

# CATALOGUE OF STEPPED POOLS

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The catalogue lists, describes, and provides relevant bibliography to all known stepped pools in Galilee from the Hellenistic to Byzantine periods. It forms part of the dataset used in the book *Being Jewish in Galilee, 100–200 CE: An Archaeological Study* (Brepols). The catalogue focuses mainly on the date during which the stepped pools were used as *miqva'ot*, or Jewish ritual purification baths, though some basic information on their design and archaeological context is provided as well. The stepped pools are listed according to archaeological site from north to south and received a unique

identification number that is used in the book. Where available, the number or locus given by the excavators is placed in brackets. Each entry starts with a brief description of the architectural structure, as well as the various dating hypotheses and arguments available. This is followed by the method of investigation (M), the general dimensions (D), and the general type of archaeological context with which the stepped pool is associated (C). Finally, the proposed date of construction (Con.) and when it fell out of use (Out.) as a *miqveh* is given.

## 1. Meroth (L90)

The remains of stepped pool L90 are located in an arched room beneath the fifth century CE synagogue. No information is available on the structure itself. It is part of a network of eight known subterranean rooms, including a nearby cistern, that are linked by a narrow opening. The rooms contained unstratified ceramic material generally dating from the first to fifteenth century CE. The network of subterranean rooms has been interpreted as a secret hideout complex, though it may also have been used for storage purposes.

Ilan and Damati (1987) first dated the stepped pool and cistern to the Early Roman period, when it was supposedly part of an industrial area. By the Middle Roman period, tunnels would have cut through these rock-cut installations to form an underground complex, also indicating the time when the stepped pool and cistern fell out of use. Later, Ilan and Damati (1989; also Adler 2011) suggested cautiously that this stepped pool may have been part of the fifth century synagogue. However, from the evidence presented, no

conclusions can be drawn about the exact date of the stepped pool.

M excavation — C not available — D not available

No date available

Ilan and Damati 1984: 75; 1985: 67; 1987: 51–52; 1989; Aviam 2004b: 126; Amit and Adler 2010b: 131 n. 29; Adler 2011: 321 no. 2

## 2. Meroth

Remains of a stepped pool are located north of the synagogue complex. This pool is reportedly larger than pool L90 [no. 1]. No further information is available on the structure or its context and date. Adler (2009; 2011) suggests that it may have stood in connection with nearby burials, but this association remains unverified.

M excavation — C burial? — D not available

No date available

Ilan and Damati 1987: 22–24; 1989; Adler 2009: 59; 2011: 321 no. 3

## 3. Sasa

The remains of a small, plastered stepped pool

are located in the corner of a room that supposedly is connected to the settlement's late Roman to Byzantine synagogue. The stepped pool was hewn out of bedrock and consisted of an elongated rectangular pool area with rounded corners that was accessed by three steps. Presumably based on its purported connection with the synagogue, Reich (2013) dates this pool to the post-70 CE period. No evidence for such a date is provided. Furthermore, Reich (2013: 276) mentions the existence of a second stepped pool at this site, but no actual information on this pool is provided. M excavation — C not available — D 1.8m × 1.1m × n.a.

No date available

Amit and Adler 2010b: 131 n. 29; Adler 2011: 321 no. 4; Reich 2013: 214, 276, fig. 257

#### 4. Gush Halav (L105)

The remains of a stepped pool are found in the corner of a room of a presumed house during a small rescue excavation. The pool was dug into fill layers. The walls of the pool consisted of roughly hewn stones and a layer of poor quality plaster. The pool had an L-shaped access from the east, after which five wide steps led into the pool itself. Adler (2011) dates this stepped pool to the Early Roman period. Cooking vessels and jars dating to 90–320 CE, two paped lamps and glass vessels from the late first or early second centuries CE were found in the fill layers of the stepped pool. This suggests that by the late first to early second centuries CE the pool no longer functioned as a miqveh, and instead may have been reused as storage area.

M excavation — C domestic? — D 1.8m × n.a. × n.a.

Con. 63 BCE (?) — Out. 76–125 CE

Adler 2011: 321 no. 5; Hartal 2013

#### 5. Meiron (C-5)

The remains of stepped pool C-5 are found in the northwest corner of Room L in House MI, but predates the construction of this house. Probably it is associated with earlier housing in this area, of which only fragmentary remains

have been discovered. Quarter turn steps with a landing provided access into the pool. The accumulated fill inside the pool was disturbed in modern times and, thus, is not suitable to date this structure. Finds from a debris layer that had accumulated over the stepped pool, suggest that it was in use during Stratum II (50 BCE–135 CE) or, at the latest, in Stratum III (135–250 CE). Moreover, only a very thin bedrock wall separated the stepped pool from a cistern (C-3). Evidence of a small entrance into the cistern from the east suggests that, at least in its latest phase, it served a non-water holding purpose. The excavators suggested therefore that before the stepped pool and cistern were filled up by debris, both installations were used either for storage or not at all. This could have happened in Stratum III or very early in IV (250–363 CE), which means that prior to the third century CE the stepped pool no longer functioned as miqveh. Foerster (1987) has questioned the stepped pool's function as miqveh altogether because of the low door height of its entrance (0.70 m). However, the scale of the two section drawings on which they base their calculation appears to be a bit off when compared to photographs of the stepped pool's entrance. In my opinion, the low door height does not immediately disprove its identification as miqveh.

M excavation — C domestic — D not available  
Con. 50–1 BCE (?) — Out. 101–250 CE

Meyers, Strange, and Meyers 1981: 41–44, photos 26–27, figs. 3.9–11; Foerster 1987: 267; Amit and Adler 2010b: 131 n. 29; Adler 2011: 321 no. 6

#### 6. Khirbet Shema' (L2029/L2030)

The remains of rock-cut stepped pool L2029/L2030 are located in the northeast area beneath the later synagogue. The stepped pool consisted of at least four steps, accessed from the east. As it preceded the construction of the synagogue in that area, no information is available on the context of the stepped pool. The fill (L2030) that accumulated inside this stepped pool contained ceramics, mainly storage jars, dating to the Middle and Late Roman

periods, as well as two Hasmonean coins from the first half of the first century BCE. Above the stepped pool but still beneath the floor level of the synagogue, the retrieved ceramics date almost completely to the Late Roman period.

The excavators date the stepped pool to Stratum II (180–284 CE) based on the observation that it preceded the synagogue, but not on the basis of the material recovered from it. Their dating remains problematic. First, the evidence of two Hasmonean coins found in the fill of the pool, though small in quantity, may suppose that this installation was already earlier in use, either by the second half of the first century BCE or the first century CE. Second, the proposed of around 284 CE for when the stepped pool would have fallen out of use is solely based on the assumed chronology of the later synagogue. Loffreda (1981) points out that this 284 CE date used for the synagogue chronology has nothing to do with the archaeological evidence found at Khirbet Shema' but is a result of the adoption of the pottery chronology used at Tell Hesban, Jordan (see Sauer 1973). Loffreda (1981) and Magness (1997) instead suggest only one synagogue phase that was constructed no earlier than the late fourth century CE. It remains uncertain whether the filling of the stepped pool during the Middle and Late Roman period (70/135–363 CE) suggests that it had fallen out of use. The evidence of many storage jars in this fill may just indicate that the stepped pool's function had changed into a subterranean storage space.

M excavation — C not available — D not available

Con. 50 BCE–100 CE — Out. 151–350 CE (?)  
Meyers, Kraabel, and Strange 1976: 40–41, 258; Loffreda 1981; Magness 1997; Hoss 2005: 194–95 no. 37; Adler 2011: 321 no. 7

### 7. Khirbet Shema' (T-17)

The remain of rock-cut stepped pool T-17 are located on the southeast slope of the hill, probably outside the ancient village, in an area used for industrial purposes. Adler (2009)

suggests that this stepped pool is associated with nearby burials, but it is unclear on which this association is based. The stepped pool could be accessed through a larger, unroofed feature that consisted, aside from the stepped pool, out of two rooms. A rectangular northern room served as a forecourt of the stepped pool. An opening in its west wall provides entrance to a smaller room with low ceiling (ca. 1m high). While essentially unproven, the excavators assume that this small room was used for cleansing the hair before entering the miqveh. Further to the south of the forecourt lays apparently another room in which the stepped pool is located. The plastered stepped pool itself consisted of five steps that were accessed by turning 180 degrees.

According to the excavators fourth-century CE ceramics from the fill in the stepped pool date this structure to Stratum IV (306–419 CE). One Hasmonean coin from this fill may hint, however, to an earlier construction date than the excavators suppose. Moreover, rather than indicative for the use period of the stepped pool in general, the reported homogeneous fourth-century fill suggests that around that time the stepped pool had probably fallen out of use and was filled in. This is supported by the large number of storage jars found in the fill of the stepped pool and the larger unroofed structure, which suggests that sometime in the fourth century the structure was turned into a storage area.

M excavation — C industrial? — D 2.4m × 1.6m × n.a.

Con. (?) — Out. 101–300 CE

Meyers, Kraabel, and Strange 1976: 113–17; Adler 2009: 59; 2011: 321 no. 8

### 8. Parod

No description of structure, date, or context available. Suggested by Amit and Adler (2010b) and Adler (2011) based on unpublished report of Y. Tepper.

M not available — C not available — D not available

No date available

Amit and Adler 2010b: 131 n. 29; Adler 2011:

321 no. 9

**9. 'Akbara**

No description of structure, date, or context available.

M not available — C cave — D not available

No date available

Adler 2011: 321 no. 10

**10. Chorazin (L53)**

The remains of a stepped pool are located in a domestic complex to the north of the synagogue. The rock-cut pool, roofed with eight long basalt beams, consisted of nine steps accessed from the west. The sides of the pool were extended by two courses of roughly-trimmed basalt ashlar. In its east wall, a narrow horizontal slit provided lighting into the pool. Near it lay a larger cistern (L62), which was probably connected to the pool. Based on a general date for the entire domestic complex to which it is associated, the construction of the stepped pool has been dated to the fourth century CE. No information is available on possible deposits found in association to this pool to support such a date.

M excavation — C domestic — D 4.0m × 2.0m × 2.0m

Con. 301–400 CE (?) — Out. (?)

Yeivin 1984a: 67; 1984b; 1993: 302–3; Hoss 2005: 182 no. 2; Adler 2011: 321 no. 11; Reich 2013: 216, 275

**11. Horvat Kamon (L107)**

Remains of a small, plastered stepped pool with two rock-cut steps was discovered in a small rescue excavation. It was found in a room probably belonging to a domestic structure. The lower part of the stepped pool was hewn out of bedrock, while the upper part was made of dressed ashlar. Since only the lowest course of ashlar is preserved, the original height of the pool cannot be determined. Ceramic finds indicate that the stepped pool fell out of use around the early second century CE (Phase III). It cannot be determined from the evidence available when the stepped pool was constructed.

M excavation — C domestic? — D 1.0m × 0.5m × min. 0.7m

Con. (?) — Out. 101–125 CE

Aviam 2007: Map 3; Adler 2011: 321 no. 12; Hartal 2012; Reich 2013: 196

**12. Sheikh Nashi**

No description of structure, date, or context available. Suggested by Adler (2011) based on a brief survey report by Tepper, Drain, and Tepper (2000).

M survey — C not available — D not available

No date available

Tepper, Drain, and Tepper 2000: 45; Adler 2011: 321 no. 17

**13. Horvat Kur**

No description of structure, date, or context available. Suggested by Amit and Adler (2010b) and Adler (2011) based on a brief survey report by Tepper, Drain, and Tepper (2000: 45).

M survey — C not available — D not available

No date available

Tepper, Drain, and Tepper 2000: 67–68; Amit and Adler 2010b: 131 n. 29; Adler 2011: 321 no. 18

**14. Yodefatz**

The remains of a small stepped pool are located in the northeast corner of Room 4, which was part of a partly-exposed house. The stepped pool was not hewn out of the bedrock, but was built entirely from fieldstones and plaster. Three narrow steps along one of the inner walls led to the pool's floor level. The latest ceramic material from foundation levels suggested that the house, including the pool, was built sometime in the first century BCE. The latest pottery and coins found above floor level indicate that occupation ended sometime in the middle decades of the first century CE.

M excavation — C domestic — D not available  
Con. 100–1 BCE — Out. 51–75 CE

Adan-Bayewitz and Aviam 1997: 148–51, fig. 21; Adler 2011: 321 no. 19; Reich 2013: 193–94, 274

**15. Yodefah**

Remains of a rock-cut stepped pool is located in a house that is attached along its north side to another house with a stepped pool [no. 14]. Six steps winded counter-clockwise into the pool, which was covered with up to five successive layers of plaster. A nearby cistern and settling basin appear not to have not been connected to it. Ceramics from fills inside this stepped pool indicates the period of its construction (first century BCE) and when it fell out of use (second quarter of the first century CE) to the same period as [no. 14]. One difference is a break in the bedrock separating the pool from the nearby cistern. This may indicate that at one point, probably during their last use-phase, the stepped pool and the cistern were connected to one another and turned into a storage space. The break may, though, also relate to the destruction of the entire domestic structure.

M excavation — C domestic — D not available  
Con. 100–1 BCE — Out. 51–75 CE

Adan-Bayewitz, Aviam, and Edwards 1995: 195; Adan-Bayewitz and Aviam 1997: 151, fig. 22; Adler 2011: 321 no. 19; Reich 2013: 193–94, 274

**16. 'Ibellin (Complex D) (?)**

Complex D consists of a four-stepped passageway leading into a trapezoidal room. In the east of the passageway a niche is hewn. The cave complex appears never to have been plastered. A large number of Byzantine ceramics from the fill inside the cave suggest that it was in use no later than this period. Cave Complex D is closely associated with two other caves (Complex A and B), which consisted of a network of subterranean rooms, as well as three nearby cisterns (Complex C). The remains of rock-cut Complex D are today located beneath a Crusader structure. Shahar (2003) and Adler (2011) identified this cave complex tentatively as a miqveh, but the excavator identifies Complex D and the cisterns of Complex C as storage spaces. The unplastered nature of the cave complex appears, as well as the abundance of ceramics, favors the latter

suggestion.

M excavation — C cave — D not available

Con. 301–400 CE — Out. 601–700 CE

Muqari 1999; Shahar 2003: 220; Adler 2011: 321 no. 24

**17. 'Ibellin (L187/L189) (?)**

The remains of a rock-cut stepped pool are located on a hilltop, near the modern Greek Orthodox Church of St. Mariam Baouardy. It is not known whether it is associated with any above-ground structure. Three steps lead down into a vaulted subterranean pool. The pool apparently is connected again to other rock-cut subterranean features, such as a tunnel leading into a circular space. It remains unclear from published reports whether this stepped pool functioned as a miqveh or was used as entrance into a larger cave complex. The excavator dates the pool to the Early Roman period, but it is unspecified on which grounds.

M excavation — C not available — D 2.0m × 2.0m × 2.0m

No date available

Abu Raya 2008; Adler 2011: 321 no. 25

**18. Khirbet Qana**

Remnants of a rock-cut stepped pool are located in the northern extent of the hilltop (Field 3). Accessed from the south, three steps descended into a plastered pool. While domestic structures have been identified in its vicinity, it remains unknown if and how the stepped pool is associated to any of them. Two layers of hydraulic plaster were identified. Organic material from the inner plaster layer provided two AMS radiocarbon dates (all dates modeled in OxCal using IntCal13 calibration curve): 1910±35 BP (sample no. AA-41832; 18–214 CE at 95.4% probability) and 2015±45 BP (sample no. AA-41833; 162 BCE–74 CE at 95.4% probability). Organics from the outer plaster layer provided 1880±40 BP (sample no. AA-42274; 53–236 CE at 95.4% probability). These radiocarbon dates suggest that the stepped pool was in use roughly from the first century BCE up to the second century CE,

perhaps up to the mid-third century. Byzantine ceramic material from the fill inside the stepped pool may suggest that it later was used for storage.

M excavation — C not available — D not available

Con. 100–1 BCE — Out. 101–200 CE

Edwards 2002: 114–15, fig. 13; Rech et al. 2003: 162; Amit and Adler 2010b: 131 n. 29; Adler 2011: 321 no. 26

### 19. Khirbet Qana

Remnants of a plastered, rock-cut stepped pool are located on the southeast slope of the hill. It is closely associated with three other plastered water installations. The excavators originally identified it as an industrial installation used for dyeing, tanning, or fulling, but in a later publication suggested its function as a miqveh. Adler (2011) suggests that it was used as miqveh. No evidence has been provided in support of any of the above identifications. Organic material from the plaster player provided an AMS radiocarbon date of  $1900 \pm 50$  BP (sample no. AA-42272; 3–236 CE at 95.4% probability; date modeled in OxCal using IntCal13 calibration curve). This suggests tentatively that the pool was in use around the first and second centuries CE.

M survey — C not available — D not available

Con. 1–100 CE — Out. 101–200 CE

Edwards 2002: 117, fig. 16; 2009: 224–25; Rech et al. 2003: 162, fig. 5; Amit and Adler 2010b: 131 n. 29; Adler 2011: 321 no. 27

### 20. Khirbet Qana (?)

No description of structure, date, or context available. Suggested by Shahar (2003) and Adler (2011) based on pers. comm. with Y. Tepper. It remains possible that it is one of the other two stepped pools investigated by D. Edwards and his team [nos. 18–19].

M not available — C not available — D not available

No date available

Shahar 2003: 233; Adler 2011: 321 no. 28

### 21. el-Ma'aser (?)

A partially blocked cave entered through a stepped passageway is located in the center of the site. No further description of structure, date, or context available. Leibner (2009a) and Adler (2011) tentatively identify it as a miqveh. An earlier survey of the site did not refer to such an installation.

M survey — C not available — D not available  
No date available

Tor 2000; Leibner 2009: 249–50; Adler 2011: 321 no. 30

### 22. Arbel

Two stepped pools, exposed in a rescue excavation, are located in the western extent of ancient Arbel. Both stepped pools are reportedly associated with partly-exposed domestic structures in the area. No further description of the structures is available. The excavator dates the houses and the pools to the sixth to early seventh century CE, but it is unspecified on which evidence this date is based.

M excavation — C domestic? — D not available

Con. 501–600 CE (?) — Out. 601–625 CE (?)

Aviam 2004a: 25 n. 9–10; Leibner 2009: 252; Adler 2011: 321 no. 31; Reich 2013: 220, 272

### 23. Arbel

[See description no. 22.]

M excavation — C domestic? — D not available

Con. 501–600 CE (?) — Out. 601–625 CE (?)

Aviam 2004a: 25 n. 9–10; Leibner 2009: 252; Adler 2011: 321 no. 32; Reich 2013: 220, 272

### 24. Kul'at Ibn Man

Roughly 25 plastered water installations, mostly cisterns but also three stepped pools, are located in several caves on a cliff to the west of ancient Arbel, near the summit of the hill, beneath and around the later Mamluk-Ottoman fortress Ibn Man. One of the plastered, stepped pools was accessed from the northwest by three steps. No description of the other two stepped pools is available. Unstratified ceramic material found on the slope in front

of the caves dates to the Early Roman, Byzantine, Mamluk, and Ottoman periods. Leibner's more recent survey (2009a) provides a roughly similar picture for the surrounding of the caves. As the caves have only been surveyed, there is no specific information available to date the three stepped pools. Reich (2013) dated the installations based on their type of plaster to the late Second Temple period. No evidence to support such a date has been provided.

M survey — C cave — D not available

No date available

Ilan 1989–90: 17–18, fig. 15; Leibner 2009: 237–42; Adler 2011: 321 no. 21; Reich 2013: 194–95, 272

### 25. Kul'at Ibn Man

[See description no. 24.]

M survey — C cave — D not available

No date available

Ilan 1989–90: 17–18; Leibner 2009: 237–42; Adler 2011: 321 no. 22; Reich 2013: 194–95, 272

### 26. Kul'at Ibn Man

[See description no. 24.]

M survey — C cave — D not available

No date available

Ilan 1989–90: 17–18; Leibner 2009: 237–42; Adler 2011: 321 no. 23; Reich 2013: 194–95, 272

### 27. Arbel, Caves West

Remains of a stepped pool were discovered in a group of caves located about 1 km west of Kul'at Ibn Man [nos. 24–26]. No further description of structure or context is available. A single worn Hasmonean coin was reportedly found inside the pool, but no other evidence is reported. Probably based on this coin, Adler (2011) dates the stepped pool cautiously to the Hellenistic to Early Roman period.

M survey — C cave — D not available

No date available

Ilan 1989–90: 17–18; Leibner 2009: 240; Adler 2011: 321 no. 29

### 28. Huqoq

No description of structure, date, or context available. Suggested by Leibner (2009a) and Adler (2011) based on a brief survey published by Tepper *et al.* (2000: 73–75).

M survey — C not available — D not available  
No date available

Tepper, Drain, and Tepper 2000: 83–84; Leibner 2009: 151; Amit and Adler 2010b: 131 n. 29; Adler 2011: 321 no. 35

### 29. Huqoq (Area 4000)

Remains of a rock-cut stepped pool are located on the southern periphery of ancient Huqoq, near agricultural terraces and installations. It remains uncertain if the stepped pool was associated with any structure. The stepped pool is accessed from the west through a twelve-step long passage descending into a trapezoidal, roofed immersion room. In the room's eastern extent lay a wide, but shallow pool accessed through two steps. Ceramics from the thin silt layer that covered the floor of the immersion room dates the stepped pool's functioning as a miqveh generally to the Roman period (63 BCE–363 CE). In the Byzantine period, the stepped pool may have been turned into a cistern, as indicated by a shaft cut through the earlier plastered ceiling.

M excavation — C agricultural? — D 4.5m × 4.6m × 2.4m

Con. 100–1 BCE (?) — Out. 301–400 CE (?)

Magness 2012; Magness *et al.* 2014: 331–32, figs. 1–2; Amit and Adler 2010b: 131 n. 29; Adler 2011: 321 no. 36

### 30. Magdala (Mkv1)

This stepped pool is located in a small, flagstone-paved rectangular room that is situated in the northernmost extent of a partly-exposed house. The house is found in the northwestern part of the town. The pool, built into alluvial soil, is almost square in dimensions with a seven-stepped descend from the south spanning its entire width. The pool's three lowest courses consist of smoothed ashlar with no adhesive mortar, while the courses above it are built using finely-trimmed fieldstones and

mortar. There is no evidence of plaster. Two large channel openings (20 × 30cm) are located in the upper courses of the side walls; the eastern channel connects this stepped pool with an adjacent one [no. 32], the output of the western channel has not been determined. A small overflow channel with a flat-lying protruding stone is located a little higher up in a corner of the pool's northern (back) wall, from which water would run along the adjacent alley. The particular construction of this pool suggests that it was fed by groundwater (not usual rainwater) coming through the joints of the lower courses and either of the two channel openings above them. The water level in this pool, hence, fluctuated according to the lake level of the nearby Sea of Galilee. The excavators identify this stepped pool as a miqveh of an unknown type, since it is the first one not fed by rainwater but by groundwater. De Luca and Lena (2015) doubt this interpretation as similar techniques were used in water architecture with different functions elsewhere on the site. The stepped pools are generally dated to the Early Roman period (63 BCE–70 CE) after which they would have fallen out of use. No finds found in the fills of this pool are reported.

M excavation — C domestic — D 2.2m × 2.3m × 2.0m (4.9 m<sup>3</sup> max. vol.)

Con. 63 BCE (?) — Out. 70 CE (?)

Zapata-Meza 2012: 94–96, figs. 3, 17–18; Reich and Zapata-Meza 2014: 65–67; De Luca and Lena 2015: 306–7

### 31. Magdala (Mkv2)

This stepped pool is located in a small, flagstone-paved rectangular room that is situated in the southernmost extent of a partly-exposed house, just south of stepped pool [no. 33], in the northwestern part of the town. The house is located along an alley, opposite another house with evidence of two stepped pools [nos. 30, 32]. The rectangular stepped pool has a seven-stepped descend from the west spanning its entire width. In terms of structure, date, and functioning the stepped pool appears to bear strong similarities with

stepped pool [nos. 30, 32–33]. However, for this particular pool no detailed description of the structure or its date is available.

Con. 63 BCE (?) — Out. 70 CE (?)

M excavation — C domestic — D not available  
Zapata-Meza 2012: 94–96, figs. 3, 17–18; Reich and Zapata-Meza 2014; De Luca and Lena 2015: 306–7

### 32. Magdala (Mkv3)

This stepped pool is located in a small, flagstone-paved rectangular room that is situated in the northernmost extent of a partly-exposed house. The house is found in the northwestern part of the town. The pool is roughly square with a seven-stepped descend from the east spanning its entire width. A large channel opening (20 × 30cm) located in the upper course of its back wall connects this stepped pool with an adjacent one [no. 30]. In terms of structure, date, and functioning the stepped pool appears to bear strong similarities with stepped pool [no. 30–31, 33]. However, for this particular pool no detailed description of the structure or its date is available.

M excavation — C domestic — D not available  
Con. 63 BCE (?) — Out. 70 CE (?)

Zapata-Meza 2012: 94–96, figs. 3, 17–18; Reich and Zapata-Meza 2014; De Luca and Lena 2015: 306–7

### 33. Magdala (Mkv 4)

This stepped pool is located in a small, partly-exposed room that is located directly to the north of stepped pool [no. 31], in what appears to be the same house. The stepped pool is separated from stepped pool [no. 31] by a wall, but with a channel running through it connecting both pools. The house is located along an alley, opposite another house with evidence of two stepped pools [nos. 30, 32]. The rectangular stepped pool has a seven-stepped descend from the north, of which the two upper ones are incomplete, spanning its entire width. In terms of structure, date, and functioning the stepped pool appears to bear strong similarities with stepped pools [nos. 30–32]. For this particular pool no de-

tailed description of the structure or its date is available.

M excavation — C domestic — D not available  
 Con. 63 BCE (?) — Out. 70 CE (?)  
 Zapata-Meza and Díaz-Barriga 2017

### 34. Tiberias

Remnants of a stepped pool are reportedly located in a domestic structure in the northern area of Tiberias. No description of structure or context is available. The pool presumably dates to the Byzantine period, though no evidence to support this date has been reported.

M excavation — C domestic? — D not available

Con. 301–400 CE (?) — Out. 601–700 CE (?)  
 Hirschfeld 1992: 36; 1993: 1470; Stepansky 2008: 2049; Amit and Adler 2010b: 131 n. 29; Adler 2011: 321 no. 37

### 35. Tiberias (?)

The partial remains of a larger rectangular pool are located in a partly-exposed peristyle courtyard of what appears to have been a larger domestic structure at the foot of Mt Berenice. The pool has two quarter circular steps in both its northwestern and southwestern corners. Its walls are covered with a whitish plaster, while its floor was paved with a white mosaic. A parapet protruding 20 cm above the courtyard's floor ringed the pool. Stratified material from a sounding in the courtyard's northwest corner date the construction of the pool and the courtyard that surrounded it to the early third century CE when it functioned as a water basin. The two quarter circular sets of steps were added later, as indicated by the continuation of the pool's original mosaic floor beneath them. Their addition perhaps led to a change in the basin's function, though it may also have been a decision of aesthetics. When this addition took place remains unknown. The presence of the steps has led Hirschfeld (2004) and Amit and Adler (2010b) to identify this pool as a possible miqveh. However, this pool does not resemble any other miqveh in plan and constructional features. (e.g. mosaic floor). Moreover, the pool's functioning

as a bathing facility seems at odds with the attested 20 cm high parapets surrounding it. Thus its identification as miqveh is doubtful.

M excavation — C domestic — D 3.0m × 4.4m × 1.5m

No date available

Hirschfeld 2004: 10–11, 31–33, 221; Amit and Adler 2010b: 131–32 n. 29; Amir 2004; Milstein and Ariel 2004

### 36. Sawa'ed Hamriya

No description of structure, date, or context available. Based on pers. comm. of Adler (2011) with D. Amit.

M not available — C not available — D not available

No date available

Adler 2011: 321 no. 38

### 37. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit I (SP1)

Constructed either together with or somewhat later than the military complex, which was built around the beginning of the first century BCE. The stepped pool had fallen out of use either sometime before or when an artificial fill covered the military complex, which happened based on a coin of Agrippa II no earlier than 53 CE.

M excavation — C domestic — D 5.0m × 2.0m × 1.0m

Con. 100–76 BCE — Out. 26–75 CE

Meyers, Meyers, and Høglund 1995: 68; 1997: 265; 1998: 279; Meyers 1998: 347; 1999: 110, 120–21; Galor 2007: 206, figs. 1–2; Adler 2011: 322 no. 51

### 38. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit I (SP2/L85.3226)

[See description of stepped pool no. 37.] In the later stages of its use-phase, the pool was converted to an industrial purpose, as suggested from 80 bone tools found in a deposit within this pool.

M excavation — C domestic — D 2.0m × 2.0m × 1.5m

Con. 100–76 BCE — Out. 26–75 CE

Meyers, Meyers, and Høglund 1995: 68; 1997: 265; 1998: 279–80; Meyers 1998: 347; 1999: 110, 120–21; Galor 2007: 206, figs. 1 and 3;

Adler 2011: 322 no. 52

### 39. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit I (SP3)

[See description of stepped pool no. 37.]

M excavation — C domestic — D 2.5m × 2.5m × 2.0m

Con. 100–76 BCE — Out. 26–75 CE

Meyers, Meyers, and Høglund 1995: 68; 1997: 265; 1998: 279; Meyers 1998: 347; 1999: 110, 120–21; Galor 2007: 206, fig. 1, fig. 4; Adler 2011: 322 no. 53

### 40. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit II, B/E (SP4)

The house, stepped pools and cisterns were supposedly built around the same time in the mid-first century BCE. Ceramic assemblages and faunal remains found in a fill deposit suggests that, at least, one of the two stepped pools fell out of use sometime in the first century CE. The house was destroyed somewhere in the first century CE and, based on later ceramic material from some loci, in the later part of that century reoccupied again. Presumably, the other two stepped pools would then already have fallen out of use.

M excavation — C domestic — D not available

Con. 75–26 BCE — Out. 1–100 CE

Meyers, Meyers, and Høglund 1994: 249–50; 1995: 68–70; 1997: 265; Grantham 1996: 97–98; Høglund and Meyers 1996: 40; Galor 2007: 206, figs. 1 and 5; Adler 2011: 322 no. 54

### 41. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit II, F (SP5)

[See description of stepped pool no. 40.]

M excavation — C domestic — D not available

Con. 75–26 BCE — Out. 1–100 CE (?)

Meyers, Meyers, and Høglund 1994: 249–50; 1995: 68–70; 1997: 265; Grantham 1996: 97–98; Høglund and Meyers 1996: 40; Galor 2007: 206, fig. 1; Adler 2011: 322 no. 55

### 42. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit II, L (SP6)

[See description of stepped pool no. 40.]

M excavation — C domestic — D not available

Con. 75–26 BCE — Out. 1–100 CE (?)

C.L. Meyers 1997: 531; Galor 2007: 206, fig. 1; Adler 2011: 322 no. 56

### 43. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit III, J (SP7)

Most of the architecture and finds of this Unit are Byzantine in date, only some spots may be associated with Early Roman occupation. There is no information provided on this stepped pool, however. Galor (2007) dates its construction to the beginning of the Early Roman period, but does not provide a date for when it had fallen out of use.

M excavation — C not available — D not available

Con. 75–26 BCE — Out. (?)

Meyers, Meyers, and Netzer 1985: 296; 1987: 276; C.L. Meyers 1997: 531; Galor 2007: 206, fig. 1; Adler 2011: 322 no. 57

### 44. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit IV, O (SP8)

This house and its stepped pools were constructed around the mid-first century BCE. No information in the preliminary reports is provided on a date for when these stepped pools were constructed and when they had fallen out of use. In an article devoted to House Unit IV, Rutgers (1999) has suggested that the stepped pools together with the cisterns “fell into disuse and were turned into dumps” somewhere during the middle and later Roman periods (135–363 CE). This is consistent with the view of Meyers in a later article on this house.

M excavation — C domestic — D 3.5m × 1.5m × 2.0–3.0m

Con. 75–26 BCE — Out. 101–300 CE

Meyers, Meyers, and Netzer 1985: 296; 1987b: 275–76; 1990b: 219–20; Meyers, Meyers, and Høglund 1994: 247; Rutgers 1998: 182, 190; 1999: 191; Meyers 2006a: 867, fig. 3:O; Galor 2007: 206, figs. 1 and 7; Adler 2011: 322 no. 58

### 45. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit IV, J (SP9)

[See description of stepped pool no. 44.] This stepped pool is considered by Meyers (2006a) too small for the immersion of people, and thus rather was used for the purification of glass and/or metal vessels.

M excavation — C domestic — D not available

Con. 75–26 BCE — Out. 101–300 CE

Meyers, Meyers, and Netzer 1985: 296; 1987b: 275–76; 1990b: 219–20; Meyers, Meyers, and Høglund 1994: 247; Rutgers 1998: 182, 190; 1999: 191; Meyers 2006a: 867–88, fig. 3:J; Galor 2007: 206, figs. 1; Adler 2011: 322 no. 59

**46. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit IV, L (SP10)**

[See description of stepped pool no. 44.]

M excavation — C domestic — D 2.0m × 1.0m × 1.5m

Con. 75–26 BCE — Out. 101–300 CE

Meyers, Meyers, and Netzer 1985: 296; 1987b: 275–76; 1990b: 219–20; Meyers, Meyers, and Høglund 1994: 247; Rutgers 1998: 182, 190; 1999: 191; Meyers 2006a: 867, fig. 3:L; Galor 2007: 206, figs. 1 and 6; Adler 2011: 322 no. 60

**47. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit IV, D? (SP11)**

[See description of stepped pool no. 44.] It remains uncertain whether the room in which this stepped pool is located is part of House Unit IV. Meyers (2006a) places it within House Unit IV, but on the map of Galor (2007: fig. 1) this pool seems to fall outside this unit. M excavation — C domestic — D not available  
Con. 75–26 BCE — Out. 101–300 CE

Meyers, Meyers, and Netzer 1985: 296; 1987b: 275–76; 1990b: 219–20; Meyers, Meyers, and Høglund 1994: 247; Rutgers 1998: 182, 190; 1999: 191; Meyers 2006a: 867; Galor 2007: 206, fig. 1; Adler 2011: 322 no. 61

**48. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit IV, A (SP12)**

[See description of stepped pool no. 44.] It remains uncertain whether the room in which this stepped pool is located is part of House Unit IV. Meyers (2006a) does not mention it as part of House Unit IV, but on the map of Meyers (2006a: fig. 3) and of Galor (2007: fig. 1) this room is understood as part of it.

M excavation — C domestic — D not available  
Con. 75–26 BCE — Out. 101–300 CE

Meyers, Meyers, and Netzer 1985: 296; 1987b: 275–76; 1990b: 219–20; Meyers, Meyers, and Høglund 1994: 247; Rutgers 1998: 182, 190; 1999: 191; Meyers 2006a: 867; Galor 2007: 206, fig. 1; Adler 2011: 322 no. 62

**49. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit V, S (SP13)**

The stepped pool is part of a domestic structure that was built around the mid-first century BCE. The pool fell out of use sometime in the Early Roman period (63 BCE–135 CE), probably in the latter half of it. This is suggested on the basis of deposit material found inside the pool, among which “two nearly complete pottery jars of the Early Roman period.” These jars suggest that by then the pool no longer functioned as miqveh but may have been reused for storage purposes. In the seventh century CE (?) a plaster floor was built over the stepped pool.

M excavation — C domestic — D not available  
Con. 75–26 BCE — Out. 1–100 CE

Meyers, Meyers, and Høglund 1995: 70; Galor 2007: 206, fig. 1; Adler 2011: 322 no. 63

**50. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit VII (SP18)**

The stepped pool is associated with architecture of unknown function. Galor (2007) suggests that it was built around the mid-first century BCE. No further description of the structure, the date, or the context is available. M excavation — C domestic? — D not available

Con. 75–26 BCE — Out. (?)

Meyers, Netzer, and Meyers 1990: 219–20; Galor 2007: 206, fig. 1; Adler 2011: 322 no. 68

**51. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit VII (SP19)**

[See description of stepped pool no. 50.]

M excavation — C domestic? — D not available

Con. 75–26 BCE — Out. (?)

Meyers, Netzer, and Meyers 1990: 219–20; Galor 2007: 206, fig. 1; Adler 2011: 322 no. 69

**52. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit VII (SP20)**

[See description of stepped pool no. 50.]

M excavation — C domestic? — D not available

Con. 75–26 BCE — Out. (?)

Meyers, Netzer, and Meyers 1990: 219–20; Galor 2007: 206, fig. 1; Adler 2011: 322 no. 70

**53. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit VIII (SP14)**

The function of this large architectural Unit is unknown. The excavators have opted for a “public” function, but evidence for such function has not been provided. While this Unit is generally dated from the first to fourth century CE, no information is provided on the use-life of the stepped pools. At a certain point in time, these stepped pools were apparently enlarged to form underground storage spaces. When this happened is not stated in any of the reports.

M excavation — C domestic? — D not available

Con. 100–1 BCE (?) — Out. (?)

Meyers, Meyers, and Netzer 1985: 296; Meyers, Netzer, and Meyers 1987: 276; 1990: 220; Galor 2007: fig. 1; Adler 2011: 322 no. 64

**54. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit VIII (SP15)**

[See description of stepped pool no. 53.]

M excavation — C domestic? — D not available

Con. 100–1 BCE (?) — Out. (?)

Meyers, Meyers, and Netzer 1985: 296; Meyers, Netzer, and Meyers 1987: 276; 1990: 220; Galor 2007: fig. 1; Adler 2011: 322 no. 65

**55. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit VIII (SP16)**

[See description of stepped pool no. 53.]

M excavation — C domestic? — D not available

Con. 100–1 BCE (?) — Out. (?)

Meyers, Meyers, and Netzer 1985: 296; Meyers, Netzer, and Meyers 1987: 276; 1990: 220; Galor 2007: fig. 1; Adler 2011: 322 no. 66

**56. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit VIII (SP17)**

[See description of stepped pool no. 53.]

M excavation — C domestic? — D not available

Con. 100–1 BCE (?) — Out. (?)

Meyers, Meyers, and Netzer 1985: 296; Meyers, Netzer, and Meyers 1987: 276; 1990: 220; Galor 2007: fig. 1; Adler 2011: 322 no. 67

**57. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit IX (?)**

Galor (2007) has noted that three more

stepped pools were excavated in Unit IX. No information in any of the reports is provided on Unit IX. Therefore, context and date remain unknown and it cannot be verified whether these structures are in fact stepped pools.

M excavation — C not available — D not available

No date available

Galor 2007: 211 n. 1; Adler 2011: 322 no. 73

**58. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit IX (?)**

[See description of stepped pool no. 57.] Reich (2002) has counted, aside from the previous 20 stepped pools in Western Quarter, two extra. This may have been one of the recently excavated, although also here caution should be taken.

M excavation — C not available — D not available

No date available

Reich 2002: 50; Galor 2007: 211 n. 1; Adler 2011: 322 no. 72

**59. Sepphoris, WQ, Unit IX (?)**

[See description of stepped pool no. 58.]

M excavation — C not available — D not available

No date available

Reich 2002: 50; Galor 2007: 211 n. 1; Adler 2011: 322 no. 71

**60. Sepphoris, WQ, USF Villa, Room 40 (C216)**

This stepped pool leads down from Room 40 (Square I.9) in the USF Villa. Early to Middle Roman ceramic material from the deposit inside this pool (L9019) dates its construction generally to the first century BCE. The fact that no later material has been found in this pool may also suggest a possible date for when the pool fell out of use. The latter is supported by evidence of a breach in the pool’s west wall that leads to a large subterranean space (C217). This breach likely rendered the stepped pool unsuitable as a miqveh. While no possible date for the occurrence of this breach is given, the fact that a water-washed fill (L13103) in space C217 contained simi-

lar first- to second-century material as the fill deposit found inside the stepped pool, may suggest that when the breach was formed this material was washed in from the stepped pool into the subterranean space. If correct, this suggests that during the second or third centuries CE the stepped pool was linked to room C217.

M excavation — C domestic — D 2.0m × 2.0m × n.a.

Con. 100–1 BCE — Out. 101–300 CE

Strange, Longstaff, and Groh 1987: 279; 2006: 88–92, 104–9, 121; Adler 2011: 322 no. 42

#### **61. Sepphoris, WQ, USF Villa, Room 40 (C227)**

The stepped pool consists of a poorly preserved entrance that leads to a stepped tunnel opening into a pool. The stepped pool has not been excavated and, therefore, no construction date can be established. More information is available on the period when the pool fell out of use. The entrance to the stepped pool is located beneath the north wall of Room 40 and, thus, the pool predates the construction of this wall. While the excavators do not give a construction date for this wall, it can be suggested based on the construction phases proposed by Bonnie (2018) that Room 40 (and this wall) was built sometime in the second century CE.

M excavation — C domestic — D 2.6m × 1.5m × 2.0m

Con. (?) — Out. 101–200 CE

Strange, Longstaff, and Groh 1987: 279; 2006: 74, 116; Adler 2011: 322 no. 43

#### **62. Sepphoris, Western Quarter, USF Villa, Room 13 (C238)**

The rock-cut stepped pool consists of four steps leading down from the west. A 20–25 cm accumulation deposit containing a small layer of silt and up to 20 cm of other debris was found inside the pool. Ceramics from this deposit date almost completely Early Roman, while also one Hasmonean coin was found. It is not specified whether the pottery was found in the silt or not. No construction date

is provided for stepped pool C238. However, based on the pottery from the deposit, the excavators suggest that this pool had fallen out of use sometime in the early first century CE. This date seems too precise. While technically possible, the date is not obvious from the archaeological data that is presented. The date for when the pool fell out of use appears to revolve around what is meant by “Early Roman,” which the excavators do nowhere define. General scholarly agreement suggests from around 63 BCE to either 70 or 135 CE. It seems more reasonable, therefore, to suggest that the pool had fallen out of use by the late first century CE or shortly after. The earliest general date of the fill material, which is first century BCE, may be used as a construction date.

M excavation — C domestic — D 1.7m × 1.2m × 1.8m

Con. 100–1 BCE — Out. 1

Strange, Groh, and Longstaff 1988: 189; Strange, Longstaff, and Groh 2006: 76–77, 111–12, 121; Adler 2011: 322 no. 41

#### **63. Sepphoris, WQ, USF Villa, Room 10? (L10012)**

The stepped pool is located in the eastern end of the USF Villa, probably in Room 10 (square I.10). Its four steps could be entered from the east. Waterman, following the view that the USF Villa was a Christian basilica, interpreted the pool as a baptismal font. Strange, Longstaff, and Groh suggest it is used as a miqveh. No further description of the structure or the date is available. Adler (2011) suggests a date from the Hellenistic to Late Roman period, but no evidence for this is presented.

M excavation — C domestic — D 1.1m × 0.6m × 1.6m

No date available

Waterman 1937: 5, 31–34, fig. 2, pl. IX fig. 1; Strange, Longstaff, and Groh 2006: 75, 99–100; Adler 2011: 322 no. 39

#### **64. Sepphoris, WQ, USF Villa, Room 28**

The rock-cut stepped pool was accessed through three steps from the west. No fur-

ther description of the structure or the date is available. Adler (2011) suggests a date from the Hellenistic to Late Roman period, but no evidence for this is presented.

M excavation — C domestic — D 1.1m × 1.0m × n.a.

No date available

Waterman 1937: 5, 31–34, fig. 2; Strange, Longstaff, and Groh 2006: 75; Adler 2011: 322 no. 40

#### 65. Sepphoris, Hilltop, beneath House of Dionysos (L86.1844)

The stepped pool is located beneath one of the rooms in the south wing of the House of Dionysos, built in the late second or early third century, and thus predates the construction of this house. Evidence of cisterns and wall remains in this area indicates that the stepped pool is associated with domestic structures that were in use from around the first century BCE to early second century CE. The ceramic assemblage found in the accumulation deposits inside the stepped pool, which consisted of cooking vessels, rouletted cups and storage jars, dates from the first century to the first half of the second century CE. This shows that by the mid-second century the stepped pool would have fallen out of use. The ceramic assemblage also suggests that in the later stages of usage the stepped pool was probably converted into a storage space.

M excavation — C domestic — D not available  
Con. 100–1 BCE (?) — Out. 101–150 CE

Weiss and Netzer 1998: 22; Talgam and Weiss 2004: 27, 29, fig. 30; Balouka 2004: 35–39

#### 66. Sepphoris, Hilltop, above House of Dionysos

The stepped pool is located above the remnants of the House of Dionysos, in relation to domestic buildings from the Byzantine period. No further description of the structure, the date, or the context is available.

M excavation — C domestic — D 1.5m × 2.0m × n.a.

Con. 301–400 CE (?) — Out. 601–700 CE (?)  
Netzer and Weiss 1993a: 195–96; 1993b: 14;

1995: 165–66; Weiss and Netzer 1996b: 81–82; 1997: 126; Adler 2011: 322 no. 44

#### 67. Sepphoris, Hilltop, above House of Dionysos (?)

[See description of stepped pool no. 66.] The structural difference with pool [no. 66] is that this pool appears to have had no steps descending into the pool. The excavators doubt, therefore, that this pool was used as *miqveh*.

M excavation — C domestic — D not available  
Con. 301–400 CE (?) — Out. 601–700 CE (?)

Netzer and Weiss 1993a: 195–96; 1993b: 14; 1995: 165–66; Weiss and Netzer 1996b: 81–82; 1997: 126; Adler 2011: 322 no. 45

#### 68. Sepphoris, Hilltop, storehouse south of Citadel (?)

A large cistern built in the Roman period was during the Byzantine period interconnected with several other enlarged cisterns. At that time also steps leading down to the bottom of the large cistern were added along its west side. The excavators suggest that, when the steps were built, “the cistern may have been used not only to store water, but also as a ritual bath (*miqveh*)” (Weiss and Netzer 1998). This identification seems unlikely. The cistern, which is bell-shaped, does not at all resemble other *miqva’ot* in terms of architecture. Moreover, its large size and the fact that it was interconnected with other cisterns makes it also much larger than any known *miqveh*. It seems more reasonable, considering the extent of the network of cisterns, that the steps were added to the cistern for cleaning purposes.

M excavation — C industrial — D 8.5m × 15m × n.a.

Con. 301–400 CE (?) — Out. 601–700 CE (?)  
Netzer and Weiss 1993b: 14; Weiss and Netzer 1996a: 32; 1997: 126; 1998: 23; Adler 2011: 322 no. 46

#### 69. Sepphoris, Northern slope, northeast of theater

A number of stepped pools have been found on the slope to the northeast of the theater, where they are associated with partly-exposed

domestic structures. No description of any pool, the context, or date is available. Based on their suggested similarity with domestic buildings found in the Western Quarter, the excavators date the houses in this area generally to the Roman period. The stepped pools may have been functioning as miqva'ot around the same time, though alterations in function during the lifespan of these houses cannot be ruled out. It remains equally uncertain how many stepped pools there were in this area (the excavators describe their amount as "several" or "a number of"). Adler (2011) has listed four stepped pools in this area, though he acknowledges that such a number remains speculative. Since the excavators write in plural, here a minimum number of two will be used.

M excavation — C domestic? — D not available

Con. 100–1 BCE (?) — Out. 301–400 CE (?)  
Weiss and Netzer 1995: 41; 1997: 122; Adler 2011: 322 nos. 47–50

#### **70. Sepphoris, Northern slope, northeast of theater**

[See description of stepped pool no. 69.]

M excavation — C domestic? — D not available

Con. 100–1 BCE (?) — Out. 301–400 CE (?)  
Weiss and Netzer 1995: 41; 1997: 122; Adler 2011: 322 nos. 47–50

#### **71. Sepphoris, Lower Eastern Plateau, beneath Nile Festival Building**

Two stepped pools are located beneath the remains of the fifth-century Nile Festival Building. No description on the structures, their exact context, or their date is available. The excavators note a rich ceramic assemblage of the Roman period in one of the stepped pools, but no further information is provided. Since the stepped pools precede the construction of the Nile Festival Building, the excavators date both generally to the Roman period.

M excavation — C domestic? — D 2.3m × 4.0m × n.a.

Con. 100–1 BCE (?) — Out. 301–400 CE (?)

Netzer and Weiss 1994: 42; Weiss and Netzer 1995: 43; 1997: 121; 1998: 23–24; Adler 2011: 322 no. 74

#### **72. Sepphoris, Lower Eastern Plateau, beneath Nile Festival Building**

[See description of stepped pool no. 71.]

M excavation — C domestic? — D 1.3m × 1.6m × n.a.

Con. 100–1 BCE (?) — Out. 301–400 CE (?)  
Netzer and Weiss 1994: 42; Weiss and Netzer 1995: 43; 1997: 121; 1998: 23–24; Adler 2011: 323 no. 75

#### **73. Sepphoris, Lower Eastern Plateau, bathhouse east of cardo**

The stepped pool is located in a bathhouse, situated east of the cardo, immediately north of the later Nile Festival Building. No description of the structure itself is available. The excavators date the construction of the bathhouse, including the stepped pool, to the late first or early second century CE. This is based in part on the general idea that Lower Eastern Plateau was only constructed and populated from this period onwards. Also the earliest coin from above floor level (no evidence is provided from below it) is Hadrianic. By the time the Nile Festival Building was erected in the fifth century CE the bathhouse and this pool were probably already out of use. Drawing a parallel with Herodian baths, where a stepped pool was standard within the frigidaria, the excavators suggest that this stepped pool in the Sepphorean bathhouse was also used as a miqveh.

M excavation — C bathhouse — D 1.3m × 1.6m × n.a.

Con. 76–125 CE — Out. 301–400 CE  
Weiss and Netzer 1996a: 34; 1997: 121; 1998: 24; Weiss and Talgam 2002; Weiss 2007: 128; 2008: 2031; Adler 2011: 323 no. 77

#### **74. Sepphoris, Lower Eastern Plateau, unidentified monumental structure north of temple**

The stepped pool is located in the west part of a yet unidentified monumental structure

(Area 78.2). A five-stepped descend led down into the pool area. No further description of the structure is available. The monumental structure was built sometime in or after the second quarter of the second century CE, probably in connection with the construction of the colonnaded streets in this area of Sepphoris. The excavator has yet been unable to clarify the relationship of this pool with the monumental structure, whether it preceded it or that it was contemporaneous.

M excavation — C not available — D not available

No date available

Weiss 2009: 106–9; 2010: 103–4

#### **75. Sepphoris, Lower Eastern Plateau, beneath Basilical Building (i.e. macellum)**

The stepped pool is located in the northwest corner of the later Basilical Building, i.e. macellum. No description of the structure is available. Nor has there any information been provided for a construction date of this pool. However, the excavators note that the stepped pool preceded the macellum, as a mosaic floor from the Severan period was built over it when the latter building was erected. This indicates that the stepped pool had fallen out of use around that time.

M excavation — C not available — D not available

Con. (?) — Out. 193–235 CE

Strange, Groh, and Longstaff 1999: 123

#### **76. Sepphoris, Lower Eastern Plateau, structures and water installations north of Basilical Building (i.e. macellum)**

The stepped pool is located to the north of the area of the Basilical Building, i.e. macellum, in association with remnants of two (domestic?) structures and various other water installations (Area 78.1). No further description of the structure or context is available, aside from the fact that the stepped pool reportedly had an adjacent settling tank. The structures in this area have been generally dated to the Roman period. No specific date is given for when this stepped pool was in use, nor is

there any information on finds associated with accumulation debris in the pool. Adler (2011) suggested the presence of three stepped pools in this area. However, the statement in the 1995-season report on the presence of stepped pools (emphasis on the plural) in the area was only an assumption drawn from the presence of water installations. The 1998-season report notes that at that time one stepped pool had been identified through excavation. The other installations were not investigated. Thus it remains unknown if these were stepped pools and, if so, how many there were. Furthermore, Adler suggests that one stepped pool is associated with a possible pottery workshop, but this workshop is dated later than the structures and water installations (incl. the stepped pool) in this area.

M excavation — C not available — D not available

No date available

Weiss and Netzer 1998: 25; Weiss 1999: 22\*–23\*, fig. 37; Adler 2011: 323 nos. 76, 78–79

#### **77. Karm er-Ras (L331)**

This large stepped pool is located in a large, but only partly-exposed domestic building on the south slope of the hill (Area S). The pool is partially cut out of bedrock and was completely plastered. A six-stepped descend from the west, spanning the full width of the pool, led into a vaulted pool area, the ceiling of which already collapsed in antiquity. The construction of this pool has been generally dated to the beginning of the Early Roman period (63 BCE–70 CE), though no evidence for this date is provided. The pool reportedly was modified during the Middle Roman period (70–250 CE), after which it fell out of use. Alterations were made to the outer walls of the pool and it was intentionally filled with stones, partly derived from the collapsed ceiling.

M excavation — C domestic — D 4.3m × 2.3m × 2.2m

Con. 100–1 BCE (?) — Out. 76–250 CE (?)

Alexandre 2008a; Adler 2011: 323 no. 80

**78. Karm er-Ras (L207)**

The rock-cut stepped pool is located in a partly-exposed house structure on the southeast slope of the hill (Area C). A six-stepped descend from the west led into the pool area. The entire installation was coated with plaster that was rounded along the corners. The fill of stones and earth found in the pool was left unexcavated, thus no exact date for this installation can be provided. The excavator suggests that the stepped pool is contemporaneous with the house in which it was found, though technically it could have been a later addition. Stratified ceramics date the house generally to the Early Roman period (63 BCE–70 CE).

M excavation — C domestic — D 1.9m × 1.4m × 1.7m

Con. 100–1 BCE (?) — Out. 51–100 CE (?)

Alexandre 2008b; Adler 2011: 323 no. 81

**79. Karm er-Ras (L735)**

The remains of this plastered, rock-cut stepped pool are located on the east slope of the hill (Area H). It was found within a partly-exposed domestic building. Three steps that could be descended from the west, located along the north wall of the pool area, led into the pool itself. Based on finds from the house, the excavator generally dates occupation there during the first to third centuries CE, after which the house was destroyed in a fire. Other than the stepped pool appearing to have been added to the house at some stage during this period, no specific information is given for its date.

M excavation — C domestic — D not available

Con. 1–100 CE (?) — Out. 201–300 CE (?)

Alexandre 2008c; Adler 2011: 323 no. 82

**80. Zarzir**

Remains of a terraced water installation with several layers of plaster were exposed in a small rescue excavation. No description of structure, date, or context available. Based on pers. comm. of Adler (2011) and Reich (2013) with U. Ben-Zion and D. Avshalom-Gorni.

M excavation — C not available — D not available

No date available

Adler 2011: 323 no. 83; Reich 2013: 196, 272

**81. Alonim**

Remains of dwellings belonging to a village. In one of the houses a stepped pool was reportedly exposed. Reich (2013) dates the remains of the village and the stepped pool to the end of the Second Temple period, but no evidence for such a date is provided. No further description of structure, date, or context available. The site was excavated by Adam Druks in the 1970s but remains unpublished.

M excavation — C domestic — D not available

No date available

Adler 2011: 323 no. 84; Reich 2013: 196, 272

**82. 'En Rani (?)**

Remnants of this plastered, rock-cut stepped pool are located in the southwest part of 'En Rani. No building remains are found in direct association with the stepped pool, though these may have been destroyed in modern times. The stepped pool was entered by stepped descend from the north. Only the three lowermost worn steps are intact, the upper part of the staircase was destroyed in modern times. The bottom of the pool is not level but slightly inclined to the southwest, where a small circular hollow pit of 25-cm deep was hewn out in the bottom. Ceramics found in the fill inside this installation date from the Hellenistic through Byzantine periods, but was insufficient to conclusively date the stepped pool. Based on the type of hydraulic plaster that was used, the excavator suggested a Late Roman or Byzantine date for this installation. The excavator identified this stepped pool as a miqveh based on the presence of steps. However, the presented evidence fits better the identification of this installation as a collecting vat used in wine production. Contrary to the identification as a miqveh, this explains the presence of a circular hollow pit in the corner of the pool, which is commonly found in collecting vats. Also the size of this stepped pool is roughly similar to many collecting vats from this area (for examples, see description

[nos. 91–92]).

M excavation — C industrial — D 2.1m × 1.4m × 2.0m

Con. 201–300 CE (?) — Out. 601–700 CE (?)  
Alexandre 2005; Amit and Adler 2010b: 131–32 n. 29; Adler 2011: 323 no. 86

### 83. Tel Yin'am

The plastered, rock-cut stepped pool is located on the south slope of the tell (Area C). No known above-ground building remains are found in association with it. A five-stepped descend from the east led into the pool area. The four lower steps are rock-cut, while the uppermost one was made of dressed limestone blocks. Ceramics from the steps and floor of the stepped pool, as well as one sherd within the plaster, date to the third to fifth century CE. This date is supported by radiocarbon dates from organic inclusions in two plaster samples from the pool, which yielded dates of 505±65 CE and 529±65 CE (Liebowitz 1981: 91). Plaster layers however were relatively often renewed through time; it is unknown whether the samples were taken from the pool's original plaster layer or from a later renovation. As a general date, it can be suggested that the stepped pool was used from around the third into the fifth century CE.

M excavation — C domestic — D 4.0m × 3.0m × 2.0m

Con. 201–300 CE (?) — Out. 401–600 CE  
Liebowitz and Folk 1980: 36; Liebowitz 1981: 89–91, fig. 8; Amit and Adler 2010b: 131–32 n. 29; Adler 2011: 323 no. 87; Reich 2013: 220, 274

### 84. Beth She'arim (Cistern no. I)

The plastered stepped pool is located on the hilltop near the synagogue, where it formed part of a domestic structure (the Zaid Farm) of which several rooms have been exposed. The stepped pool was hewn out of bedrock and could be entered by five steps from the east. The pool area is roofed by bedrock. An unplastered cistern lies directly southeast of this stepped pool. Both the cistern and the stepped pool were at a certain point in time

filled with debris, including stones, a large amount of ceramics and lamp fragments. The lamp fragments date from the second to early fourth century CE and suggest that in this period the stepped pool and cistern fell out of use. No evidence is presented for a construction date of both installations.

M excavation — C domestic — D 1.8m × 1.3m × 3.5m

Con. (?) — Out. 101–325 CE (?)

Avigad 1955: 207–9; Adler 2011: 323 no. 88; Reich 2013: 221, 314 no. 1

### 85. Beth She'arim

The stepped pool is located in a room of Building V, which is a larger domestic structure to the southeast of the ancient synagogue on the hilltop. No date for the stepped pool or the structure has been provided. Mazar identified this stepped pool as a rock-cut storage cellar, but this was prior to the general identification of stepped pools as miqva'ot. Adler (2011) and Reich (2013) have interpreted it as a miqveh. M excavation — C domestic — D not available  
No date available

Mazar 1941–42: 15; Adler 2011: 323 no. 89; Reich 2013: 221, 314 no. 3

### 86. Beth She'arim

The stepped pool is located in the southeast corner of Building B, a probable domestic structure dated to the mid-second to early third century CE, which lies near the ancient synagogue on the hilltop. Mazar interpreted the stepped pool as part of an industrial installation. Adler (2011) and Reich (2013) have interpreted it as a miqveh. No date for the pool has been provided.

M excavation — C domestic — D not available  
No date available

Mazar 1941–42: 8; Adler 2011: 323 no. 90; Reich 2013: 314 no. 4

### 87. Beth She'arim

This stepped pool is reportedly located in the courtyard in front of a large basilical building in the southern area of the town. Tepper and Tepper (2004) report that it is unclear wheth-

er the pool was built contemporaneous with the basilica or whether it predates that building. No further description of structure, date, or context is available. Adler (2011) dates the installation generally to the Middle to Late Roman period (135–363 CE), but without any evidence for it.

M excavation — C not available — D not available

No date available

Tepper and Tepper 2004: 174; Amit and Adler 2010a: 85; Adler 2011: 323 no. 91

### 88. Beth She'arim

This stepped pool is part of a burial complex consisting of a hypogeum (Catacomb 11) and an elaborate mausoleum that is now entirely destroyed, all located at the western edge of the necropolis. It is situated in the northwest corner of the rock-cut courtyard in front of the hypogeum that is paved with a mosaic floor. Nine quarter turn steps with a landing provided access into the pool. The pool appears to have been fed by rainwater through a plastered channel built alongside the north wall of the courtyard. No date has been established from the finds inside the stepped pool. Ceramics from the first hall within the hypogeum (Hall A) suggest a third-century date for this catacomb. It is assumed that also the external courtyard and stepped pool dates to this period. Reich (1990), Amit and Adler (2010a) and Adler (2011) identify this installation as a miqveh, but provide no grounds for this other than that it generally met rabbinic regulations. Alternatively, because of its distinct burial context, this pool may have been used within pagan purification rites. House-tombs found along the Via Sacra in Rome, for instance, had wells for supplying water for cult and purification purposes.

M excavation — C burial — D 3.4m × 2.4m × 2.7m

Con. 201–300 CE (?) — Out. (?)

Mazar 1941–42: 18; Amit and Adler 2010a: 74–76, figs. 2–; Adler 2011: 323 no. 92; Reich 2013: 221, 314 no. 2

### 89. Beth She'arim (no. 24)

This substantially large stepped pool stood as an independent structure in the northwest part of the necropolis, close to the so-called “mausoleum” or memorial monument. The stepped pool was hewn out of bedrock. Its ceiling has now almost completely collapsed. The entrance to the pool area is reached by a 3.5m stepped descend from the northwest. The stepped pool area itself consisted of thirteen additional steps, of which only the uppermost three are currently visible. Two layers of plaster are recognized along the walls of the stepped pool. Directly northeast of this installation, a settling basin was found to collect silt from the runoff rainwater from the hill. Mazar (1960) dated this stepped pool more generally to the third to fourth century CE, which he presumed to have been the primary period of activities at the necropolis. The general chronology of the necropolis is today heavily contested and, therefore, cannot be used as a reliable indicator. No description on the evidence found inside the pool is available. Mazar (1956) identified the installation either as a pool, bath or cistern. Amit and Adler (2010a) identified it as a miqveh intended to serve a large number of people upon leaving the necropolis. Aside from style, no other archaeological indicator for this suggestion is presented.

M excavation — C burial — D 8.0m × 8.0m × 5.9m

No date available

Mazar 1956: 262; 1960; Amit and Adler 2010a: 76–81, figs. 6–8; Adler 2011: 323 no. 93; Reich 2013: 221, 314 no. 5

### 90. Beth She'arim (no. 29)

This plastered, rock-cut stepped pool is situated roughly 25 meters north of stepped pool [no. 89]. The L-shaped installation is entered from the north. One first has to pass some sort of built hallway and a rock-cut threshold; then four steps down northwards, after which two steps eastwards would lead into the pool area. The pool area was hewn out of bedrock, while the hallway and steps originally had a

masonry ceiling. Amit and Adler (2010a) have cautiously noted that it may have operated simultaneously as the necropolis during the third to fourth century CE, but acknowledge that there is no archaeological evidence for this suggestion.

M excavation — C burial — D 3.0m × 3.3–4.1m × 1.2m

No date available

Amit and Adler 2010a: 81–84, figs. 9–10; Adler 2011: 323 no. 93; Reich 2013: 221, 315 no.

6

### 91. Nazareth (?)

Remnants of a square rock-cut stepped pool are located beneath the present Basilica of the Annunciation, where it is associated with various nearby rock-cut caves and cisterns, probably used for agricultural purposes. No traces of earlier structures associated with these rock-cut features have been attested. The plastered pool can be accessed through a narrow flight of steps along its north wall. In the pool's northeast corner lay a small circular hollow pit (70 × 60 cm). It is unclear whether, as in the case of some stepped pools [nos. 82 and 92], the bottom of the pool inclined towards this corner. A square recess (63 × 61 cm) was carved out high up in the middle of the north wall. It is unclear if this is original or added at a later stage. At some later stage, also unclear graffiti was scratched onto the plastered walls of the pool. When the stepped pool had fallen out of use, it was filled with earth, limestone blocks, pottery and plaster fragments containing graffiti written in Greek and in Syriac. An oxidized curved knife used for grape harvesting was found as well. Ultimately, by the fourth or fifth century CE, a mosaic floor depicting a *chi-rho* and belonging to a pilgrim's church was laid out over the remains of the stepped pool. No evidence for a construction date of the stepped pool has been reported. Strange (1992) tentatively dated its construction to the second century CE, though it is unclear on which evidence this suggestion is based. Late Roman ceramics found in the fill inside the pool date the period when it fell

out of use to sometime in the third or fourth century CE.

The identification of this stepped pool is debated. Bagatti (1967), based on the graffiti scratched onto the plastered walls, interpreted the pool as a Jewish-Christian baptismal basin. Strange (1992; 1997; 2007; also Adler 2011) identified it on the basis of the steps as a *miqveh*. And Taylor (1993) suggested that it functioned as a collecting vat in the production of wine. The latter identification is deemed the most plausible for several reasons. First, the identification as collecting vat fits the evidence of agricultural production in this area prior to the construction of the church. For instance, a wine pressing zone was found only 20 m away (Bagatti 1967: 53–55). Second, a knife used for grape-cutting was found in the fill of this vat. Third, the floors of such collecting vats often were decorated with a mosaic (Frankel 1999: 139). Although this vat had no mosaic floor, an almost identical one found nearby beneath the Church of St Joseph [no. 92] did have a mosaic floor. Fourth, this collecting vat resembles strongly in shape and construction the numerous collecting vats known from Late Roman and Byzantine Palestine.

M excavation — C industrial — D 2.0m × 2.0m × 1.6m

Con. (?) — Out. 201–400 CE (?)

Testa 1962; Bagatti 1967; Taylor 1993: 230–67; Strange 1992; 1997; 2007: 726; Adler 2011: 323 no. 95

### 92. Nazareth (?)

The remains of this stepped pool are located beneath the present Church of St Joseph. It is located nearby [no. 91] and as a structure is almost identical to it. The pool could be entered from the west via seven narrow steps along the south wall. The floor, the steps, and part of the surrounding area were covered by a well-preserved mosaic floor. The pool's floor mosaic was decorated with six black rectangles on a white background. The walls of the pool are coated with plaster in which Late Roman or Byzantine potsherds were fixed. The bottom

of the pool is not level but slightly inclined to the northwest, where in the corner a circular hollow pit (70 × 60 cm) was dug out in the bottom. Between the steps and the floor runs a 16-cm wide channel that is decorated with mosaics as well. Near the south wall, a basalt block is inserted into the floor. As the pool's mosaic floor runs around it (and not beneath it), the stone appears to be in situ. The fill of this pool contained, among other unreported finds, a large quantity of marble fragments. Based on the sherds found in the wall plaster a general Late Roman to Byzantine date is provided for this pool. The discussion on the functioning of this stepped pool is identical to that of [no. 91]. It likely functioned as a collecting vat used in the production of wine.

M excavation — C industrial — D 2.1m × 2.2m × 2.0m

Con. 201–300 CE (?) — Out. 601–700 CE (?)

Testa 1962; Bagatti 1967: 228–32; Taylor 1993: 230–67; Strange 2007: 726

### 93. Yafia' (?)

Remnants of a partly-preserved cave complex (Cave 1), hewn into the bedrock, are located to the east of Yafia'. The eastern part of this complex was damaged in modern times by mechanical equipment. The cave complex consisted of at least two rooms. Room I, whose floor and walls are plastered, was accessed from the south via a stepped passageway, of which only two plastered steps have been exposed. This entrance was apparently blocked later by fieldstones and earth. A breach in the southeast corner of Room I led to Room II, which was paved with stone tiles. When exactly this breach was made is not known. Unstratified finds from the Middle and Late Roman, Byzantine, Early Islamic, Mamluk and Ottoman period lay inside this cave complex. The evidence was too poor and mixed to provide a date for the complex. Furthermore, it cannot be determined whether both rooms were hewn and used at the same time. Based on the plaster in Room I and the two exposed steps leading into this room, the excavator identified this feature as a miqveh. This iden-

tification is highly uncertain, because the date of the complex is unknown, it is unknown whether Rooms I and II were built at the same time, and there were possibly more rooms than these two.

M excavation — C cave — D not available

No date available

Abu 'Uqsa 2000; Adler 2011: 323 no. 96

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