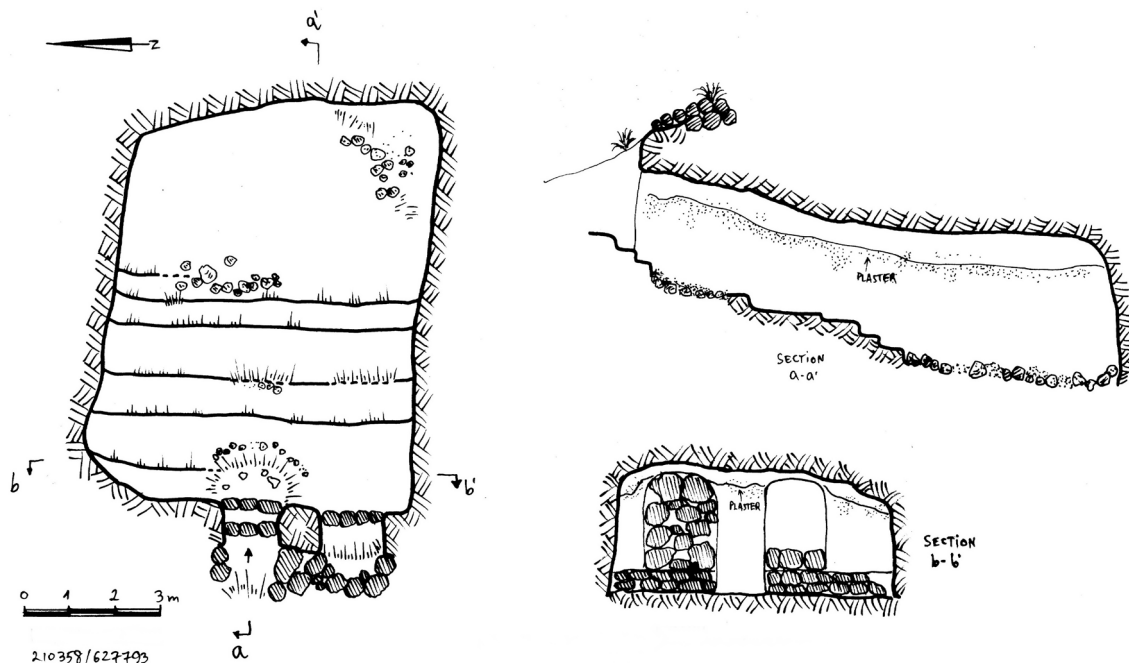


Fig. 21: Plan and section of Ritual Bath 118 at Shalmon Spur (drawing by Y. and B. Zissu).

best of our knowledge, it is the largest and best-preserved ritual bath known outside Jerusalem, with an estimated volume of c. 150 m³ (Figs. 21, 22, 23).



Fig. 22: Ritual Bath 118 at Shalmon Spur; view to the northwest (photograph by B. Zissu).



Fig. 23: Ritual Bath 118 at Shalmon Spur; view to the southeast (photograph by B. Zissu).

Access to the installation was apparently via a rock-cut stepped vestibule, now concealed beneath sediment. This approach likely functioned as a catchment for runoff water from the surrounding slopes and possibly from the adjacent ravine.

The installation has a double-entrance arrangement consisting of two adjacent arched openings separated by a square rock-cut pier. The northern entrance (width 1.3 m; height c. 2 m) is currently open and serves as the point of access, whereas the southern entrance (width 1.4 m; height 2.1 m) was blocked in a later phase.

The immersion chamber is rectangular in plan (c. 7×9 m), with a slightly sloping ceiling reflecting the natural stratification of the rock. Seven rock-cut steps extend along the length of the installation, facilitating descent into the immersion pool. The lower part of the installation, including the bottom steps and the pool itself, is currently covered by water and sediment.

The immersion pool is rectangular (c. 6.7×4.5 m), although its depth cannot be determined without excavation. The walls and floor of the installation were coated with three layers of hydraulic plaster: a foundation layer of gray plaster containing small pebbles; a smoothed, light-colored layer characteristic of the late Second Temple period installations; and an upper repair layer incorporating crushed pottery and ribbed sherds, particularly in the lower portions.³⁴

These repair layers may indicate continued use or reuse of the installation, possibly extending into the Byzantine period, when the bath may have been converted into a water storage facility. Notably, however, no opening for water extraction was cut into the ceiling, as is typical of later cistern use.

The scale of the installation, its sophisticated hydraulic treatment, and its location adjacent to a major route leading to Jerusalem suggest that it exceeded the needs of a small rural settlement. It has therefore been proposed that this installation may have served a broader population, possibly including pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem during the festival periods (see discussion below).³⁵

Kh. Beit Sakia (Grid Ref. 16092/12799)

Kh. Beit Sakia is situated on the northern bank of Naḥal Refa'im, overlooking the route ascending along the wadi. The site occupies a moderately sloping terrace on the valley flank and forms part of a broader system of terraced slopes characteristic of this region of the Jerusalem Hills. Today, much of the site is concealed beneath a forest planted on the agricultural terraces, significantly limiting surface visibility.³⁶

The site comprises a cluster of architectural and agricultural remains dispersed across the terraced slopes and covering an area of c. 14 dunams. Visible remains include hewn burial caves, terrace walls, field boundaries, and a limited number of built structures, indicating a rural settlement.

Particularly noteworthy is a substantial rectangular structure of Ottoman date (c. 20×8 m), subdivided internally into three chambers. Installations associated with olive-oil production were uncovered within it, including both a lever-and-weight press and an iron screw press, attesting to agricultural activity at the site during this period.

Ritual Bath (Grid Ref. 160921/127980)

A rock-cut and plastered installation was documented at the site by the first author, with the participation of D. Bickson. The installation, hewn into the bedrock to a considerable depth (c. 2-2.5 m), is of irregular plan, roughly oval in outline, measuring approximately 4.5-5.5 m across (Fig. 24).

At the time of documentation, three broad steps could be observed in the exposed portions of the installation, although their full extent and original configuration could not be determined due to sediment accumulation and the presence of standing water.

The installation originally featured a double-access arrangement, via two rock-cut openings, each c. 0.8 m wide, separated by a pier c. 0.3 m wide. In a later phase, a circular opening was cut in the ceiling, slightly off-center, to facilitate the drawing of water. At this stage, the original entrances were blocked by built and plastered walls, and only the secondary ceiling opening remained in use, thereby transforming the *miqveh* into a water cistern.

The walls of the installation are coated with several layers of hydraulic plaster. The uppermost layer is white and contains crushed ceramic sherds, laid over a base layer incorporating small pebbles and ceramic inclusions, possibly dating to the Byzantine period. Earlier plaster layers, also white, are visible beneath. This stratigraphy indicates repeated maintenance and resurfacing of the installation over time.

³⁴ van Zuiden and Asscher 2021.

³⁵ Zissu, Bickson and Raviv 2023.

³⁶ Marcus 1993, 115, Site 96.

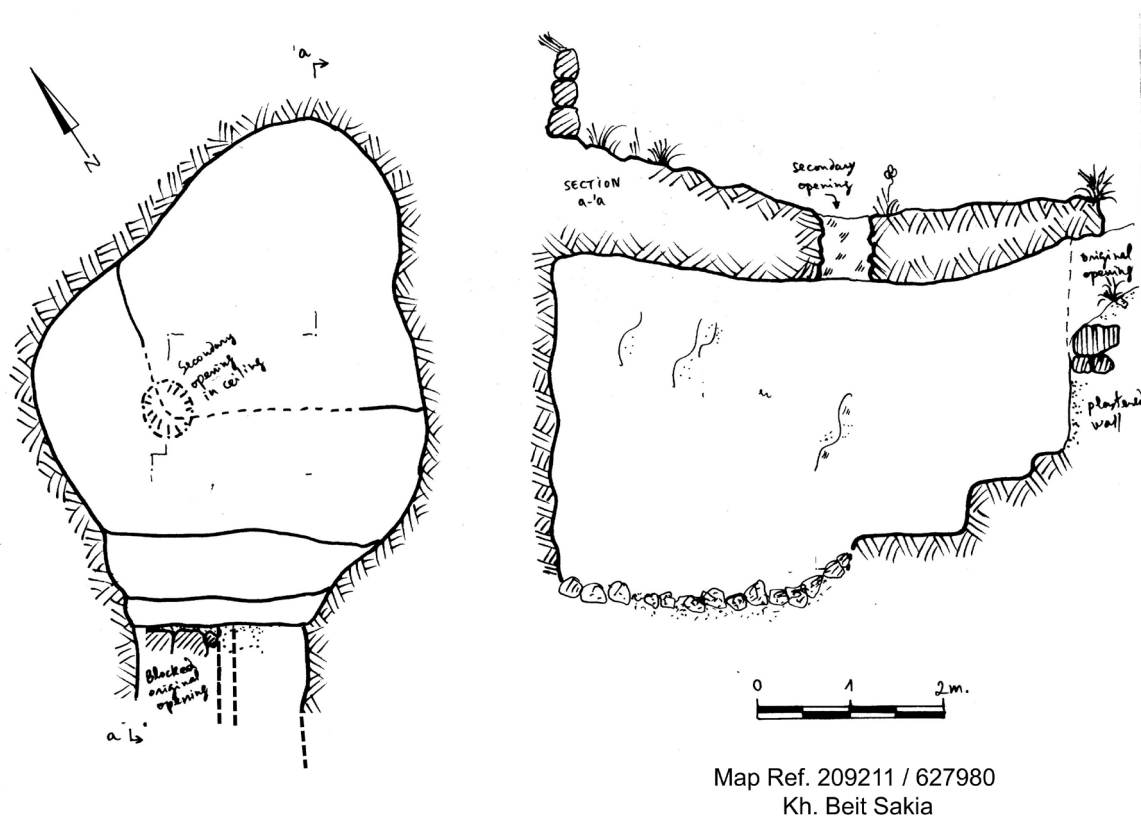


Fig. 24: Plan and section of the ritual bath at Kh. Beit Sakia (drawing by B. Zissu).

Khirbet el-'Umur (Grid Ref. 15943/13345)

The site is situated on a small plateau along a southward-descending slope toward Nahal Kesalon, at an elevation of c. 650 m a.s.l. It lies approximately 1 km west of the spring of 'Ein Limon, which constitutes its nearest permanent water source. The site was surveyed in 1991 by B. Zissu, D. Weiss, and G. Solimany.³⁷

The site extends over approximately 40 dunams, with extensive remains dispersed across the slope and the adjoining hill shoulder. Architectural remains include building foundations and wall segments, many of which are overlain by later construction. Two rock-cut cavities were also documented. Modern agricultural terraces—apparently constructed within the last century—have significantly altered the site and partially obscured earlier remains. Nevertheless, the principal architectural remains appear to be ancient in date.

The pottery assemblage includes a small number of Hellenistic and Early Roman finds, alongside substantial remains from the Byzantine period and additional evidence of activity during the Early Islamic and Ottoman periods.

Within the western part of the site, a rock-cut installation was identified and documented (Grid Ref. 159439/133416; elevation 634 m above sea level). The installation was discovered by Tal Tutka and documented by the first author with the participation of Tamara Zissu and Avigail Gan Sinclair. Hewn in bedrock of the Kesalon Formation, the installation cannot be fully understood in its original context due to Ottoman-period construction activity, and excavation would be required to clarify its full layout.

At present, access to the installation is via a massive terrace constructed of stones, including large ashlar in secondary use (Fig. 25). The terrace is oriented east–west. It created a leveled area on which the remains of an Ottoman-period structure have survived; the terrace itself should probably also be dated to this period. The builders of the terrace deliberately incorporated the entrance to the earlier installation within it.

Originally, the installation had two rock-cut openings, each approximately 0.8 m wide and 1.8 m high, separated by a pier ca. 0.7 m wide (Figs. 26–29). In front of these openings, a broad entrance corridor was hewn, measuring approximately 4.2 m in width and 4.8 m in length. An unknown number of broad steps descended northward through this corridor toward the double entrance. At present, however, the entrance corridor is covered with debris and cacti, thereby hindering its proper examination.

³⁷ Sha'ar ha-Gay Survey map 100; Site 15-13/93/1; unpublished.



Fig. 25: Aerial view showing the location of the ritual bath at Kh. el-'Umur, view to the west (photograph by B. Zissu).

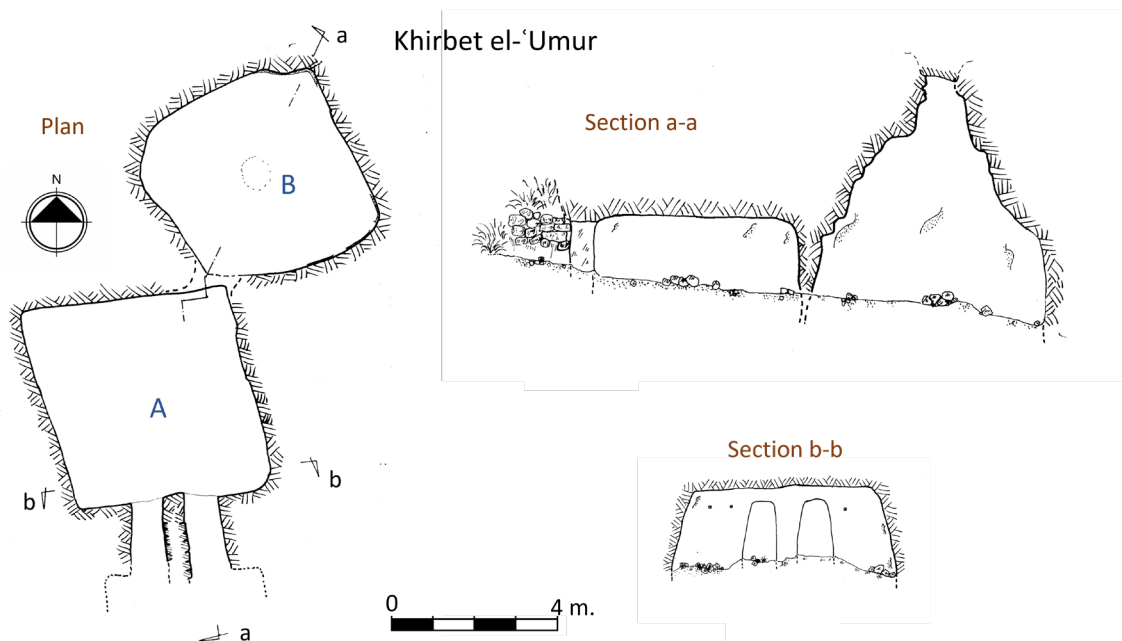


Fig. 26: Plan and sections of the ritual bath at Kh. el-'Umur (drawing by B. Zissu).

The eastern opening was incorporated into the terrace and allowed access into the interior space, whereas the western opening was blocked by an earth fill retained by ashlar-built retaining walls. Antiquities looters caused the collapse of the retaining wall that had sealed the western entrance, and part of the fill slid into the interior of the installation.

The installation comprises a square chamber (A) measuring approximately 5.5×5.5 m, with a height of about 2.3 m above the accumulated sediment covering its floor. Since the floor is currently buried beneath substantial alluvium, neither the original form of the steps nor their number can be determined. Traces of plaster survive on the walls, mostly in the northwestern part of the installation. Niches for oil lamps are preserved in the southern (entrance) wall: two to the east of the entrances and one to its west.



Fig. 27: Ritual bath at Kh. el-'Umur, looking south (photograph by B. Zissu).



Fig. 28: Adjacent cistern at Kh. el-'Umur, looking north (photograph by B. Zissu).



Fig. 29: Opening connecting the ritual bath and cistern at Kh. el-'Umur, looking north (photograph by B. Zissu).

Today, access continues through a wide passage created by a later breach into an adjacent cavity (B), which originally functioned as a water cistern. The cistern has a roughly square plan (c. 5.5×5.3 m) and a bell-shaped section, reaching a maximum height of approximately 5 m above the sediment covering its floor. At least two layers of light-colored hydraulic plaster mixed with small pebbles are preserved on its walls. Its original opening was blocked in the past with large stones after it ceased to serve for water storage.

The square plan, identical orientation, and proximity of the two installations suggest, in our view, that the cistern and the *miqveh* were constructed together. It is possible that a *hashaka* arrangement existed between them, by means of a pipe or a rock-cut aperture. It may be suggested that this aperture enabled the mingling of the waters when required (*neqev hashaka*). Such an arrangement accords with the principle formulated in Mishnah *Mikwa'ot* 6:1: "Any [pool of water] that is mingled with [water from] an immersion-pool is deemed like to the immersion-pool itself..." Such arrangements between ritual baths and adjacent water installations are known in the archaeological record, their purpose being to enable the mingling of water and thereby to preserve or restore the ritual validity of the *miqveh*.

In our assessment, at least three phases may be identified in the subterranean complex.

Phase I: A *miqveh* with a double entrance, alongside which a water cistern was hewn, including a *hashaka* arrangement between the two installations (late Second Temple period).

Phase II: The creation of a connection between the two installations, transforming them into a large subterranean water reservoir (possibly in the Byzantine period).

Phase III: The conversion of both installations into a subterranean storage facility serving a nearby structure (Ottoman period).

Mount Heret (Har Heret) (Grid Ref. 16363/13214)

Mount Heret is situated in the Jerusalem Hills, on a prominent ridge overlooking the surrounding valleys, between Naḥal Sorek to the south and the tributaries of Naḥal Kesalon and Naḥal Refa'im to the north. The site lies at an elevation of c. 712 m a.s.l. and forms part of a broader mountainous landscape characterized by steep slopes and extensive agricultural terracing.

An archaeological survey was conducted at the site in 2001–2002 in advance of a development plan (Permit G-113/2001), under the direction of Zvi Greenhut and Gideon Solimany on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority (unpublished). The surveyed area extended between Nahal Zova and a quarry to the west, Nahal Heret to the east, the spring of 'Ein Heret to the northeast, and Nahal Sorek to the south. The survey documented approximately 67 sites, including two settlement foci, a spring complex with a rock-cut tunnel, and numerous agricultural installations.³⁸

The archaeological remains are dispersed across an area of several dunams and include building remains, rock-cut installations, agricultural terraces, field clearance heaps, quarries, rock-cut tombs, and a variety of agricultural features such as winepresses, olive presses, and columbaria. The ceramic finds indicate activity primarily during the Hasmonean, Early Roman, and Byzantine periods. The site appears to have functioned as a rural agricultural settlement, with evidence for olive-oil production and other agricultural activities.

Among the installations documented at the site are at least two ritual baths representing different architectural types.

The first, identified during the survey (Site 38), is a typical rock-cut *miqveh* measuring c. $2 \times 1.5 \times 2.3$ m. It includes a flight of seven steps descending to a rock-cut immersion basin set at a right angle to the stairway. The installation is coated with several layers of plaster. No evidence for a separation arrangement or double entrance was noted in this case, and it may be classified as a standard single-access *miqveh*. Adjacent to it is an additional plastered installation, possibly representing a later phase of reuse for agricultural purposes.

A second and more significant installation was exposed during a salvage excavation conducted in 2018 along the route of a gas pipeline, under the direction of Galit Litani on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority. This installation formed part of a larger subterranean complex, which also included an olive-oil press in an adjacent chamber (Fig. 30). The western chamber of this complex was identified as a ritual bath.³⁹

This *miqveh* is of particular importance for the present study, as it incorporates a clear separation arrangement. Access to the immersion basin was provided by a double flight of steps cut into the bedrock and coated with

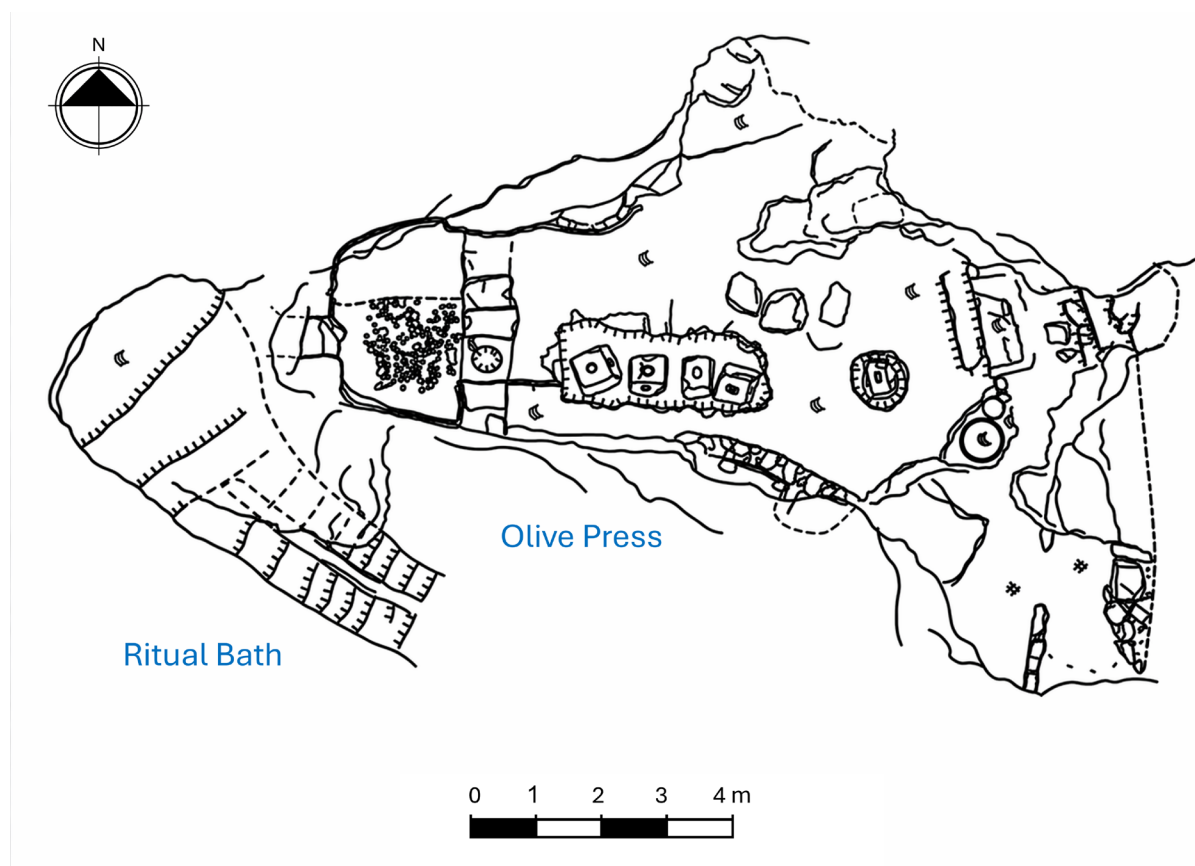


Fig. 30: Plan of the ritual bath and olive press at Har Heret (courtesy of Galit Litani, IAA; drawing by B. Zissu).

³⁸ Spiezer 2024, 60-64, site no. 30.

³⁹ Spiezer 2024, 60-64, site no. 30; Figs. 66-70.

plaster, descending to an oval immersion pool lined with white plaster. The two stairways created separate routes of movement, corresponding to descending and ascending paths. Although the entrances themselves were not preserved, it has been suggested that a double entrance may originally have existed.

The ceramic assemblage recovered from the fills of the installation dates to the Hasmonean and Early Roman periods, indicating that the ritual bath was in use during the late Second Temple period. The association of the *miqveh* with an olive-oil production installation suggests that concerns for ritual purity were integrated into the economic activities carried out at the site.

The evidence from Mount Heret thus provides an important example of a rural ritual bath incorporating a separation arrangement, even in the absence of a fully preserved double entrance. Together with the more conventional *miqveh* identified in the survey, it illustrates the coexistence of different architectural solutions for ritual immersion within a single site and contributes to the broader corpus of such installations in the Jerusalem Hills. Although only partially preserved, the installation may nevertheless reflect an awareness of spatial separation within the immersion process—a feature otherwise rarely attested in rural contexts and perhaps indicative of heightened concern for maintaining ritual purity even within agricultural settings (see discussion below).

Discussion and Summary

Double-entrance ritual baths are relatively rare in comparison with simpler installations featuring a single entrance. In this context, it is important to note that such arrangements are closely related to another architectural solution attested in *miqva'ot*, namely the installation of low partitions dividing the stairway into separate paths. These partitions, often only 10–20 cm high, are typically hewn along the steps of the entrance corridor or in the upper section of the immersion staircase. Both features—double entrances and internal partitions—reflect similar concerns for regulating movement within the installation and may represent alternative or complementary responses to the same halakhic and practical requirements.⁴⁰

At present, about 70 dual access baths are known, most of them from Jerusalem and a minority from Second Temple period sites in Judea.⁴¹ In some cases, as we identified at Horvat Geres and Horvat Asad, baths of this type were discovered adjacent to simple, single-entrance baths. These data, together with the distinctive architectural plan of these baths, have led several scholars to propose different interpretations of the phenomenon and its significance.

Reich was the first to address this phenomenon, and the basic assumption he proposed is generally accepted in current scholarship. Reich argued that the division of the entrance or the stairway into two routes was intended to separate the impure persons descending to the ritual bath from the pure persons ascending from it, so that the latter would not become impure again through physical contact with those descending.⁴² Reich added that additional reasons may have stood behind the separation arrangements in ritual baths, and that these seem to constitute material expression of different customs among Jews in the late Second Temple period.⁴³

Subsequent scholarship has sought to explain the limited distribution of such installations. Eyal Regev examined the question why separation arrangements occur only in a small group of late Second Temple period ritual baths. He proposed that these baths belonged to priestly populations, whereas the rest of the people immersed in ordinary baths. Regev based his view, which sees the separation of the routes as an element characteristic of practices associated with the Temple and the priestly estate, on several halakhic sources describing arrangements separating entrance and exit to the Temple. He therefore suggested that priestly strictness in matters of purity and impurity led priests to use ritual baths with separation arrangements preventing physical contact between the impure and the pure.⁴⁴

In contrast to Regev, Amit showed that there is no overlap between the location of priestly settlements and the distribution of ritual baths with double entrances. In his opinion, therefore, baths of this type do indeed indicate a high level of strictness in the laws of purity and impurity, but they should not be attributed specifically to priestly populations. In his view, the type of baths incorporating separation arrangements must be examined in light of the complex halakhic and cultural-material reality, which reflects three different gradients in the domain of purity: the geographical gradient—from the Temple through Jerusalem to the Land of Israel; the human-social gradient—from priests through *haverim* to *'ammei ha-aretz*; and the halakhic gradient—from the severe impurity of corpse defilement to the lighter impurity of seminal emission.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Reich 2013, 63.

⁴¹ Adler 2011, 135–136.

⁴² Reich 1981; Reich 1990, 34–39; Reich 2013.

⁴³ Reich 1990, 39.

⁴⁴ Regev 1996; Regev 2006.

⁴⁵ Amit 1997, 56–62.

This broader perspective finds support in recent archaeological syntheses, which have pointed to the widespread distribution of *miqva'ot* across a variety of settings, including domestic, agricultural, industrial, and funerary contexts. The ubiquity of these installations suggests that ritual immersion was practiced on a regular basis by large segments of the population, without clear distinction between priests and non-priests or between urban and rural settings. Such evidence indicates that the maintenance of ritual purity functioned as a pervasive social norm extending well beyond strictly cultic contexts.⁴⁶

As part of his broader analysis of material culture and social practice in late Second Temple Judaea, Eyal Regev has addressed ritual baths within wider discussions of purity practices and social differentiation, situating them within the cultural and archaeological framework of the period.⁴⁷

Within this framework, it has further been argued that the concentration of *miqva'ot* in Jerusalem should not be understood as reflecting a phenomenon unique to the city, whether in connection with the Temple cult or with priestly populations, but rather as an intensified expression of practices widely attested throughout Judea. The archaeological record thus suggests that immersion was not limited to specific cultic occasions but formed part of routine behavior embedded in everyday life.⁴⁸

A useful parallel may be found in Adler's analysis of ritual baths adjacent to tombs, where the placement of *miqva'ot* in immediate proximity to *loci* of impurity was explained not as a contradiction to *halakhah*, but as a practical response to situations involving predictable exposure to impurity—particularly of a degree that could be remedied through same-day immersion.⁴⁹

Asher Grossberg likewise rejected Regev's claim and suggested that this type of ritual bath should not be associated specifically with priests. Instead, he proposed that such baths were intended to serve the general population of pilgrims who came to Jerusalem and were required to purify themselves under crowded conditions to enter the Temple.⁵⁰ This proposal, however, pertains only to baths with separation arrangements discovered in Jerusalem and does not provide a solution for the appearance of baths of this type in rural Jewish settlements of the Second Temple period, dispersed throughout the countryside of Judea.

At the same time, recent discussion has suggested that the dichotomy between “urban/Temple-related” and “rural/local” installations may be too rigid. The distribution of some large or carefully planned ritual baths with separation arrangements along approaches to Jerusalem raises the possibility that at least part of the rural corpus should be viewed in connection with pilgrimage movement and with public or semi-public needs. Rabbinic traditions concerning the maintenance of roads, ritual baths, and water systems before the pilgrimage festivals (*Mishnah Sheqalim* 1:1; *Tosefta Sheqalim* 1:1), although preserved in later compilations, may preserve a memory of practical arrangements connected with festival traffic. In this light, the rural baths of the Jerusalem Hills need not all be interpreted in identical terms: some may reflect heightened local observance, while others may have served wider populations moving toward Jerusalem.⁵¹

Jonathan Adler recently summarized the discussion concerning the nature of installations of this type. Adler agrees with the basic assumption that separation arrangements in ritual baths were intended to prevent contact between the impure and the pure. He examines, however, from a halakhic point of view, the various possibilities by which a pure person might contract impurity through physical contact. It turns out that, according to the Bible and rabbinic sources, a person can become impure through physical contact with an impure person only in a limited number of impurity types, defined at the level of *'av ha-tum'ah*: a *zav*, *zavah*, menstruant, one who has intercourse with a menstruant, corpse-impure person, woman after childbirth, and leper. Adler proposed an additional explanation for the separation arrangements in ritual baths, relying on the *mishnayot* at the end of chapter 2 of tractate *Hagigah*. These *mishnayot* describe a hierarchy of increasing purity levels (*Mishnah Hagigah* 2:6–7). This source sets out the practical consequences of such a hierarchy: a person who maintained purity for engagement with one level of sanctity had to regard one who maintained purity for a lower level of sanctity as though he were in a severe state of impurity at the level of *'av ha-tum'ah*. Adler therefore suggested that the need to prevent contact between persons observing different standards of purity was what led to the installation of separation arrangements in ritual baths.⁵²

Adler's refinement is especially important because it allows the architectural phenomenon to be understood in more nuanced social terms. The separation arrangement need not reflect only the binary distinction between the impure and the pure; it may also embody practical responses to a graded system of purity observance. This

⁴⁶ Adler 2023, 162-165.

⁴⁷ Regev 2019; Regev 2023, 10-30.

⁴⁸ Adler 2016, 229-232, 236-237.

⁴⁹ Adler 2009.

⁵⁰ Grossberg 1997.

⁵¹ Safrai 1964; Gibson 2005; Gurevich 2017; Raviv and Zissu 2018.

⁵² Adler 2011, 142-146.

approach fits well the complex social reality of late Second Temple Judaism, in which different individuals and groups maintained different standards of purity in relation to food, offerings, and access to sacred space. It also helps explain why such installations remained relatively rare: they were not required everywhere, but rather in settings where stricter or differentiated purity practice was deemed significant.

Another aspect, related to the nature of the ritual baths under discussion, was observed at two sites in the Jerusalem Hills: Horvat Revi'a and Horvat Geres. At both sites, one of the bath entrances was blocked by a stone wall coated with a layer of gray plaster. Plasters of this type may indicate that the blocking was carried out in the Second Temple period as a further stage in the functioning of the installation as a ritual bath. This phenomenon was also identified by Reich in baths on Mount Zion, in the Jewish Quarter, and at Ramat Rahel.⁵³ Reich proposed that the individual who altered the access arrangement of the installation in the Second Temple period—from two adjacent entrances to a single entrance—did so to emphasize that he did not observe, or perhaps even opposed, the custom for which the double entrance had originally been intended. Reich further suggested that a change in attitude on this matter may have been connected to the halakhic outlooks of the various sects that existed in the late Second Temple period. In his opinion, the change in the entrance arrangement in these baths may reflect a halakhic change, a change in the concept of purity held by the bath's owner, or perhaps a change in ownership of the installation. While this interpretation cannot be excluded, the available evidence does not permit a definitive conclusion. Functional considerations, changes in circulation patterns, alterations to adjacent architectural spaces, or changing local requirements may also account for the blocking of one entrance.

The group of double-entrance ritual baths found in the Jerusalem Hills and discussed here fills a "gap" in the distribution map of this type. Based on the updated distribution map (see Fig. 3), apart from three baths discovered at two sites in the northern Judean Shephelah, all ritual baths of this type have been found at sites lying within c. 20–30 km of Jerusalem and within the bounds of the Judean highlands. It should be noted that about half of these baths were discovered in Jerusalem itself, rather than in the surrounding rural area. It therefore seems that ritual baths of this type in the rural zone were installed under the strong influence of explicit religious laws, sectarian practices, or prevailing attitudes whose source lay in the social, economic, and religious center of Jerusalem. The evidence from the Jerusalem hinterland suggests that such installations should not be viewed in isolation, but rather as components of a broader rural system in which agricultural production, movement toward Jerusalem, and the maintenance of ritual purity were closely intertwined.

Further support for the interpretation proposed here may be drawn from *miqva'ot* situated adjacent to agricultural installations—particularly winepresses and olive-presses—which constitute a well-attested but relatively under-discussed phenomenon in the archaeology of the Second Temple period. Approximately twenty such installations are currently known, primarily in Judea and the environs of Jerusalem, often located in agricultural fields at some distance from residential areas. In many cases, these *miqva'ot* were constructed as an integral component of the production complex itself, indicating a deliberate functional association between ritual purification and agricultural processing.

The prevailing interpretation, supported by both archaeological context and halakhic sources, is that these installations served agricultural laborers engaged in the production of wine and olive oil—commodities particularly susceptible to ritual impurity due to their liquid nature. The processing of grapes and olives involved the transformation of solid produce into liquids (*mashqin*), which, according to halakhic principles, were especially prone to impurity and capable of transmitting it further (*Mishnah Makshirin* 1:1; 6:4). This heightened sensitivity necessitated stricter control over the purity status of those handling the produce.

Accordingly, *miqva'ot* were often constructed immediately adjacent to wine or olive presses, even where domestic baths existed within nearby settlements. This duplication underscores their specific functional role within agricultural production. Their proximity allowed workers to immerse immediately prior to commencing work, thereby attaining the status of *tevul yom*, sufficient—according to Pharisaic *halakhah*—to handle unconsecrated produce (*hullin*) without transmitting impurity. This arrangement minimized the risk of contamination during production and reflects the economic and religious importance of maintaining purity standards, particularly in connection with Temple-related consumption.

The halakhic literature further reflects direct concern with the purity of workers in such contexts. A passage in the *Mishnah* (*Tohorot* 10:3) discusses laborers in an olive press or vineyard, emphasizing the need to ensure that they have undergone proper immersion before engaging in work; in the view attributed to R. Yose, supervision is required "until they immerse," underscoring the importance of verified purification. Similarly, the broader tannaitic corpus stresses the regulation of impurity in contexts involving liquids and food production (cf. *Mishnah Terumot* 3:4; *Mishnah Tohorot* 10:1–3), reflecting the economic and ritual sensitivity of these activities.

⁵³ Reich 1990, 38–39.

Against this background, the installation of *miqva'ot* within or beside agricultural facilities provided a practical mechanism for enforcing purity regulations *in situ*. As emphasized by Reich, their proximity also facilitated supervision of workers' ritual status, ensuring compliance with halakhic requirements. This concern may further be connected to the preparation of produce destined for priestly consumption or offerings, which required a state of purity.

As for architectural elaboration, to the best of our knowledge, dual access *miqva'ot* or installations incorporating partition walls are not attested in clear agricultural contexts.⁵⁴ The sole possible exception is the feature at Mount Heret, which incorporates a separation arrangement but its entrance (or entrances) are not preserved. The absence of clear evidence elsewhere may reflect either issues of preservation or the more utilitarian character of rural installations, in which immediate access and operational efficiency likely took precedence over architectural elaboration.

Beyond their significance for the study of Jewish ritual purity, these installations contribute to our understanding of the broader religious landscape of late Second Temple Judea. The concentration of ritual baths along routes leading to Jerusalem and their occurrence in rural settlements demonstrate that concerns with purity permeated everyday life well beyond priestly or urban contexts. This observation provides important archaeological context for early Christian sources, which repeatedly refer to purification, immersion, pilgrimage, and debates concerning ritual purity. The evidence presented here suggests that such practices formed part of the lived religious environment shared by the various Jewish communities from which early Christianity emerged in the first century CE.

In this light, the installations discussed here should be understood not only as expressions of local practice, but also as part of a broader system linking agricultural production, mobility toward Jerusalem, and the maintenance of ritual purity in the late Second Temple period.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adler, Y. 2008. Second Temple Period Ritual Baths Adjacent to Agricultural Installations: The Archaeological Evidence in Light of the Halakhic Sources. *Journal of Jewish Studies* 59: 61-72.
- Adler, Y. 2009. Ritual Baths Adjacent to Tombs: An Analysis of the Archaeological Evidence in Light of the Halakhic Sources. *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 40: 55-73.
- Adler, Y. 2011. The Archaeology of Purity: Archaeological Evidence for the Observance of Purity Laws in Eretz-Israel from the Hasmonean Period until the End of the Talmudic Period (164 BCE–400 CE). PhD dissertation. Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University.
- Adler, Y. 2016. Between Priestly Cult and Common Culture: The Material Evidence of Ritual Purity Observance in Early Roman Jerusalem Reassessed. *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 7: 228-248.
- Adler, Y. 2023. Jewish Ritual Immersion in the Longue Durée: From Earliest Manifestations until Today. *Atiqot* 113: 159-181.
- Amit, D. 1992. Horvat Hillel (Kh. Hilal). *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* 97: 79-80.
- Amit, D. 1993. Ritual Baths in the Hebron Hills—Milestones for the Reconstruction of Jewish Settlement in the Second Temple Period. Z.H. Ehrlich and Y. Eshel (eds.), *Judea and Samaria Research Studies. Proceedings of the Third Conference*: 157-189. Qedumim–Ariel.
- Amit, D. 1997. Second Temple Period Ritual Baths (*Miqva'ot*) in the Hebron Hills. Master's thesis. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. (Hebrew).
- Amit, D. 1999. A *Miqveh* Complex near Alon Shevut. *Atiqot* 38: 75-84.
- Conder, C.R. and Kitchener, H.H. 1883. *The Survey of Western Palestine. Memoirs. Vol. 3. Judaea*. London: Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund.
- Galor, K. 2002. Qumran's Plastered Installations: Cisterns or Immersion Pools? C. Ohlig, Y. Peleg and T. Tsuk (eds.), *Cura Aquarum in Israel. Proceedings of the 11th International Conference on the History of Water Management and Hydraulic Engineering in the Mediterranean Region, Israel 2001*: 33-45. Siegburg: Deutsche Wasserhistorische Gesellschaft.
- Galor, K. 2003. Plastered Pools: A New Perspective. J.-B. Humbert and J. Gunneweg (eds.), *Khirbet Qumrân et 'Ain Feshkha II. Études d'anthropologie, de physique et de chimie. Studies of Anthropology, Physics and*

⁵⁴ Adler 2008.

- Chemistry. *Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus. Series Archaeologica* 3: 291-320. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; Fribourg: Academic Press.
- Gibson, S. 2005. The Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem and Jewish Purification Practices of the Second Temple Period. *Proche-Orient chrétien* 55/3-4: 270-293.
- Grossberg, A. 1997. The Ritual Baths in Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period and the Ways They Were Rendered Fit for Use: 'The Mixing of Ritual Baths' and the Confusion of Concepts. *Cathedra* 83: 151-168.
- Gurevich, D. 2017. The Water Pools and the Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Late Second Temple Period. *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 149/2: 103-134.
- Kloner, A. 2003. *Survey of Jerusalem: The Northwestern Sector. Introduction and Indexes*. Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority.
- Lieberman, S. 1967-1968. Their Ascent Was Not by the Same Route as Their Descent. A.S. Rosenthal (ed.), *Peraqim. Annual of the Schocken Institute for Jewish Research of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America* 1: 97-98.
- Marcus, M. 1993. *The Jerusalem Hills: Landscape Survey and Hiking Routes*. Jerusalem: Israel Nature and Parks Authority.
- Netzer, E. 1978. Miqva'ot of the Second Temple Period at Jericho. *Qadmoniot* 11/42-43: 54-59.
- Rahmani, L.Y. 1991. Two Byzantine Winepresses in Jerusalem. *'Atiqot* 20: 95-110.
- Raviv, D. and Zissu, B. 2018. Rock-Cut Water Cisterns and Ritual Baths alongside Second Temple Period Pilgrims' Roads to Jerusalem: A Reexamination. A.A. Gunko et al. (eds.), *Speleology and Speleostology. Proceedings of the IX International Scientific Conference*: 146-167. Naberezhnye Chelny: Naberezhnye Chelny State Pedagogical University.
- Regev, E. 1996. Ritual Baths of Social Classes and Sects in Israel during the Second Temple Period. *Cathedra* 79: 3-21.
- Regev, E. 2006. Archaeology and the Mishnah's Halakhic Tradition: The Case of Stone Vessels and Ritual Baths. A.J. Avery-Peck and J. Neusner (eds.), *The Mishnah in Contemporary Perspective*: 136-152. Leiden.
- Regev, E. 2019. The King's Baths: Jewish, Greek, and Roman Baths in Hasmonean and Herodian Palaces. *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 135/2: 168-187.
- Regev, E. 2023. *The Social Archaeology of Late Second Temple Judaea: From Purity, Burial, and Art, to Qumran, Herod, and Masada*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Reich, R. 1980. Mishnah Sheqalim 8:2 and the Archaeological Evidence. A. Oppenheimer, A. Rappaport and M. Stern (eds.), *Studies in the History of Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period. Memorial Volume for Abraham Schalit*: 225-256. Jerusalem.
- Reich, R. 1982. Jewish Ritual Baths at Tel Gezer. *Qadmoniot* 15/57: 74-76.
- Reich, R. 1990. *Jewish Ritual Baths in the Second Temple, Mishnaic and Talmudic Periods*. PhD dissertation. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
- Reich, R. 1998. Ritual Baths at Qumran. *Qadmoniot* 30/114: 123-128.
- Reich, R. 2013. *Miqwa'ot (Jewish Ritual Baths) in the Second Temple, Mishnaic and Talmudic Periods*. Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi and Israel Exploration Society.
- Safrai, S. 1964. *Pilgrimage at the Time of the Second Temple*. Jerusalem: Am Hasefer. (Hebrew).
- Safrai, Z. 1981. The Conquest of Jerusalem in 68-69 CE. A. Oppenheimer, A. Rappaport and M. Stern (eds.), *Studies in the History of Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period*: 320-339. Jerusalem.
- Saller, S.J. 1946. *Discoveries at St. John's 'Ein Karim (1941-1942)*. Jerusalem: Franciscan Press.
- Spiezer, Y. 2024. *The Rural Hinterland of Jerusalem During the Hasmonean, Roman and Byzantine Periods. Vol. II. The Corpus, GIS Maps, Illustrations and Statistics*. PhD dissertation. Ramat Gan: Martin (Szusz) Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology, Bar-Ilan University.
- Spiezer, Y., Zelinger, Y. and Zissu, B. 2026. The Rural Hinterland of Jerusalem in the Hasmonean Period. *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 17/1: 80-121.
- van Zuiden, A. and Asscher, Y. 2021. A Typology of Lime-Based Plasters from Iron Age II until the Byzantine Period in Jerusalem and Its Vicinity. Y. Zelinger, O. Peleg-Barkat, J. Uziel and Y. Gadot (eds.), *New Studies in the Archaeology of Jerusalem and Its Region. Collected Papers* 14: 225-251. Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority.
- Weiss, D., Zissu, B. and Solimani, G. 2005. *Archaeological Survey of Israel. Map of Nes Harim (104)*. Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority.

- Yetah, M. 2002. Ritual Baths and Stone Vessels in the Land of Benjamin in the Second Temple Period. Y. Eshel (ed.), *Judea and Samaria Research Studies* 11: 81-90. Ariel.
- Zelinger, Y. 2010. The Rural Settlement in the Lod Shephelah during the Second Temple Period. PhD dissertation. Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University.
- Zissu, B. 2002. The Rural Settlement in the Judean Hills and Shephelah from the End of the Second Temple Period until the Suppression of the Bar Kokhba Revolt. PhD dissertation. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
- Zissu, B. 2007. On the Identification of the Settlement 'Gerasa' in Judea. Y. Eshel (ed.), *Judea and Samaria Research Studies* 16: 219-230. Ariel.
- Zissu, B. 2023. Archaeological Explorations at 'En Qobi in the Jerusalem Highlands and the Identification of Qube/Qubi. *Cercetări Arheologice* 30/1: 263-284.
- Zissu, B. and Amit, D. 2008. Common Judaism, Common Purity and the Second Temple Period Judean 'Miqwa'ot' (Ritual Immersion Baths). W.O. McCready and A. Reinhartz (eds.), *Common Judaism: Explorations in Second-Temple Judaism*: 47-62. Minneapolis.
- Zissu, B., Bickson, D. and Raviv, D. 2023. An Archaeological Survey at the Shalmon Spur (Nahal Refa'im) in the Jerusalem Highlands. *Speleology and Speleostology* 2023/3: 43-59.
- Zissu, B. and Klein, E. 2014. On the Use and Reuse of Rock-Cut Tombs and a Ritual Bath at Tel en-Naşbeh: New Perspectives on the Roman and Byzantine Necropoleis. J.R. Zorn and A.J. Brody (eds.), "As for Me, I Will Dwell at Mizpah ...": The Tell en-Naşbeh Excavations after 85 Years. *Gorgias Studies in the Ancient Near East* 9: 199-224. Piscataway, New Jersey: Gorgias Press.

Lista figurilor

- Fig. 1:** Planul și secțiunile unei băi rituale tipice, cu o singură intrare, de la 'Ein Kerem. Instalația a fost descoperită în anii 1940 de Sylvester Saller; la acea dată, băile rituale tipice nu fuseseră încă identificate, astfel încât instalația a fost interpretată drept un „monument” („The Monument”) (după Saller 1946: 65, fig. 17).
- Fig. 2:** Reconstituirea unei băi rituale cu intrare dublă și un perete despărțitor central, care separă scara de coborâre de cea de urcare (desen B. Zissu).
- Fig. 3:** Harta distribuției băilor rituale prevăzute cu sisteme de separare (desen B. Zissu).
- Fig. 4:** Planul și secțiunile unei băi rituale cu intrare dublă din Valea Crucii (desen B. Zissu).
- Fig. 5:** Planul și secțiunea unei băi rituale cu intrare dublă de la Western Har Tayyasim (desen E. Klein).
- Fig. 6:** Planul și secțiunea unei băi rituale cu intrare dublă de la Horvat Revi'a (desen B. Zissu).
- Fig. 7:** Intrarea dublă, separată printr-un pilon cruțat în stâncă, a băii rituale de la Horvat Revi'a; se remarcă blocarea ordonată a Intrării 2; vedere spre sud (fotografie B. Zissu).
- Fig. 8:** Vedere aeriană a sitului Kh. Kefr Som, spre est, indicând amplasarea băilor rituale nr. 1 și 2 în raport cu situl (fotografie B. Zissu).
- Fig. 9:** Planul și secțiunea Băii rituale nr. 1 de la Kh. Kefr Som (desen E. Klein).
- Fig. 10:** Calea de acces către intrările Băii rituale nr. 1 de la Kh. Kefr Som, vedere spre sud (fotografie B. Zissu).
- Fig. 11:** (a) Intrările Băii rituale nr. 1 de la Kh. Kefr Som, vedere spre nord; (b) detaliu: resturile zidului de blocare deasupra canalului, inclusiv urme de tencuială și un canal secundar, posibil asociat filtrării sedimentelor (fotografii B. Zissu).
- Fig. 12:** Planul și secțiunea Băii rituale nr. 2 de la Kh. Kefr Som (desen E. Klein).
- Fig. 13:** Intrarea dublă, separată printr-un pilon, a Băii rituale nr. 2 de la Kh. Kefr Som; vedere spre nord (fotografii B. Zissu).
- Fig. 14:** Planul și secțiunea băii rituale de la Horvat Asad (desen B. Zissu).
- Fig. 15:** Intrarea dublă, separată printr-un pilon cruțat în stâncă, a băii rituale de la Horvat Asad; vedere spre vest (fotografie E. Klein).
- Fig. 16:** Vedere aeriană a sitului Horvat Geres, spre vest, indicând amplasarea sitului, a băii rituale și a drumului roman (fotografie B. Zissu).

Fig. 17: Horvat Geres — zid realizat din blocuri mari de piatră de câmp fasonată, care pare să fi reprezentat limita estică a aşezării. Personajul se află deasupra băii rituale (fotografie B. Zissu).

Fig. 18: Planul şi secţiunea unei băi rituale cu intrare dublă de la Horvat Geres (desen E. Klein).

Fig. 19: Intrarea dublă, separată printr-un pilon cruţat în stâncă, a băii de la Horvat Geres; se remarcă blocarea Intrării 2; vedere spre est (fotografie B. Zissu).

Fig. 20: Vedere aeriană a sitului Shalmon Spur şi a văii Naḥal Refa‘im, spre nord-est (fotografie B. Zissu).

Fig. 21: Planul şi secţiunea Băii rituale 118 de la Shalmon Spur (desen Y. şi B. Zissu).

Fig. 22: Baia rituală 118 de la Shalmon Spur, vedere spre nord-vest (fotografie B. Zissu).

Fig. 23: Baia rituală 118 de la Shalmon Spur, vedere spre sud-est (fotografie B. Zissu).

Fig. 24: Planul şi secţiunea băii rituale de la Kh. Beit Sakia (desen B. Zissu).

Fig. 25: Vedere aeriană indicând amplasarea băii rituale de la Kh. el-‘Umur, vedere spre vest (fotografie B. Zissu).

Fig. 26: Planul şi secţiunile băii rituale de la Kh. el-‘Umur (desen B. Zissu).

Fig. 27: Baia rituală de la Kh. el-‘Umur, vedere spre sud (fotografie B. Zissu).

Fig. 28: Cisterna învecinată de la Kh. el-‘Umur, vedere spre nord (fotografie B. Zissu).

Fig. 29: Deschiderea care face legătura între baia rituală şi cisterna de la Kh. el-‘Umur, vedere spre nord (fotografie B. Zissu).

Fig. 30: Planul băii rituale şi al preseii de ulei de la Har Ḥeret (prin amabilitatea Galit Litani, IAA; desen B. Zissu).

BOAZ ZISSU:
Bar-Ilan University, Israel
Boaz.Zissu@biu.ac.il

EITAN KLEIN
Israel Antiquities Authority
Eitankn779@gmail.com

