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Stuart S. Miller

# At the Intersection of Texts and Material Finds

Stepped Pools, Stone Vessels, and Ritual Purity  
Among the Jews of Roman Galilee

With a Postscript: From Roman Galilee  
to Nineteenth Century Chesterfield, Connecticut

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
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Cover: Stepped Pool #4 at Sepphoris © 2014 Stuart S. Miller

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## Postscript

### From Roman Galilee to Nineteenth-Century Chesterfield, Connecticut

This book originally ended with the closing thoughts of the preceding chapter, but a serendipitous development, just as I was sending the earlier draft of my manuscript to the publisher, has had me thinking and rethinking ever since about the overall significance of what I originally set out to do and how it might have some implications for a period that I never dreamed I would ever be studying, never mind writing about.

In spring 2012, I received an email correspondence from my colleague Nicholas Bellantoni, who, as the state archaeologist, is responsible for all Connecticut Archaeological Preserves. Nicholas and representatives of the “New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society,” an eponymous group of descendants of a Jewish farming community that settled in Chesterfield, Connecticut in the late nineteenth century, were inviting me to visit their historic site, the state’s 24<sup>th</sup> Archaeological Preserve.<sup>1</sup> The group was not aware of my interest in ancient *miqvaḏt*; nor did it dawn on me that this modern site would have any bearing on my immediate scholarly interests. Soon after our correspondence, Nicholas and some representatives of the society met me outside the woods in which the synagogue, the house of the ritual slaughterer (*shochet*, *shohet*), and the community’s creamery once stood. After I was shown the remaining foundation of the burned down synagogue,<sup>2</sup> we walked a short distance down a slight hill to the location of the *shochet*’s house. I recall looking down over the remains of the eastern wall of what was once the basement in disbelief. What I saw was a clearly demarcated concrete pool, with one step exposed (Fig. 16), which reminded me more of the ancient, plastered stone pools of Sepphoris and Roman Palestine than of a modern tiled *miqveh* (Figs. 17 and 18).

I immediately realized the importance of what I was viewing and excitedly related to the others that the only excavated *miqveh* I knew of that was of approximately the same vintage belonged to the Lloyd Street Synagogue in Baltimore,

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1 The site was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2012, thanks to the efforts of the legally reactivated “NEHFES,” which maintains a very informative website: <http://newenglandhebrewfarmers.org/>.

2 For a picture of the synagogue in its better days and other photos and information about the community and the organization, see the NEHFES website.



Fig. 16 Chesterfield miqveh prior to excavation  
© 2012 University of Connecticut Chesterfield Field School.



Fig. 17 A modern, late 20<sup>th</sup>-century miqveh  
© 2012 University of Connecticut Chesterfield Field School.



Fig. 18 Early 20<sup>th</sup>-century miqveh, below 5 Allen St., Lower East Side, NYC  
 © 2014 Celia Bergoffen Ph.D., R. P. A. Reproduced with permission.

a find that had been unearthed by Esther Doyle Reed just a few years earlier.<sup>3</sup> (I was unaware at the time that Celia Bergoffen had excavated a *miqveh* from the early 1900s on the Lower East Side.<sup>4</sup> See Fig. 18.) My follow-up comment was something along the lines of, “But that is Baltimore, this is Chesterfield, what is this doing here!?” I then explained that a turn-of-the-twentieth-century *miqveh* from a long

3 Remains of the *miqveh* were found in 2001 but its excavation was not completed until 2011. See, most recently, Esther Doyle Read, *Archaeological Investigation of the Lloyd Street Synagogue Mikveh, 18BC143, Baltimore, Maryland* (Baltimore Center for Urban Archaeology Research Series 68; Baltimore, Md.: University of Maryland, 2012). Also, see the report in the *Baltimore Sun* dated to February 13, 2011: [http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2011-02-13/news/bs-md-lloyd-synagogue-mikveh-0207-20110213\\_1\\_mikveh-jewish-ritual-bath-lloyd-street-synagogue](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2011-02-13/news/bs-md-lloyd-synagogue-mikveh-0207-20110213_1_mikveh-jewish-ritual-bath-lloyd-street-synagogue).

4 See Gerard R. Wolfe, Jo Renee Fine, and Norman Borden, *The Synagogues of New York's Lower East Side: A Retrospective and Contemporary View* (2d ed; New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 29 f., and Celia Bergoffen, “Phase IA Archaeological Assessment Report for the Proprietary Baths and Possible Mikvah at 5 Allen Street, Borough of Manhattan” (New York: The Eldridge Street Project, Inc., 1997). This *miqveh* is tiled and, as a consequence, is considerably more modern in appearance than either the Lloyd Street or Chesterfield *miqva'ot*. See Fig. 18 and discussion below. Interestingly, a good number of *miqva'ot* belonging to Spanish-Portuguese Jews and dating to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have been discovered in the Caribbean and in Brazil (Recife). See Laura Arnold Leibman, “Early American *Mikvaot*: Ritual Baths as the Hope of Israel,” *RAE* 1 (2009), 109–45.

forgotten and defunct farming community is unusual precisely because American rabbis of that time were decrying the neglect of the ritual immersion attending marital purity laws.—I subsequently realized that these were usually *urban* rabbis, such as Bernard Illowy in mid-nineteenth-century Baltimore, or later, in the early twentieth century, Leo Jung in New York City, David Miller in Oakland, California, and Elozar Meir Preil in Elizabeth, New Jersey!<sup>5</sup>—In any event, I was already certain that an extant *miqveh* from this period would offer a new angle for studying the religious life of early Jewish farmers in America. The Chesterfield community, after all, was founded only a few years after one of the first synagogues in Connecticut, Congregation Beth Israel of Hartford, which built a *miqveh* by 1852, had officially renounced Orthodoxy.<sup>6</sup> Nicholas and I quickly worked out the logistics and put in motion a plan to co-direct, under the aegis of the University of Connecticut, an excavation of the *miqveh* and the environs of the house of the *shochet* that summer.

Some background I am sure will be helpful. Chesterfield was the first of several Jewish farming communities in Connecticut established with the financial support of the Bavarian philanthropist Baron Maurice de Hirsch, who was determined to reroute Jews escaping persecution in Czarist Russia away from the cities, where they already competed for jobs and lived in crowded accommodations, to a new life working the land.<sup>7</sup> In 1890, a Russian Jew named Haiman Panken purchased some thirteen hundred acres in Chesterfield and nearby Salem. Panken and perhaps nine other Russian Jewish immigrant families soon settled in Chesterfield. These Russian Jewish families left the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, New York, and were led by Harris (Hirsch) Kaplan, an erstwhile whiskey merchant from Pereyaslov, Ukraine, who had studied in the Bialystok Yeshiva. By April 1891, some fifty-two Jewish farmers and their families were living within a five mile radius.<sup>8</sup> The new residents of Chesterfield became vegetable, poultry, and dairy farmers, whose milk and cream were sold by the creamery. Many supplemented their meager incomes with sewing piece work, suspenders, wallets, and hats. The community, which originally called itself “Society Agudas Achim,” adopted the more Americanized “New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society,” when, in 1892,

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5 See Joshua Hoffman, “The Institution of the Mikvah in America,” in *Total Immersion: A Mikvah Anthology* (ed. Rivkah Slonim; Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1996), 76–92. Cf. Jenna Weissman Joselit, *New York’s Jewish Jews: The Orthodox Community in the Interwar Years* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 115–22. Cf. Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004), 50 f.

6 The synagogue was established as an orthodox institution in 1847. By the early 1870s the reformers within the congregation had become the majority. See David G. Dalin and Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Making a Life: Building a Community* (New York and London: Homes & Meier, 1997), 34–47.

7 See Samuel J. Lee, *Moses of the New World: The Work of Baron de Hirsch* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1970).

8 According to an account in the *Jewish Messenger*, January 29, 1892.



Baron de Hirsch funded the construction of Connecticut's first rural synagogue on newly purchased land. The fund also loaned money to the newly created "New England Hebrew Farmers Creamery Association" to build the creamery, which eventually went bankrupt when many families developed thriving summer boarding homes to which the farmers preferred selling their dairy products.<sup>9</sup>

The Jewish farmers who settled in Chesterfield formed one of a handful of communities funded in Connecticut by the Baron de Hirsch Fund, going back to the late nineteenth century. But unlike Colchester, and, further north, the "Rockville Settlement" (Rockville, Vernon, and Ellington), which grew and continued to thrive after World War II, Chesterfield never numbered more than five hundred persons and began to decline long before the war, dwindling to just a few families by the mid-1930s.<sup>10</sup> It is this that makes Chesterfield so intriguing, as it offers historians a rare snapshot of a distinct stratum in the history of the Jewish farming communities that were established by Hirsch, not only in Connecticut, but also in New Jersey, upstate New York, some western states, Texas (Galveston), western Canada, Argentina, and elsewhere.<sup>11</sup>

While the locating of an intact *miqveh* in a rural agricultural community in Connecticut from this period was significant in and of itself, the excavation of the ritual bath turned up a number of surprises. As readers of this volume already know, the main challenge in maintaining a *miqveh* is the provision of an adequate

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9 For a beautiful impressionistic memoir and for historical background, see Micki Savin, *I Remember Chesterfield* (Bloomington, Ind.: AuthorHouse, 2005). See too, Dana L. Kline, "To Begin Again: The Russian Jewish Migration to America with Special Emphasis on Chesterfield, Connecticut" (Master's Thesis, Connecticut College, 1976), 62–86.

10 The Baron de Hirsch Fund was affiliated with the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society. For more information on the communities referred to, see Seymour S. Weisman, *The Jewish Community of Colchester, Ct: A Century of Modern Shtetl Living* (West Palm Beach, Fla.: Hadeira Press, 1995); Alexander Feinsilver and Lillian Feinsilver, "Colchester's Yankee Jews After Half a Century," *Commentary* 20 (1955): 64–70; and Mark A. Raider, "Jewish Immigrant Farmers in the Connecticut River Valley: The Rockville Settlement," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 47:2 (1995): 213–42. In general, see Morton L. Gordon, "The History of the Jewish Farmer in Eastern Connecticut" (Ph.D. diss., Yeshiva University, 1974); the short overview by Mary M. Donohue and Kenneth Libo, "Hebrew Tillers of the Soil: Connecticut's Jewish Farms," *Hog River Journal* (Spring 2006), n.p., online: <http://www.hogrivers.org/issues/v04n02/tillers.htm>; and Mary M. Donohue and Briann G. Greenfield, *A Life of the Land: Connecticut's Jewish Farmers* (West Hartford, CT: Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford, 2010).

11 Of all of these, the communities in New Jersey have been most extensively studied, but, interestingly, the religious life of all of the settlements has not been given adequate treatment. This is why the *miqveh* at Chesterfield is particularly important, although there were others, not only in Connecticut, but in New Jersey. See below, n. 21. For the larger religious picture in New Jersey, see Joseph Brandes and Martin Douglas, *Immigrants to Freedom: Jewish Communities in Rural New Jersey since 1882* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1971), 207–53. As in Chesterfield, the need for synagogues was felt almost immediately in the New Jersey communities, particularly for their social and cultural importance. See Gertrude W. Dubrovsky, *The Land Was Theirs: Jewish Farmers in the Garden State* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1992) and the 2007 film of the same name.

supply of valid water. Typically, modern *miqva'ot* are supplied with rain water that flows from the roof into two separate basins which are used to render the water of the actual *miqveh* valid. One basin is a *bor hashaqah*, sometimes called in modern times an *òsar*, whose forty *se'ah* of rain water are brought into contact<sup>12</sup> through a pipe with drawn water used to fill the *miqveh*, thus making it *kasher*. The other is a *bor zeri'ah* whose 40 *se'ah* of water have been “seeded” with drawn water, that is, tap water that forces the whole to overflow through another pipe and fill the *miqveh*.<sup>13</sup> Modern authorities often insist on some combination of both of these methods although one technically would be halakhically sufficient.<sup>14</sup>

From the outset, it was evident that the Chesterfield *miqveh* did not have a *bor* of either type, and in this respect resembled the ancient pools that have been excavated and described above. But unlike the ancient ritual baths, which were constructed either prior to or when rabbinic *halakhah* was first being formulated, and, therefore, were not in all likelihood built in accordance with views of the rabbis, builders of modern *miqva'ot* have a vast, well developed rabbinic tradition to consult. My best guess was that the pool was fed directly with rain water that flowed from the roof or from a nearby stream through a pipe. The latter turned out to be the case. We in fact uncovered and followed the pipe a distance of fifty feet in the direction of a local brook. The water flowed, via gravity, through the pipe and poured out of an outlet in the wall a couple of feet above the pool into a conduit in the stone ledge below (Figs. 19 and 20). The conduit was more than utilitarian. It very likely ensured that the airborne water returned to its “natural” state by forcing it to flow for a short distance along the ground, that is, by the process known as *hamshakhah* (“conduction”).<sup>15</sup>

12 Modern literature on the subject, particularly of a devotional nature, frequently emphasizes the connection between the word *hashaqah* and *neshiqah* (“kissing”), perhaps because the ritual bath is seen as essential to marital harmony. The two Hebrew terms, although linguistically related, obviously do not have the same meaning, so this must be considered a folk, or, more likely, a modern, homiletical etymology. It might be interesting to study its origins, however.

13 For more on these mechanisms, see above, pp. 68–70.

14 There are also some communities that utilize a variation on a *bor hashaqah* known as *bor 'al gabbe bor*, which is a workaround arrived at by Habad *hasidim* for halakhic difficulties that some authorities have raised with both a *bor hashaqah* and a *bor zeri'ah*. See Schneur Zalman Lesches, *Understanding Mikvah: An Overview of Mikvah Construction* (Montreal: Kollel Menachem of Montreal, 2001), 53–57.

15 See above, p. 94. The flow of the water out of the pipe through the air, what is referred to in halakhic terms as a *hefseq 'avir* (“interruption via air”), would not necessarily have been halakhically problematic, but modern authorities often insist that all water that is conducted to a *miqveh* be subjected to *hamshakhah*, i. e., flow along the ground before entering the pool, even on concrete. In this instance the conduit is three handbreadths (*tefahim*) long and one handbreadth wide, precisely the length required by most halakhic authorities. On *hefseq 'avir*, see *b. Zevah*. 25b. On the requirement of *hamshakhah* as a precaution and the extent of the area over which the water must flow, see Blau (Bloi), *Introduction to Miqva'ot*, 260. Cf. Katz, *Miqveh Mayim*, 3:228 f., where he also discusses the permissibility of concrete as opposed to earth for the process.



Fig. 19 The author snaking the pipe leading to the water source for the Chesterfield *miqveh*. Just below my right foot is the channel which received the water from the pipe and led it into the *miqveh*. The channel is also visible in Fig. 20. © 2012 University of Connecticut Chesterfield Field School

One unusual feature of the Chesterfield *miqveh* was totally unexpected. As the students dug, it became evident that the pool was completely wood-lined (Fig. 20). I was familiar with Talmudic passages and later commentaries that suggest that a woman should not immerse while standing upon wood, either because it was unsafe or because the wood was susceptible to *tumah*.<sup>16</sup> Even the sixteenth-century code of Jewish law, the *Shulkhan 'Arukh*, expressly prohibits immersion while standing on wooden stairways in a *miqveh*.<sup>17</sup> But, as Nehemia Plotkin has shown, the view of the *Shulkhan 'Arukh* may have been based upon the early medieval authorities (*ri'shonim*) of Provence, but later rabbinic authorities along the Polish-Russian border, evidently in response to local custom, found earlier, alternative halakhic justifications for allowing wood on the floor of a *miqveh*.<sup>18</sup>

16 See *b. Nid.* 66b. The question that arises among the commentators is whether wood contracts *midras* (lit., “treading,” but including all forms of physical contact) impurity. See Nehemia Plotkin, “The Custom in Ashkenaz of Immersing (while Standing) upon Boards” (Hebrew), *Sinai* 117 (1996): 124–38.

17 *Shulkhan 'Arukh, Yoreh De'ah*, 198:31.

18 Plotkin, “Custom in Ashkenaz,” 138, n. 20.



Fig. 20 The excavated Chesterfield miqveh with the remains of its wood lining. © 2012 University of Connecticut Chesterfield Field School

Apparently, this view circulated as well, as it turns out that this is not the only wood-lined *miqveh* from this era in the United States; the ca. 1845 *miqveh* from Lloyd Street in Baltimore, was also lined with wood.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Information concerning the wood lining of the Baltimore *miqveh* was provided by Esther Doyle Read. It is interesting that the use of wood to line a *miqveh* was apparently adopted not only by East European Jews but also by the German Jews who originally comprised Congregation Nidchei Yisroel (a.k.a. Baltimore Hebrew Congregation) and built the synagogue on Lloyd Street ca. 1845. The congregation was already under the spiritual leadership of Rabbi Abraham Rice, a Bavarian who is regarded as the first ordained rabbi in the United States. Rice left the congregation in 1849 largely because of its reformist trends. He returned in 1862 but died shortly thereafter. The congregation eventually became Reform. See Israel Tabak, “Rabbi Abraham Rice of Baltimore,” *Tradition* 7 (1965), 100–120.

In pondering who might have used the Chesterfield *miqveh*, or, more precisely, for whom it was originally built, some readers may instinctively conclude that it was installed in the *shochet's* house expressly for the use of his wife; after all, it was unlikely that the community could have otherwise attracted a ritual slaughterer who also served as Torah reader and cantor. Such was not the case among the New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society, whose Yiddish synagogue ledger notes the names of the *shochetim* (*shohatim*) who served in 1911 and 1912 and records the amount the women of the community were charged for the warming and use of the *miqveh*. Moreover, an article in the southeastern Connecticut newspaper *The New London Day*, dated March 24, 1910, reports the settlement of a dispute between the occupant of the house at the time, apparently the *shochet*, and the women of the community of “Chesterfield Hebrews,” who demanded access to the bathing facility which they had built “at their own expense.”<sup>20</sup>

It is apparent that in turn-of-the-twentieth-century Chesterfield, Connecticut, ritual immersion continued to have meaning, at least where marital life was concerned. The same appears to have been true in nearby Colchester as well as in several of the New Jersey agricultural communities from this period, although we do not have the material remains of their *miqva'ot*.<sup>21</sup> Evidently, some of the farming communities that Baron de Hirsch helped establish did their best to preserve a ritual that undoubtedly provided continuity and order to their otherwise fragile existence in a new land. It is striking that, unlike many of their counterparts in the cities during the same period, the original settlers in some of these farming communities were more traditional in religious outlook and observance and less

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20 See: <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1915&dat=19100324&id=0vIgAAAAIBAJ&sjid=eXQFAAAAIBAJ&pg=4810,2301483>. It is unclear whether the women were referring to themselves or to earlier women at Chesterfield. Based on a reference in a Yiddish letter from 1915 that I uncovered in the archives of the Greater Hartford Jewish Historical Society, there is some reason to believe that the *miqveh* was built shortly after the founding of the community in the early 1890s. I thank Avinoam Patt and Samuel Kassow for their insights into the nuances of the Yiddish. Assuming the letter is referring to the earlier period in the history of the community, it is, of course, possible that an earlier *miqveh* is intended, perhaps in the same location, as suggested to me by Nancy Savin, President of the New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society (who is a descendant of Harris Kaplan and the daughter of Micki and Isi Savin, see n. 9). On the other hand, it does not seem likely that the community would have gone to such great lengths to build and rebuild a *miqveh* or had the resources to do so. The small finds that we excavated in and around the *miqveh* were not sufficient to establish a date for the construction of the *miqveh*. We are hoping other documents or material remains will turn up!

21 Colchester had two *miqva'ot*, one of which dated to the early twentieth century. See Alexander Feinsilver and Lillian Feinsilver, “Colchester’s Yankee Jews,” 66, and Weisman, *Jewish Community of Colchester*, 24. For *miqva'ot* in Alliance and in Vineland, New Jersey, see Brandes and Douglas, *Immigrants to Freedom*, 210, 238, and 300.

receptive to reformist trends and assimilation.<sup>22</sup> Remarkable too is the mission the Chesterfield community in particular established for itself already in 1890, which reads as follows:<sup>23</sup>

We, the subscribers, for the purpose of perpetuating the cause of Judaism in all its essential purity, and cherishing and promoting its great and fundamental principle in the Rock upon which our undying Faith is founded, the belief in and worship of one God, hereby unite to form a Society for public worship according to the principles and practices of our Faith.

The determination of the original settlers in Chesterfield and other communities to maintain ritual immersion places the complaints of the urban rabbis who lamented the falling off of what, in the modern period, is referred to, euphemistically, as “family purity” or *tohorat hamishpahah*,<sup>24</sup> in a different light. After all, these rabbis actually acknowledge that many women, for instance, on the Lower East Side, were abstaining from sexual relations during the “unclean days” and were immersing in bathtubs, non-hygienic makeshift *miqva’ot*, and even pools in local Turkish baths.<sup>25</sup> The urban rabbis’ preoccupation with *halakhically* acceptable practices should not mislead us from the reality that many Jews attempted to preserve at least some aspect of the monthly spousal separation and/or ritualistic purification. We witnessed the same phenomenon in Chapter Ten with regard to women in Egypt in the time of Maimonides and in other medieval venues: Alongside emerging rabbinic norms, there were popular, no doubt, preexisting rites that testify to the *meaning* ritual purity continued to have for some ordinary Jews—and to the *complexity* of Jewish observance.<sup>26</sup>

The early, Jewish settlers in rural Chesterfield, however, built a “proper” *miqveh*, testifying to their dedication to halakhic observance. The important thing to bear in mind is that these rites, even in their lesser or non-halakhic forms, did

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22 Cf. Raider, “Jewish Immigrant Farmers,” 225–30, who contrasts the explicit insistence of the founders of the Ellington synagogue, Keneseth Israel, in 1913, on adhering to traditional synagogue practices with the earlier, and similarly emphatic, move away from tradition by Congregation Beth Israel in Hartford.

23 Town of Montville Land Records, 1892, now quoted on the commemorative monument marking the site where the synagogue once stood.

24 See Tirzah Meacham (leBeit Yoreh), “An Abbreviated History of the Development of the Jewish Menstrual Laws,” in *Women and Water: Menstruation in Jewish Life and Law* (ed. Rahel R. Wasserfall; Hanover, N. H.: University of New England Press, 1999), 32 f., who suggests that the expression was first used by the Neo-Orthodox in nineteenth-century Germany in response to the Reform movement’s objections to *halakhot* pertaining to menstruation.

25 See Manheimer, “The Sanitary Conditions of Mikvehs and Turkish Baths,” and, idem, “Mikveh Baths of New York City,” in *The Survey, Volume 32* (ed. Paul Underwood Kellogg; New York, Survey Associates Inc., 1914), 77.

26 Not to mention that Rambam had to defend his view and clarify for the ignorant folk in Alexandria that the bathing of a *ba'al qeri* was a *minhag* and only preceded prayer. See above, p. 236, and Chapter Eleven, n. 75.

not disappear altogether in challenging circumstances. Above, I posited that in periods of disruption of the social fabric, everyday persons are more likely to intensify their dedication to traditional rituals rather than to abrogate them.<sup>27</sup> The construction of *miqva'ot* in remote farming communities such as Chesterfield that were established in rather trying times by poor Jewish farmers who were escaping persecution and resettling in a strange land reminds us that neither the modern, nor, as argued throughout this book, the ancient historian can afford to succumb to the numbers game, assessing the significance of particular rituals exclusively by looking to how many people *seemed* to adhere to them at any given time. To be sure, quantitative analysis is important to historians and sociologists, but it only tells part of the story and can distract us from an accurate appreciation of the changing, adaptive, and enduring meanings of rituals, whose appearance in the oddest of times and places testifies to a tenacity that itself warrants scholarly attention. Indeed, the death knell of specific rites and even of entire Jewish communities that have struggled to preserve their identities in foreign and unfamiliar environments has been sounded many times in the past and continues to be broadcast in the present. As we have seen, such a defeatist view has also been projected onto the post-destruction period, *mutatis mutandis*, by some scholarly interpreters today.<sup>28</sup> But this way of assessing the relatively recent past or the period to which this book is devoted is uni-dimensional, as it fails to explain the beliefs and practices that did survive and, in the case of the ancient rabbis, the nature of the “Judaism” that served as a backdrop to their emergence in the first place.

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27 See above, Chapter Seven.

28 See above, pp. 202 f.