TWO MEDIEVAL JEWISH RITUAL BATHS – *MIKVA'OT* – FOUND AT GRESHAM STREET AND MILK STREET IN LONDON

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SUMMARY

Two medieval Jewish mikva'ot or ritual baths have been discovered in the part of the City of London known as the Jewry. One was discovered at 81–87 Gresham Street in 1986 and the other at 1–6 Milk Street during 2001 (see cover illustration).

INTRODUCTION

The word *mikveh* (plural *mikva'ot*) is Hebrew for 'a collection of water'. It also refers to a small subterranean bath filled with water collected by natural means, containing a minimum of 40 *seah* (*c.*750 litres). People immerse themselves in a *mikveh* to achieve spiritual cleanliness or purity in various ritual contexts.[1] For this reason medieval *mikva'ot* were located either close to or within synagogue precincts, and they are always found within the area of Jewish settlement. People can become ritually unclean through contact with the dead or with defiling objects, or, in the case of women, through menstruation and childbirth. *Leviticus* (15) details the Mosaic Law of 'the uncleanliness of men and women in their issues and their cleansing' (*Encyclopaedia Judaica* 11, 1533–44; 15, 751). A *mikveh* is a uniquely Jewish institution, and such is its importance that Jewish practice requires a community to build one before it constructs a synagogue.

THE LONDON MEDIEVAL JEWRY

William I 'transferred' Jews to London from the important Norman community at Rouen (William of Malmesbury 1998, I, 53). The documentary evidence for London's 12th-century Jewry, though slim by comparison with that for the 13th century, is important. The single extant Pipe roll of Henry I's reign, for 1130–31, provides valuable information on the Jewry's financial relationship with the Crown. The first rolls for Henry II's reign show that by 1159 Jews were well established in ten other towns. By the 1200s an abundance of public records becomes available (Hillaby 1994, 1–2, 8–15).

After Henry II's death, in whose reign (1154–1189) William of Newburgh tells us the Jews were 'happy and respected', the English community experienced very hard times. The attack on London's Jewry in 1189 was followed by massacres at York and a number of other towns in 1190. In the later years of John's reign his endless demands for money impoverished the Jewish community; almost all their stone houses were expropriated. The early years[2] of Henry III's reign (1216–1227) witnessed a marked revival in the Jewry's fortunes, but by the mid 13th century heavy taxation led once more to expropriation until, in 1290, the much reduced community was expelled, with the royal clerks compiling a final account of all Jewish property (Hillaby 1992, 97–107, 132–7, 151–2, table 8; *idem* 1994, 15–40). From 1290 until 1658, when

the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell, readmitted them, the Jews were forbidden to reside in England.

From the detailed documentary evidence available the parishes and streets most favoured by London's Jews can be plotted with some precision. St Olave's Old Jewry and St Lawrence Jewry with St Mary Colechurch and St Martin Pomary and in particular Colechurch (Old Jewry) and Ironmonger Lanes, Catte (Gresham) and Milk Streets were the principal areas of settlement (Fig 1). Some Jews lived at the southern end of Bassishaw and Colman Street, the south-east of Lothbury Street, and about the junction of Wood with Catte Street. The two magnets for residence were the *Magna Scola* (great synagogue), at the corner of Old Jewry and Lothbury, behind the homes of such plutocrats as the Londoner Abraham son of the Rabbi, Aaron of Lincoln and Jurnet of Norwich, and the Guildhall. Indeed the house of Aaron of Vives, associate of Henry III's avaricious son Edmund Crouchback, 'adjoined' the Guildhall on the west. Aaron also owned a plot 'on the way to Hustings', by Guildhall Yard (Hillaby 1992, 90–6, 100–2, 146–8, 151–3; *idem* 1993, 189–91).

There are a number of misconceptions about Jews and Jewry. Firstly, although described as 'in Jewry' the area where they resided was no ghetto. This latter term appeared first in Venice in 1516 and became general throughout the Catholic world after the bull *cum nimis absurdam* in 1555. In medieval London Jews and Christians lived side by side for purely secular reasons. The Jews chose to live in the 'central business district' of London as leading members of their community played an important part in the financial affairs of both city and kingdom. The Jews were not only moneylenders but exchangers, pawnbrokers, and traders in precious metals, jewellery and furs. They were intimately associated with and lived close to their Christian counterparts, such

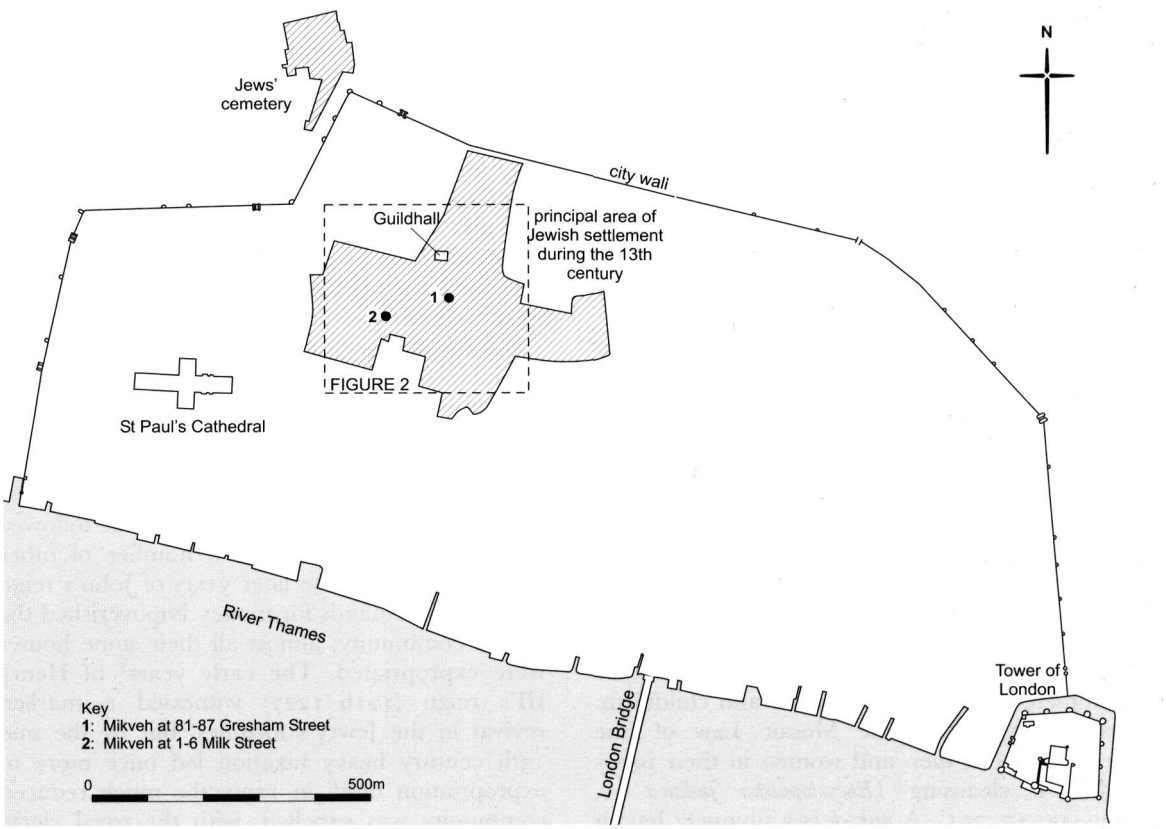

Fig 1. The City of London (c.1270), showing the line of the city walls, the principal area of Jewish settlement (defined from post-medieval parish boundaries), the extent of the Cripplegate cemetery, and the location of Fig 2. (1: Mikveh at 81–7 Gresham Street (found 1986); 2: Mikveh at 1–6 Milk Street (found 2001))

as gold- and silversmiths (Stacey 1995, 79, 83–5; Biddle 1976, 439, 496–7; Hillaby 2002, 88).

Also a myth is 'the time-hallowed view' that the Jews were the pioneers of domestic building in stone (Dobson 1996, 46, n 153). The wealthier Jews certainly lived in such houses. Stow (1908, I, 9) records that in 1215 the baronial opposition repaired the city walls with stone taken from Jewish houses. However, documentary evidence at York suggests that the occupancy of such buildings was normal amongst the more wealthy merchants during the 12th and 13th centuries (RCHM 1972, lxi), a trend confirmed at other urban centres including Gloucester, Southampton, and Worcester (Hillaby 1990, 97; *idem* 2002, 88; Platt 1973, 39–41; Platt & Coleman Smith 1975, 83–5). In London fitz Ailwin's 1189 *Assize of Building* refers to 'many citizens' building stone houses after the Great Fire of 1136 (*Liber Albus* 1861, 284–5; Schofield *et al* 1990, 160–1), confirming the commonness of this practice amongst the richer Londoners.

Both myths sadly occur in the rationale behind a provisional attempt to identify the medieval Jewish community in London from their material culture (Pepper 1992). Five artefact types – lead tokens, bone counters, coin scales, ceramic hanging lamps and window louvres – were selected. The first three artefacts relate to money lending or mercantile activity, while the presence of louvres implies the existence of houses with either stone-built ground storeys or cellars. However, as noted above, the occupation of stone houses was widespread amongst the richer Londoners, so this criterion is invalid. Comparison of the four excavations within the Jewry with other City sites revealed a marked concentration of these artefacts (Pepper 1992, 6). However, as the date of the artefacts was not considered, it is likely that some postdate the expulsion of the Jews. Furthermore, while the chosen artefacts are good indicators of mercantile activity, they are not exclusively Jewish. The dietary evidence provided by faunal assemblages from rubbish pits (presumably due to lack of available data) was not considered by Pepper (1992).[3] In conclusion, evidence of social differentiation using aspects of material culture cannot be reliably applied to England's medieval Jewries in London and elsewhere.

The Jewish cemetery at Cripplegate, just outside the walled city (Fig 1), was partly excavated in 1949 and 1961 (Grimes 1968, 180–1; Honeybourne 1959–64). Existing basements had extensively disturbed the site, except for a small area between Well Street and St Giles churchyard where a row of seven truncated, empty graves was found (Shepherd 1998, 85). The clearance of the cemetery was presumably undertaken by Christians after the 1290 expulsion, as such an action would have been against the laws and customs of the Jewish community. Although the excavations revealed no tombstones, six fragments with Hebrew inscriptions (now lost) have been found incorporated into the city wall and its gatehouses: one in 1586 when Ludgate was rebuilt, four in 1617 when Aldersgate was demolished, and the last discovered in London Wall during 1753 (Honeybourne 1959–64, 153–4, pls 26–7, which reproduces three). In 1232 the *Domus Conversorum* was established for converts at New Street (now Chancery Lane). In 1337 the chapel was assigned to the Keeper of the Rolls and in due course it became partly an office and a record repository (Trice Martin 1894). It was demolished in 1895.[4]

In summary, whilst the documentary evidence relating to the London Jewry is rich, the archaeological evidence unearthed to date is limited. Thus, the Gresham Street and Milk Street discoveries represent important evidence of this community.

THE DISCOVERIES OF 1986 AND 2001

During 1985–86 archaeological investigations were undertaken at Guildhall House, 81–7 Gresham Street, to the south of the Guildhall (Fig 2).[5] The excavations revealed the truncated chalk-rubble foundations of two 12th-century buildings fronting onto Catte (Gresham) Street. Due to the degree of truncation caused by the construction of post-medieval basements, it is not certain if either of the medieval buildings possessed cellars. Adjacent to one of the foundations was a truncated stone-lined structure. Initially this feature, excavated during March 1986, was interpreted as a subterranean strong room.[6] Research in 1990 first suggested that this structure should be re-interpreted as a *mikveh* (Sermon 1990).

During the excavations at 1–6 Milk Street (October 2001), a second truncated *mikveh* was uncovered (Fig 2). [7] Thanks to funding from the Bevis Marks Synagogue Trust the *mikveh* has been dismantled, and it is proposed to rebuild it in a suitable setting. During 1976–77 this site had

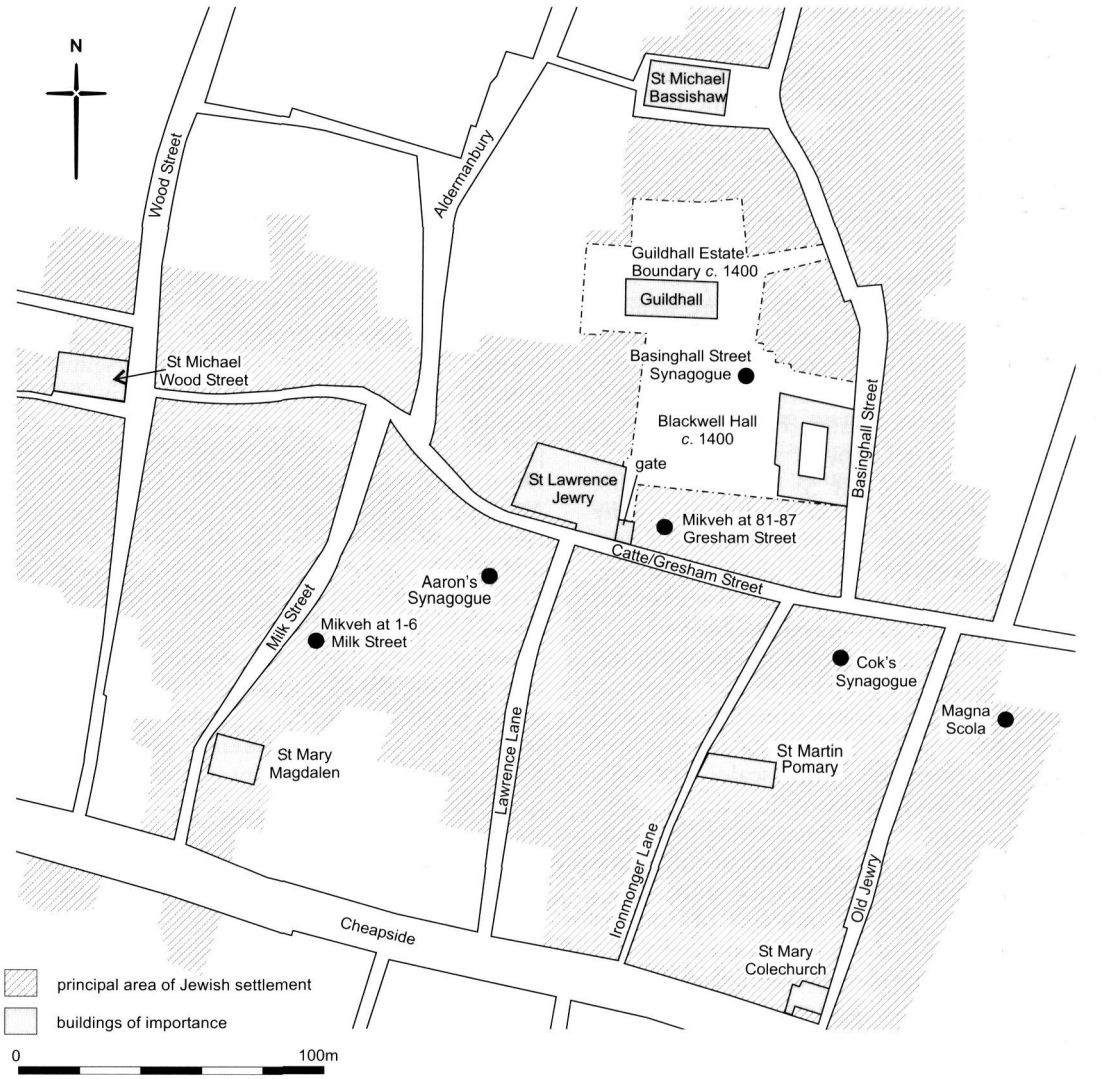

Fig 2. The central portion of the London Jewry showing the extent of the principal area of Jewish settlement, churches, and other important buildings. Only the approximate position of the Magna Scola and the other synagogues is shown, as the precise location of these structures is uncertain.

been partly excavated in advance of the previous redevelopment, but archaeological work carried out within the vicinity of the *mikveh* was very limited (Schofield *et al* 1990, 113), so it remained undiscovered and more amazingly was undisturbed during the 1978 redevelopment.

THE GRESHAM STREET *MIKVEH* (Fig 3)

The structural remains of the Gresham Street *mikveh* consisted of a rectangular arrangement of two courses of high-quality, squared Upper Greensand ashlar blocks (size varied from 80 x 150 x 220mm to 300 x 300 x 250mm), bonded with grey-yellow lime mortar, set within a slightly larger construction pit. While it is certain that the *mikveh* was intended to be subterranean, its original depth and the height of the associated floors is not known, due to modern truncation.

The internal dimensions of the structure were 1.65 by 1.15m and the internal depth was 56cm. Between the back of the ashlar lining and the

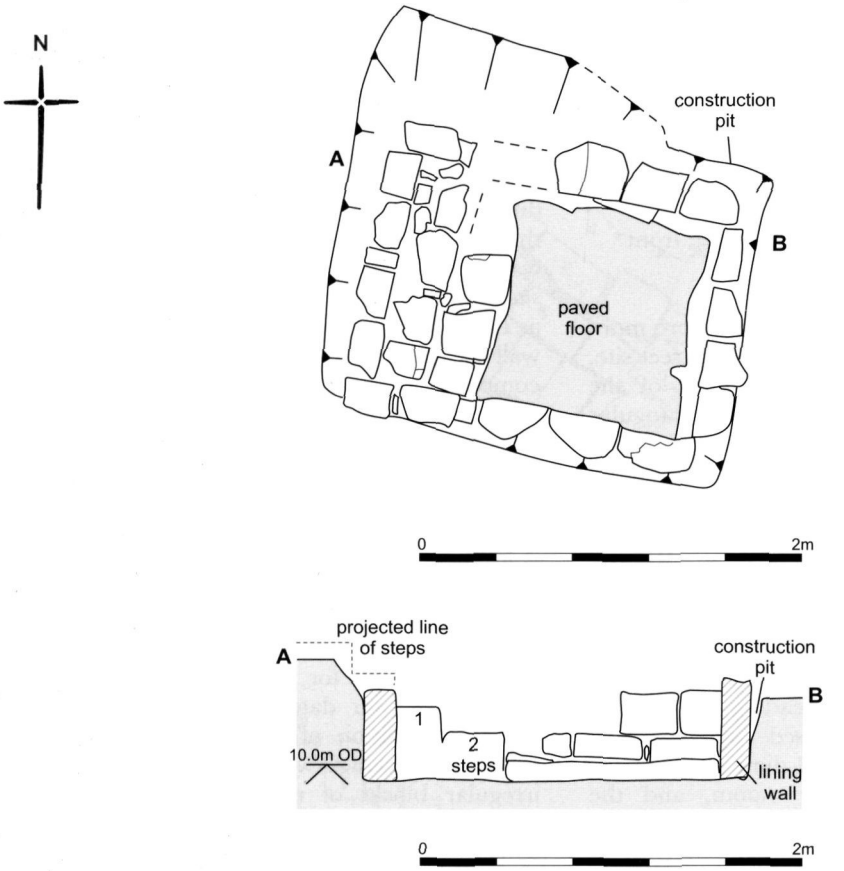

Fig 3. Plan and cross-section of the Gresham Street mikveh

construction pit was a mass of rubble packing. A sherd of a London-type ware serving jug (1080–1200), recovered from the packing, dates the construction of the *mikveh* to the 12th century. Within the internal area of the masonry there was a compact layer of pebbly sand. Along the western internal face this deposit was sealed by a spread of rubble, which served as a base for Greensand blocks arranged on two levels to form stairs providing access to the structure. Assuming that the structure was originally 1.20m deep, there would have been an additional five steps.[8] The upper step comprised four squared blocks and the lower one three. In the spaces between some blocks were found the remains of three lengths of decayed wood, which indicate the presence of wooden treads on top of the uneven steps.

Abutting the steps a single layer of reused Greensand blocks of varying size formed a floor, measuring 1.05 by 1.15m. The roughly horizontal surface formed was at a lower level than that of the lowest step. The blocks were laid in a continuous bed of lime mortar, which also filled the gaps between the blocks. To have functioned as a *mikveh* it must originally have been watertight, as leakage would have invalidated its usage (*Encyclopaedia Judaica* 11, 1536). There is no evidence for how the structure could have been made watertight. There were no traces of mortar on the internal faces of the masonry to suggest the presence of internal render or a stone-slab lining and flooring to seal the structure. Possibly the original mortar has degraded back to sand and the internal lining and flooring were removed at the same time as the upper portion of masonry. The disuse of the *mikveh* is represented by the removal or robbing of the upper portion of the masonry lining, reducing it to its present height. The space created by the stone robbing was backfilled with soil, containing 13th-century pottery.

The 1290 expulsion returns and other documentary evidence confirm that some of the properties situated either on or near to 81–7 Gresham Street were occupied by Jews during the 13th century (Hillaby 1992, 91, 127, 141, 148; Blair *et al* 2002, 25).

THE MILK STREET *MIKVEH* (Fig 4; front cover illustration)

The remains of the Milk Street *mikveh* were more substantial than those at the Gresham Street site, and the overall appearance and form of the structure contrasts markedly with the rectangular plan of the *mikveh* discovered in 1985. The *mikveh* was substantially built, using high quality squared Greensand ashlar blocks bonded with lime mortar, set within a construction pit. The stone has been provisionally identified as Reigate Stone, from the Cretaceous, Upper Greensand beds of Surrey.

The *mikveh* was aligned roughly north–south and was seen in plan and elevation to consist of a minimum of seven steps leading down from the north into an enclosed apsidal-ended chamber. The overall internal dimensions of the structure measured 3.00 by 1.20m, and the maximum internal depth was 1.45m. The apsidal end of the *mikveh* measured 1.20 by 1.20m, although most of the ashlar blocks at this end of the structure had been robbed to the level of its lowest course. The highest survival of the lining was along its east side, where a staggered profile of six regular courses of ashlar survived. The individual blocks of stone varied in size from 0.20 by 0.15m to 0.45 by 0.25m, and, in order to compensate for slight variations in the height of adjoining stones, pieces of peg tile had been selectively used as levelling material.

The stonework of the open apsidal 'bath' was particularly finely carved, with very narrow and tight-fitting joints between the individual ashlar blocks, presumably to make the structure watertight. There was no evidence to suggest that the bath had ever been rendered internally, and it is likely that such a coating was never required. The base of the *mikveh* was founded directly onto natural brickearth and no clear evidence was found to indicate the nature of its original floor. Given the high standard of the remainder of the structure and the slipperiness of brickearth when wet, it is inconceivable that the bath would not originally have had a stone or tile floor, which was later robbed. The gap between the back of the lining and the construction cut was packed with a mixed silty-mortar-and-rubble fill. The fill contained the base of a mid 13th-century London ware baluster jug. The uppermost four steps leading down into the *mikveh* had been substantially robbed, although their original profile could be discerned where they had been broken off in the face of the east wall. Only the bottom three steps remained *in situ*, probably by virtue of having been utilized as the base for a later east–west aligned blocking wall (see below). Each of the lower steps was composed of between three and five squared blocks of Greensand ashlar, with slightly uneven and pitted surfaces possibly caused by wear during the functioning life of the *mikveh*. There was no evidence to suggest that the steps had originally had wooden treads. The packing fill behind one of the steps contained a small assemblage of mid 13th-century London and Kingston ware pottery, contemporary with that from the construction fill, and providing a construction date for the *mikveh*.

At some later date the *mikveh* was modified with the addition of a crudely built east–west internal blocking wall composed largely of irregular blocks of reused Greensand, with a depth of 46cm and a width and length of 1.10m. This wall was built directly onto the lowest three steps (Steps 5–7) and was butted against the walls flanking the stairs. Although the addition of this wall effectively closed off the open end of the apsidal bath from the stairway, it is uncertain if it was a deliberate modification to deepen the bath during the functioning life of the *mikveh*. An alternative, although perhaps less likely, explanation for the original function of the blocking wall is that it constitutes the foundation to a wall of a later building which was built over the *mikveh* after the structure had been abandoned following the expulsion of 1290.

The disuse and partial dismantling of the *mikveh* was indicated by a number of mortar-and-rubble-based deposits which filled the lower levels of the apsidal end of the structure and part of the stairwell, partially sealing the later blocking wall. The robbing fills all contained pottery dated 1280–1350, and it is likely that the *mikveh* had been infilled at some point in the very late 13th or early 14th century.

The 1976–77 excavations at 1–6 Milk Street revealed the stone foundations of a number of 12th- and 13th-century stone-built cellared

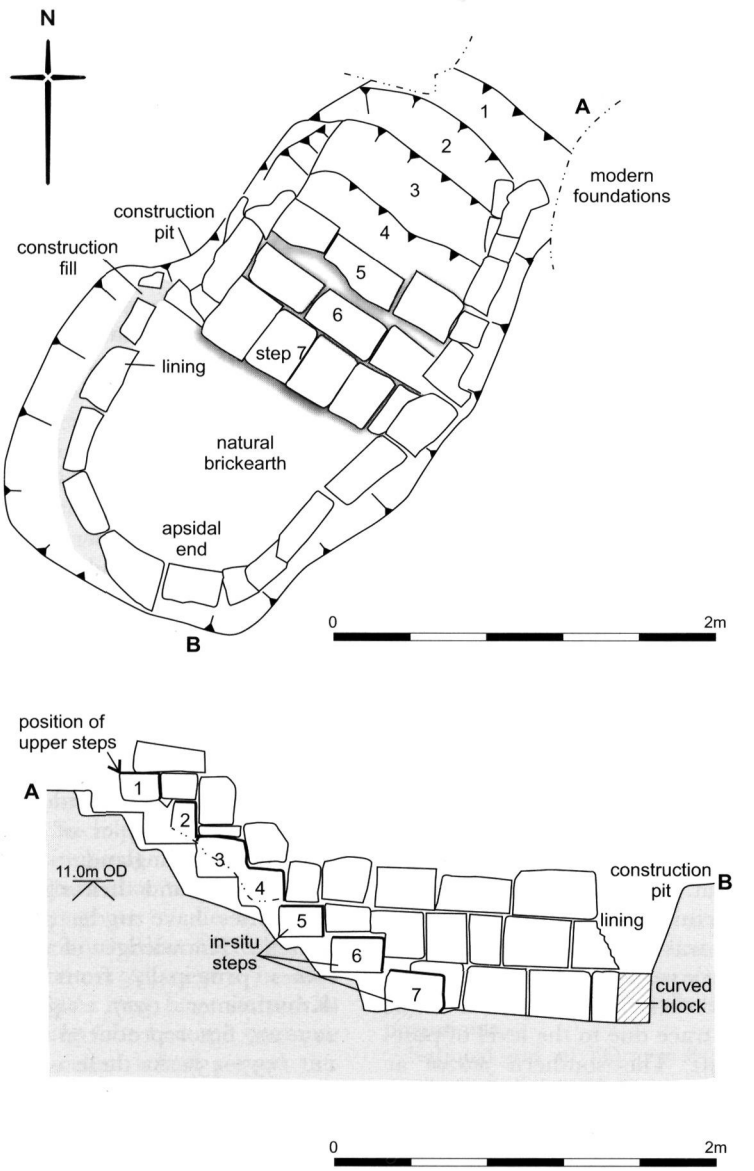

Fig 4. Plan and cross-section of the Milk Street mikveh

properties fronting onto the west side of Milk Street (Schofield *et al* 1990, 118–25). To the rear of these properties were various cess and rubbish pits and wells, presumably situated within gardens or yards. The most imposing structure discovered was a 12th-century stone undercroft. In 1276 this property belonged to Bonamicus, Jew of York, and in 1290 to his son Jacob (Hillaby 1992, 127, table 8; Schofield *et al* 1990, 140, Building 6).

In 1290 the property where the *mikveh* was discovered was occupied by a Jew, Moses Crespin, who had inherited it from his father Jacob (who had died *c.*1244). The Crespin family were leading London financiers during the early 13th century (Hillaby 1992, 127–30). After the expulsion, this property passed to Martin Ferraunt and, during the 14th century or later, it was rebuilt. During this rebuilding one of the new cellar walls sealed the remains of the *mikveh* (Schofield *et al* 1990, 145, Building 10).

THE MEDIEVAL *MIKVA'OT*

Archaeological evidence confirms that both structures were subterranean, lined with high-quality Greensand ashlar masonry, and entered by stairs. The Gresham Street example was built during the 12th century and partly dismantled during the 13th century, while that in Milk Street was built during the mid 13th century and partly dismantled during the very late 13th or early 14th century. The design of these structures is quite different from contemporary stone-lined cess pits, which tend to be larger, lined with chalk rubble, and never have stairs (Schofield *et al* 1990, 173–6). The close jointing of the ashlar lining of the Milk Street example strongly suggests that it was intended to hold water, while the presence of steps indicates it served as a bath. Those who bothered to bathe in medieval London generally used local streams or wooden tubs, not purpose-built subterranean stone-lined structures. Documentary evidence (discussed above) confirms that both structures were located within the London Jewry (Fig 2), and that a wealthy Jewish family occupied the Milk Street property during the 13th century. While the evidence for the Gresham Street property has not yet been fully researched, it is clear that several properties within the immediate vicinity were occupied by Jews. It is on the basis of this evidence that we put forward the interpretation that both these structures are medieval *mikva'ot*.

Neither structure was deep enough to fill with ground water, so they were presumably supplied with roof water from cisterns at a higher level (of which there was no trace due to the level of post-medieval truncation). The southern *mikveh* at Masada (Israel) was supplied with water from an adjoining cistern via a pipe (Yadin 1966, 164–7). The capacity of the Gresham Street *mikveh* was at least 640 litres of water, while the Milk Street *mikveh* could have contained at least 2,520 litres of water (up to Step 2), providing a depth of 1.15m, enough for complete immersion. The modification of the *mikveh* created a 0.80m deep self-contained immersion pool, capable of holding 988 litres of water. To achieve this same depth of water in the original structure an additional 480 litres would have been required, demonstrating the potential benefit of the modification.

Interestingly both the Gresham and Milk Street *mikva'ot* were apparently located within cellars below private houses, not synagogues. This raises the question whether wealthy Jews, for reasons of piety or status, constructed private *mikva'ot* so as to be able to prepare themselves in the privacy of their homes for public worship, or perhaps worship in private synagogues (created by converting suitable rooms within their homes). In 1281 the Franciscan archbishop John Pecham claimed that, 'to the mockery and great scandal of Christian religion, almost all the most important London Jews had their own synagogues' (Douie 1952, 324–5). However, this does not necessarily mean that the two London *mikva'ot* served private synagogues situated within the same properties; as there is documentary evidence for the existence of four synagogues near to both *mikva'ot* it could be argued that there was little need for additional facilities within the locality (Fig 2).[9]

A rock-cut chamber which fills with spring water at Jacob's Well Road, Bristol has been published as a medieval *mikveh* (Emanuel & Ponsford 1994). However, it has recently been reinterpreted as associated with a *bet tohorah* (a cleansing house where the dead were washed and prepared for burial) (Blair *et al* 2002, 32; Hillaby & Sermon forthcoming). If this reinterpretation of the Bristol structure is correct it means that the two London *mikva'ot* are the only two known examples of this type of medieval monument in England.

To understand their significance, the London discoveries have to be placed in a European context. Knowledge of the medieval *mikva'ot* comes principally from the Rhenish Jewries (Krautheimer 1927, 148–50, 164–5, 187–8, 217–21; figs reproduced in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 11, 1537–43). As these were for communal use they were built close to the synagogue and other facilities, such as the bakehouse, oven, butchery, and *hospitium*. Reflecting communal pride and confidence in the face of great adversity, they were also monumental in construction.

Such monumental *mikva'ot* took two forms. The first had a single vertical shaft providing air and light and access to the bath by a staircase down its four sides. A recent reinterpretation of the Cologne *mikveh* has revealed that it incorporates parts of two earlier structures, rebuilt first after the AD 700 earthquake and then again following the 881 Viking attack. Final rebuilding took place some 15 years after the Crusader attack in 1096 (Doppelfeld 1959, 92ff; Gechter & Schütte 2000). There are further examples at Friedberg in Hesse, *c.*1260, and at Andernach on

the Rhine, *c.*1300 (Krautheimer 1927, 187–8, 219–21). The second form had an additional, diagonal, shaft to provide less precipitous access. Speyer, *c.*1110, is the finest example of this type (Hildenbrand 1920), with others at Worms, 1185–86, and Offenburg in Baden (Krautheimer 1927, 148–50, 164–5, 217–18).

The dominant feature of both forms is their great depth: at Speyer the ritual bath is 10m below ground level, at Offenburg 15m, at Cologne slightly more, but at Friedberg 25m. The stairs are also highly impressive: 40 steps down the diagonal shaft at Offenberg and 44 down the central shaft at Andernach (Franzheim 1984, pls 31–7; Krautheimer 1927, figs 62, 82, 83, 84).

The illustrations reproduced by Krautheimer (1927) have greatly influenced the European perception of medieval *mikva'ot*. However, recently German archaeologists have also discovered a number of much smaller medieval *mikva'ot*, characterised by a few steps descending into stone-lined or rock-cut subterranean baths. Designated 'cellar' *mikva'ot*, these are on a much smaller scale than monumental *mikva'ot*. Although some may not be directly linked with communal synagogues, as at Cologne, they could possibly have been connected with synagogues located within private houses. Such private synagogues could have been for communal use, but a 13th-century *takkanot*[10] laid down that 'if one lends (a room for use as) a synagogue ... he may not forbid its use to any person unless he forbids it to all others' (Finkelstein 1924, 130). In fact many medieval synagogues may have started as private facilities, and over time become communal. At Eppingen the cellar *mikveh* served the 15th- or 16th-century synagogue above (Hahn 1987).[11] At Rothenburg-ob-der-Tauber the *mikveh* is under a private house and is close in design to the two found in London, but it is interpreted as serving a nearby synagogue as there is external access to the cellar where the *mikveh* was found (Kunzl 1988, 192–4). The most recent discovery of a cellar *mikveh* in Germany was at the Postplatz of Sondershausen, Thuringia, during 1998–99. It was constructed in *c.*1300 and consists of a small stone-lined bath entered by an L-shaped flight of six stone steps (Nicol 2001, fig 1).

The survey of Jewish Built Heritage in the United Kingdom and Ireland found that although there are several historic *mikva'ot* in the provinces and one in Ireland, no pre-War *mikva'ot* have survived in London (Kadish 2001, 16). Thus the discovery of two medieval examples in the capital is all the more remarkable. To serve the needs of West London's Orthodox Jewish community a new *mikveh* was being built at Naima Jewish Preparatory school at about the same time that the Milk Street *mikveh* was being excavated, demonstrating that the *mikveh* still plays an important role in contemporary Jewish life.[12]

NOTES

[1] See *mikva'ot* (ritual baths) sixth tractate in the order of *Tohorot* (Purities) in the *Mishnah*, chapters 1–10.

[2] Henry succeeded his father at the age of nine in 1216, and he did not take control of the government until 1227. Before Henry's personal rule began his government pursued a supportive policy towards the Jews.

[3] It is possible that the Jewish community might be identified archaeologically by food waste due to their dietary regulations. The absence of eel, pig bones, and shell fish would be expected as these species are considered unclean, see dietary laws in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 6, 26–39. This approach has worked in post-medieval Amsterdam, see Ijzereef 1989, but it is unlikely to be successful in medieval London due to the mixed nature of Christian and Jewish settlement.

[4] Its site is now occupied by the old Public Record Office. Part of the 13th-century chancel arch has been re-erected in the south-east range of the PRO. For a description of the chapel's architecture see the 57th *Report of the Deputy Keeper of Public Records Appendix – the Rolls Chapel* (1896), 19–47.

[5] National grid ref TQ 3249 8131, site code GDH85.

[6] Unpublished Museum of London Archive Report, GDH85, group 32; a final report on this site is being prepared as part of the Guildhall Yard post-excavation programme.

[7] National grid ref TQ 3237 8126, site code GHT00; summary forthcoming in 2002 'Excavation Roundup' in *London Archaeologist*.

[8] This is the minimum depth to provide a sufficient volume of water to have enabled an adult to completely immerse themselves by crouching down.

[9] The *Magna Scola* near the junction of Catte (Gresham) Street and Lothbury was built during the early 12th century. A synagogue was built during the 13th century by Cok son of Hagin the archpresbyter, at the rear of his Catte Street house, which occupied all the frontage between Old Jewry and Ironmonger Lane. In 1280 Aaron son of Vives gave a tenement on the south side Catte Street – between Ironmonger Lane and Milk Street – to the London community as the site of a new synagogue (Hillaby 1992, 100–2, 141–2, 149–50; *idem* 1993, 189–91, 195–7; *idem* 1994, 12). A synagogue to the north of Catte Street, off Basinghall Street, close to the Guildhall had by 1232 been closed by Henry III and converted into a chapel

of St Mary (*LR* 1916, 199; Stow 1908, I, 277–7, 286). Stow refers to a synagogue on the north side of 'Bradstrete' (now Threadneedle Street), which Henry III closed and gave to the master and brethren of the hospital of St Anthony of Vienne (Stow 1908, I, 280, 283; *CR* V 142; *CR* VI 1249, 202). Stow's claim (1908, I, 284) that St Stephen's, Coleman Street 'was sometime a synagogue' cannot be substantiated. Mention is made in 1181 of *'ecclesia sancti Stephani in Coleamanestrate'* (Gibbs 1939, 232, 239), its graveyard in 1228 (*ChR* 1903, 70–1), and St Stephen Coleman in 1276 (*AD* 1890 A, 214). In Pope Nicholas' Taxation of 1291 it is 'St Stephen in the Jewry' (Astle *et al* 1802).

[10] At this time the communal ordinance of a rabbinic synod.

[11] To avoid confusion the German *(mikwe)* for *mikveh* is not used in this text.

[12] *The Mikveh in Our Community*, 2001.

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