The Toparchy of Salome, Sister of King Herod, and its Towns: Archelais, Phasaelis, and Livias

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Abstract

Upon his death, King Herod bequeathed his kingdom to his three sons, Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Herod Philip. Part of the kingdom was bequeathed to his sister, Salome. Caesar Augustus's confirmation of Herod's will established, in practice, another toparchy within the Jordan Valley. This toparchy included the village of Archelais, established by Archelaus and transferred to Salome when Archelaus was removed from government in 6 AD; Phasaelis, a city established by Herod in 8 BC in memory of his brother Phasael only several years before Herod's death; and Livias, a town that began as an estate awarded to Salome in Herod's last will, and was subsequently named for the wife of Roman Caesar Augustus.

After Salome's death the Toparchy of Salome located north of the toparchy of Jericho in the northern Jordan Valley, was transferred to Livia, wife of Roman Caesar Augustus in 10 AD, and in 29 AD it was annexed once again to the territory encompassed by the toparchy of Jericho. The Toparchy of Salome was formed in three stages: The first was the establishment of the city of Phasaelis. In the second stage Salome's estate was added, and in the third stage Archelais was added in 6 AD. The combination of the three settlements created a territorial continuity, while Salome headed the administrative unit and received the status of governor. This made it possible to define the territory held by Salome as a toparchy. Although it only existed for a short period of time, it bears witness to an independent administrative entity governed by Salome, sister of King Herod, concomitant with the rule of Herod's three sons.

Keywords: Herod; Salome; Archelais; Phasaelis; Livias

Several days before his death, King Herod changed his will and bequeathed part of his kingdom to his sister Salome. Josephus Flavius writes: "...while Jamnia, Azotus and Phasaelis were given over to his sister Salome along with five hundred thousand pieces of coined silver" (Antiquities of the Jews XVII:188-189). Indeed, upon his death Salome received that which was promised to her and even more, and Josephus Flavius writes: "Salome, besides the legacy which the king had left her in his will, was declared mistress of Jamnia, Azotus and Phasaelis; Caesar also made her a present of the palace of Ascalon her revenue from all sources amounting to sixty talents; her estates, however, were placed under the jurisdiction of Archelaus" (Wars of the Jews II:98). Herod's will and Caesar's confirmation of the will formed, in fact, the Toparchy of Salome. Josephus Flavius attests to the toparchy when describing Salome's will, in which she bequeathed all her property to Livia, wife of Roman Caesar Augustus. He writes: "His successor in office was Marcus Ambivulos during whose administration Salome, the sister of King Herod, died. To Julia she bequeathed Jamnia and its territory
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Fig. 1: Area of the toparchy – location of the three sites

...as for Salome, she at her death bequeathed her toparchy to Julia, the wife of Augustus, together with Jamnia and the palm-groves of Phasaelis" (War. II:167). The possibility that the term "toparchy" refers to the city of Jamnia is slight, as the name is preceded by the word "and", originally και, and therefore this is not a valid option. Furthermore, Jamnia was a single town and it could not have had the status of a toparchy, rather only of a polis.

In this paper1 I wish to show that the Toparchy of Salome was formed in three stages: It began with the establishment of the city of Phasaelis by Herod in 8 BC (Netzer 1996); then the territory of Phasaelis was enhanced by the agricultural estate she inherited from Herod in 4 BC; and in the third stage Archeleis was annexed to it in 6 AD, when Archelaus was removed from government. Upon Salome's death, in 10 BC, the toparchy was bequeathed to Julia, who held it until her death in 29 AD. Notably, Azotus (Ashdod) is not mentioned among the list of cities given to Julia, as appears in Herod's will to his sister, and it may have been detracted by Caesar and become an independent city (polis), however there is no testimony or evidence of this. I estimate that Azotus was part of Salome's property.

The toparchy existed for a short period of time and ended with the death of Julia, when the territories she inherited were annexed to the toparchy of Jericho. The new toparchy eventually included the three towns of Archelais, Phasaelis, and Livia (Fig. 1). These three towns are together with Phasaelis, which in the plain, and Archelais, where palm are planted in very great numbers and the dates are of the highest quality" (Ant. XVIII:31).

1 The paper is based on the author's thesis for a Master's degree, on the topic of towns in the Jordan Valley during the Second Temple period (Hizmi 2002), supervised by Prof. Ehud Netzer (The Institute for Archeology) and Dr. Oded Ir-Shay (The Department of Jewish History). Notably, since the thesis was written and published additional information has been revealed in excavations we conducted at Phasaelis and these are presented here for the first time.
mentioned by Pliny the Elder, in his compilation *Natural History*, as located in the same region (Pliny, *N. H.*, XIII, ix, 44).

In addition, I shall try to prove that the town of Livias, mentioned by Pliny, was located on the west bank of the Jordan River. From the works of Josephus Flavius and Pliny, we know of only one toparchy in the Jordan Valley, the toparchy of Jericho. To date, the research has made no reference to another toparchy, on one hand, or to the identification of Pliny's Livias, on the other. In this paper I mean to discuss these two issues from their historical and archeological aspects. From the historical aspect, the toparchy's stages of development will be discussed, from its establishment and until it was bequeathed to Julia, wife of Caesar Augustus; from the archeological aspect I shall review the archeological finds from the three towns in the Toparchy of Salome. The archeological findings appear to support the literary sources and to enhance the information available on development of towns in the Jordan Valley towards the end of the Second Temple period. Archeological excavations were held at two of these towns, Archelais and Phasaelis.

**The administrative division of Judea in Herod's time**

Only few historical sources from the Second Temple period deal with the issue of the division of the Land of Israel. The researchers are disagreed as to the division. Information on the internal division of Judea, from the Roman conquest until the destruction of the Second Temple, is derived mainly from the works of Josephus Flavius and Pliny the Elder, and to a certain degree also from Rabbinical sources.

The secondary division of the Jewish state into toparchies was based on the ancient division. Here we must explain and define the term toparchy (in Greek – τοπαρχία and in Latin – Territorium). The toparchy is a basic administrative unit that encompassed several villages. One of these towns served as the center or capital and it was called the "city and mother" or "village and mother" (i.e., mother city). The toparchy was headed by a governor on behalf of the ruler – a toparches or toparch (τοπαρχής, district head, governor). The political-legal status of the toparchy was determined by the ruler.

As stated, Josephus Flavius and Pliny list only one toparchy in the Jordan Valley – the toparchy of Jericho (Fig. 2). We also learn from Josephus Flavius, as we shall see below, that during the time of Herod's heirs they changed the capital cities or the main cities of the toparchies in part of the kingdom, and they also changed the names of the towns.

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2 On the administrative partition in the Hellenistic-Roman period see extensive discussion in Stern A. 1973, 241–244; see also Klein 1939; Avi Yonah 1963; Stern M. 1968; and Cotton 2007.
Salome's relationship with King Herod, Caesar Augustus, and his wife Julia

Salome was the daughter of Antipater and Cypros and the younger sister of Phasael and King Herod, sister to Joseph and Pheroras (War. I:181). She was probably born in 57 BC and died in 10 BC, during the rule of governor Marcus Ambivius, which lasted from 9–12 BC (Ant. XVIII:13). Her personal, social, and political life during the Herodian dynasty was complicated, stormy, and involved intrigues against the rest of the Hasmonean branch and against her complex family related to her brother, King Herod.

She had a particularly murky relationship with Archelaus, Herod's son. She travelled with Archelaus and her two sons to Rome, to speak to Caesar against Archelaus in order to prevent him from becoming governor of Judea. Salome, in her special and typical way, expressed her wishes through her son Antipater (Ant. XVII:219 ff.; War. II:26). The dismal and wary relationship between the two continued after the death of King Herod and was evident in actions taken by Archelaus at the beginning of his rule,
such as renewal of the palace in Jericho and establishment of Archelais, both aimed at fortifying his status and taking control of the territory between Jericho and Phasaelis.

She had a good relationship with Julia, wife of Caesar Augustus, and with Caesar himself. With Julia she corresponded and consulted. For example, she accepted Julia's advice to marry Alexas, as demanded by Herod, to prevent a dispute with her brother and also in respect and appreciation of Caesar's wife (*Ant.* XVII:10). The height of the relationship between the two was manifested in the form of Salome's will to Julia, in which she bequeathed to her all her property, leaving nothing for her own family (*War.* II:167; *Ant.* XVIII:31). The strong positive relationship with Julia appears to have reflected on her relationship with Caesar himself, to her benefit. Caesar approved her part in Herod's will and added to it the royal palace in Ascalon (*Ant.* XVII:321; *War.* II:98). Moreover, once Archelaus was removed from government Caesar added Archelais to her estate and in this way approved and expanded her territory, creating a territorial continuity.

This act constitutes, in effect, the establishment of her autonomous toparchy. From these descriptions, despite the slight differences, it is clear that Salome, who was awarded the royal palace in Ascalon, enjoyed an independent-autonomous status, although her estate was under the dominion of Archelaus. Another testament that refers to the Toparchy of Salome is Pliny's description of date growing in Judea. He writes that one of the quality species that grows there are Caryotae dates. This species grows not only in Jericho but also in Archelaus, Phasael, and Livias: "nec in tota sed Hiericunte maxime quamquam Iaudata et Archelaide et Phaselide atque Liviade, gentis eiusdem convallibus". ["But not only are these trees abundant and bear largely in Judaea, but also the most famous are found there, and not in the whole of that country, but specially in Jericho although those growing in the valley of Archelais and Phasaelis and Livias in the same country are also highly spoken of"] (*Pliny, N. H.*, XII, ix, 44).

According to his testimony, the three towns mentioned are located in the same region of Judea. The term "country" has a double meaning, both geographical and administrative. Pliny often uses double meanings, such as in the term "Judea" (Stern M. 1968:219). Hence, in this case as well it is reasonable and logical to assume that Pliny intended a double meaning as suggested above, since the three towns were on the same side of the Jordan River. These three towns constitute the customary balanced order of a toparchy (Phasaelis was established as a city) and they form a territorial continuity.

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3 The Latin version and Translation is from Rackham, ibid.
The towns within the Toparchy of Salome

As stated, the Toparchy of Salome encompassed three towns. I shall review in short what is known about their establishment and development, with an emphasis on the Second Temple period. Although some of the excavations performed in the three sites within the toparchy were partial, this review is significant for understanding the residential expansion in this part of the Jordan Valley during the Second Temple period.

Archelais (Khirbet al-Beiyudat)

Archelais in ancient sources: The village of Archelais was first mentioned by Josephus Flavius, who described the actions taken by Archelaus in the Jordan Valley at the beginning of his rule. He writes: "...and diverted half the water that served to irrigate the village of Neara leading it into a plain that had been planted by him with palm-trees. He also created a village and gave it the name of Archelais" (Ant. XVII:340). After his removal from government, Archelais was awarded in 6 BC to Salome who, as stated, subsequently bequeathed her entire estate to Julia (Ant. XVII:31).

Pliny the Elder mentions Archelais as one of the settlements in the Jordan Valley known for its marvelous fruit (Pliny, N. H. XIII, ix, c); Archelais is also mentioned in sources subsequent to the destruction of the temple: in the Tabula Peutingeriana (Weber 1976; Finkelstein 1978); in a Syriac document from the 4th century BC, as one of the towns damaged in an earthquake (Russell 1980); and in the Madaba Map (Avi-Yonah 1952; Bahat 1996; Kadmon 1996).

Who was Archelaus?

Archelaus was the eldest son of King Herod and his Samaritan wife Malthace, brother of Antipas and Olympias (War. I:562). He was educated in Rome together with his brother Philip, and these energetic young men set out on the path to success, for which their brother Antipater sought to eliminate them. Due to the acts against his sister Salome, Herod incorporated changes in his will, excluding Archelaus and Philip (War. I:646). Following Antipater's attempt on King Herod's life, the king changed his will once again and appointed Archelaus heir of the kingdom (War. I:664). After Herod's death, the military and the people convened in the amphitheater of Jericho and on this occasion Ptolemy, entrusted by Herod with all financial matters and with the king's signet ring, read Herod's will appointing Archelaus king and it was Archelaus who organized Herod's funeral ceremony at Herodium (War. I:666-673). After the days of mourning and an opulent feast held for the people, as customary among the Jews, he ascended to the temple and promised that he would be good to the people. Then the people presented demands that Archelaus was unwilling to accept, particularly that he
cancel the appointment of the High Priest appointed by his father Herod. Archelaus was compelled to leave for Rome and sought to calm the people with the army's help, but they stoned the latter so he sent the army against them and killed some 3,000 people, and this occurred on the Passover (War. II:11–13). Archelaus's relationship with his family was very bad, particularly with his brother Antipas and with Salome, who asked Caesar to prevent Archelaus's nomination as king in accordance with Herod's will (War. II:14). The representatives of the people objected to this nomination as well. However, despite his opponent's allegations Caesar eventually nominated Archelaus ethnarch of half the kingdom, with the addition that if he should prove worthy he would be crowned king. Archelaus did not fulfill these expectations and was cruel to both Jews and Samarians whereby, after nine years in government, Caesar banished him to the city of Vienna in Gaul (War. II:111–113).

Identification of the site: The first to suggest the identification of Archelais with the site of Khirbet al-Beiyudat was Guthe (Guthe 1911). He was followed by Porat (1990, 19-20) and Piccirillo and Alliatta (1999). Other scholars suggested identifying Archelais as located north of Khirbet al-Beiyudat, for example Abel (Abel 1913:249). Avi-Yonah suggested identifying it with Khirbet Auja el-Tahta (Avi-Yonah 1953:121). Klein suggested Khirbet Auja al-Foqa (Klein 1939b, 92). Conder and Kitchener suggested Tel Mazar (Conder and Kitchener 1882:387). Another proposed identification is that of Zertal, who suggested perceiving the towns of Phasaelis and Archelais as one (Zertal, 1991:9; 1996, site 248).

Description of the excavations: A rectangular tower was revealed at the center of the site, 17 m. long and 14.3 m. wide, with a height of 9 m. Its walls are made of hewn stone and they are about 1.2 m. thick (Fig. 3). A layer of white plaster has remained on some of the stones and some still bear their original red paint. Of the upper part of the
walls only the inner layer remains since the hewn stones were used to build the church in the Byzantine period. The tower is divided into long narrow rectangular rooms. Two of the rooms have been excavated and a layer of local stones, arch stones, was found, covered by fragments of a mosaic floor and pottery from the Byzantine period. Arch stones were also found outside the structure, with remnants of white plaster and red paint. Beside the southern wall, a courtyard tiled with stone panels was found, with column drums of varied circumference and a burnt layer. On this level, fragments of knife parted lamps were found, as well as coins dated from the time of the Roman governors before the destruction of the Second Temple.

Near the temple a water pool was revealed, sunk in the ground and plastered with thick gray plaster typical of the Herodian period. The bottom of the pool is graded and two steps remain in it, near the eastern wall. The pool is filled by a conduit on its northwestern side and the spillover was drained eastwards, to the agricultural fields. North of the tower and of the pool a magnificent residential building was found with two entrances, to the north and to the east (Fig. 4). At the center of the building is an unroofed yard split by a whitewashed stylobate, on which remains the base of a column with remnants of art on its edges. Surrounding the yard are rooms of which some have been badly preserved due to erosion. Pottery was found in the rooms, dated from the Second Temple period, as well as a burnt beam of palm wood. Beside the building, to the west, a ritual bath was found, constructed of two pools linked by a shallow upper conduit. The pools are of similar dimensions. Only one of the pools was fully excavated and it is to be assumed that the unexcavated pool has steps leading to the bottom of the pool. One of the pools is accessed by a canal, and before it reaches the pool there is a round settling basin (Fig. 5).
North of the elaborate residential building is a large complex, covering an area of 16 dunams, which in my opinion served as a road station for those making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Fig. 6). The complex is enclosed by walls of local stone and by hewn stones 0.8 m. wide. The entrance to the complex is from the east and it is built of hewn stones, with some preserved plaster remnants. Parallel to the southern and eastern walls, inside, there is a row of columns, while on the northern and western walls there are two rows of columns, 3–5.5 m. from the wall of the complex. Along the western wall there is a series of rooms and in one of these a burnt beam of palm wood was found. Carbon 14 dating puts the beam at the 1st century BC.\(^4\)

In the complex, not far from the rooms, is a ritual bath similar to that found in the residential house. The bath is built of two pools linked by a shallow upper conduit. Remnants of thick plaster are evident on some of the walls, and in one of the pools a stairway was found, consisting of five particularly wide steps. Outside the complex, to the north and east, two excavated pools were found and these too are covered with gray plaster typical of the period (Fig. 7).

The findings of the excavation consisted of pottery, a stone vessel (Fig. 8), coins, and architectural objects. The pottery included bowls embellished with vegetation illustrations, cooking pots, flasks with a spout decorated with strips of red paint and

\(^4\) For additional information see Hizmi 2002; 2005.
a plant illustration, jugs and Herodian oil lamps, and disc-type oil lamps. Most of the lamps were broken and a few were whole. Of the knife parted lamps, two multi-spout oil lamps are notable, as well as embellished disc lamps, one with a decoration of two dolphins on the sides. Stone vessels, typical of and identified with contemporary Jewish society, were found in the excavation and were made by hand or with a lathe. The many vessels included measuring utensils, with or without a handle, small bowls, large bowls, and a vessel of burnished metal decorated in a scale pattern.

Most of the coins found were from the Herodian period until the destruction of the temple, indicating a continuous presence. The largest quantity found is from the time of Agrippa I, including a collection of 96 coins. Of the architectural items, which include column drums and arch stones, we shall mention part of a cornice adorned with an "egg and dart" pattern, with a masons' mark that was found in secondary use in the church.

Water source: The village's water source was an aqueduct that transported the water of the Auja spring, some 8.5 km. from the site in an aerial line. On the way, the aqueduct crosses several wadis that required the construction of small bridges. In the vicinity of the site, the aqueduct was visible for 1.2 km., along the ridge delimiting the site to the west. Tests we held showed that its width was some 1.5 m. and its depth some 0.6 m., and it was covered by a layer of plaster. The aqueduct branched towards the site in two places, leading to cisterns near the tower of hewn stone and the road station to the north of the site.

In conclusion, the results of the excavation indicate several stages in the village's development during the Second Temple period: In the first stage, a farm or agricultural palm tree estate was established in the time of Archelaus, when a tower constructed of
hewn stones was built. In the second stage, also in the time of Archelaus, the estate became an agricultural village named for Archelaus, and an impressive residential building was built, probably serving the supervisor on behalf of the governor. After the time of Archelaus, probably during the time of Agrippa I, in 41–44 AD, the village was expanded and a road station was established in its northern part, serving those on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The final stage of the village, in the Second Temple period, was characterized by destruction and burning following the great revolt in which the residents took part. Subsequently, two Roman army camps were established on the range overlooking the village from the west. The village was revived after some time and continued to exist during the Byzantine period as well.

Phasaelis (Khirbet al-Phasail)

Phasaelis in historical sources: Phasaelis was established, according to Josephus Flavius, as one of the monuments erected by Herod to commemorate his relatives, in this case his brother. Josephus says: "To his brother Phasael he erected appearance and splendid proportions of which we shall describe in the sequel. He also gave the name of Phasaelis to another city which he built in the valley to the north of Jericho" (War. I:418). Together with the establishment of the city, the agricultural fields around the city were also prepared for use with the help of local residents: "...and to his brother Phasael, because of the affection that he felt for him, he dedicated a very beautiful monument by setting up in the city itself a tower just as large as that of Pharos, and called it Phasael... He also built a city named after him in the valley of Jericho northward from there and thereby made the surrounding region, formerly a wilderness more productive through the industry of its inhabitants and this city he called Phasaelis" (Ant. XVI:144–145). From these two sentences we learn that the area to the north of Jericho had been deserted and uninhabited until the city was established, with no agriculture. The establishment of the city by Herod towards the end of his rule, in 8 BC (Netzer 1996), led to a flourishing of the region, as evident from Pliny's words cited above. As stated, Herod bequeathed Phasaelis to his sister Salome and she left the city to Julia, wife of Caesar, by which the estate became the property of Caesar. After a short time, Agrippa I was awarded the Jordan Valley, including Phasaelis\(^6\) and the rest of Judea and Samaria, by Claudius Caesar (Ant. 19:274).

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5 Netzer's excavations of the Hasmonean palaces showed that in the first stage of the agricultural estate's construction, in the time of Yohanan Horkanos and maybe Shimon his father, two towers were built, one of them square. The towers seem to have been intended for purposes of observation and they were an integral part of the agricultural farm (Netzer 1995; 2001).

6 According to Spanier, the town was populated by Jews, based on a fragment of an ossuary and a pool with a stairway (Spanier 2000:183).
After the destruction of the temple, Phasaelis remained inhabited. The lists of Ptolemy, from the 2nd century AD (Geographia 337a), mention Phasaelis together with Archelais and Jericho (Stern M. 1980:162–170). Quite surprisingly, Phasaelis is not mentioned in the Tabula Peutingeriana, which is based on the knowledge of Ptolemy in the 2nd century AD, although it is situated on the main road leading through the Jordan Valley. Phasaelis was one of the cities damaged in the earthquake that shook the Jordan Valley in 363 AD, as evident from a Syriac document (Russell 1980:47–67). In the Madaba Map (Fig. 9) the name of the city Phasaelis was partially retained (Guthe 1911), and in the Byzantine period the city is mentioned as one of the places in which a monastery was built (Hirschfeld 1987).

Who was Phasael and why was he commemorated?

Phasael was the eldest son of Antipater and Cypros, "from an eminent family of the Arubses", eldest brother of Herod, Joseph, Pheroras, and Salome (War. I:181). Phasael was born in 77 BC and was five years older than Herod (Kokkinos 1998:156–162). His name originates from the Aramaic-Nabatean and means "God opened" (the womb of his mother) (Kasher 2000:176). His father, Antipater, appointed procurator of Judea on behalf of Caesar Augustus, nominated his two sons to lofty positions: Phasael as governor of Jerusalem and the "districts" and Herod (despite his young age) as governor of the Galilee (War. I:203). In his position as governor of Jerusalem, Phasael wished to win the trust of the residents and their sympathy, so he treated them kindly.
and patiently, as did his brother Herod at the beginning of his rule. Josephus Flavius writes about this: "Phasael, on his side, with a generous emulation, vied with his brother's reputation, he increased his popularity with the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and kept the city under control without any tactless abuse of authority" (War: I:206). Phasael advised Herod on various matters, as when Herod suspected Malichus of poisoning their father, Antipater. Phasael managed to calm Herod and prevent a popular uprising. Nonetheless, Herod executed Malichus and his brother Helix and stood up against them. During the war with the Parthians, wishing to prevent violence and killing, Phasael tried to reach a compromise with Antigonus, last of the Hasmoneans, despite Herod's warnings that they were not to be trusted. Phasael consented to let Pescorus, one of the Parthian cup-bearers of the king's son (who was of the same name), enter the city with an escort and leave it escorted by Hyrcanus. In time it became clear that this had been a trap. The Parthians looted Jerusalem, destroyed Maresha, captured Phasael and Hyrcanus, and handed them over to Antigonus in chains to be tortured. While Hyrcanus begged for his life and asked that his body not be maimed so that he would not be forbidden from serving as a priest, Phasael chose to kill himself. He bashed his skull on a rock, unable to use his hands or iron. Thus he proved himself a true brother of Herod... He died the death of a real hero, which well suited the life he had lived. According to another testimony, Phasael survived the injury he had inflicted upon himself and Antigonus sent a doctor to treat him, who gave him bad medicine and killed him... and this is how Phasael died (War I:269–273). For this act, which showed absolute loyalty to his brother and displayed self-sacrifice and devotion, Herod repaid his dead brother by erecting two monuments in his memory: the tower of the palace in Jerusalem and a city in his name in the Jordan Valley. The tower built by Herod in memory of his brother is described as a palace tower divided into elaborate apartments, separated by a bath house, and so the tower itself was a palace: its roof was embellished with battlements and turrets, and its entire height was about ninety cubits. It resembled the tower of Pharus, which sends out a light for those approaching Alexandria, but (the tower of Phasael) was much larger (War V:166–169).

History of the research: Several archeological surveys were held on the site. The first was conducted by French explorer Victor Guérin in 1852–1888 (Guérin 1984). In the fourth volume of his reports (Samaria I), Guérin's journey to the area of Samaria and the Jordan valley is depicted. He reached the site of Phasael and described erecting his tent in the middle of a large rectangular pool, 58 paces long and 55 paces wide. According to Guérin, the walls of the pool were constructed from large polished stones. The spaces between the stones were filled, and the inner coating (=whitewash) was missing and consisted of small stone particles sunk in a thick layer of cement. Around the pool three mounds could be discerned: The largest was to the north, the circumference of its base 200 paces, and its height was 12 m. On the slopes of the mound he discerned medium sized construction stones, and on the top in two fences -
stones with no connecting material. He surmised that there had been a sturdy structure on the mound, 27 paces long and 15 paces wide, and the outline of the walls was still evident. To the west and east of the pool he discerned two other mounds, probably created from the earth excavated from the large pool beside them. Water from a canal built similarly but from smaller stones flowed into the pool. The conduit passed along the southern bank of Wadi Phasael. He found the fountainhead a 45 minute walk away, at a spring named Ras al-Ayn Phasail. The spring, according to Guérin, emanated from a rock and was divided into two streams: one flowed in the channel of the wadi and the other in an aqueduct built to the right of the wadi on an upper level for three kilometers until reaching the pool. From the pool the water was channeled eastwards by the aqueduct and after a short distance it split into two branches in opposite directions that created two separate waterfalls for the purpose of operating a windmill and also to irrigate gardens and orchards. He also discerned remnants of walls and open canals dispersed in the area. He did not recognize the remains of the town and stated that these had been completely deleted. In his opinion, the city had been located at the entrance to the wadi, which was covered with stone heaps, mostly consisting of gravel. Guérin dated the pool and the aqueduct as belonging to Herod's time, and on the slopes of the hills lining the wadi he identified the quarries from which the stone for the pool had been hewn.

In the systematic comprehensive survey first conducted by two British researchers, Conder and Kitchener, on behalf of the British Foundation for Research of the Land of Israel (Conder and Kitchener 1882:388,392–393), they discerned remnants of walls and aqueducts constructed of unpolished stones dispersed over some two and a half miles, as well as among the remnants of the main road that passed south of Phasaelis.

In a survey conducted by Pesach Bar-Adon, as part of an emergency survey in 1968, he identified an aqueduct and a cistern (measuring 50×60 m.), a bath house built of bricks on an earthen mound, aqueducts and canals, as well as a furnace and a complex (measuring 65×75 m.) south of the pool (some 250 m.). In the complex he discerned a series of rooms and in the northernmost corner a tower (measuring 9×10 m.). A fragment of an ossuary was also found (Bar-Adon 1972, 106, site 15).

Another survey was conducted by Yosef Porat in 1982. Porat held tests of the aqueduct's route. He discovered several facilities that he ascribed to the textile industry, and also a square complex (75×75 m.) that was part of the town, dated in the Second Temple period (Porat 1983).

Identification of the site: Most of the researchers agree with the identification of Phasaelis with the current day site of Khirbet al-Phasail (Avi-Yonah 1976; Porat 1985; 1990; Tzafrir et al. 1994). The site is located about 12 km. north of Jericho on the alluvial fan of Wadi Phasael. The archeological information on the site comes from surveys (Conder and Kitchener 1883:392; Bar-Adon 1972; Porat 1983) and excavations (Hizmi 2012). These surveys uncovered remains of walls, a bath house
built of bricks, a pool with steps, a fragment of an ossuary, and an aqueduct that led the water of the Phasael springs to the town and the agricultural fields surrounding it. The facilities and the findings in the vicinity of the site attest to extensive activity in the Second Temple period, for instance complexes and a residential area, water pools, and military complexes (Bar-Adon 1972).

**Description of the excavations:**

The excavation of the site centered on two complexes: the northern complex (N) and the southern complex (S) at a distance of about 300 meters (Fig. 10). Area N is to the northeast of the site, an area targeted by many illegal excavations, which raised the suspicion that robbers had focused on this area after unearthing valuable findings. Indeed, in an excavation we conducted in this area three elongated structures dated from the Second Temple period were found. One of these was on a tall mound of earth, at the center of which was a large pit full of local trash, where a large rectangular cistern was found (30×41 m, 9 m. depth) (Fig. 11). After descending 1.5 m. from surface level, the walls of the pool were revealed, built of two rows of polished stones filled with gravel. The walls were about 2.80 m thick. On some of the walls a layer of

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8 For more details of the excavation results, see Hizmi 2012.
thick gray plaster was preserved. An eight-step stairway descends to the bottom of the pool in the northeastern corner. Remnants of two stairways were also discovered in the southeast and southwest corners. A 1 m. wide aqueduct passed along the external side of the eastern wall. Beside it, to the east, remains a section of a surface paved with pebbles and coated with a plaster layer. Two walls approach this surface from the east, but their connection to the pool remains unclear.

The second structure, about 60 m. east of the cistern, is a residential building consisting of a ritual bath, residential rooms, and a hall for receiving visitors (Fig. 12). These three items appear to be part of an entire residence that has not yet been fully uncovered. The ritual bath is constructed of two pools: a reserve pool ("otzar") and
an immersion pool, 6.0 m. long by 2.0 m. wide (Fig. 13). A 5 centimeter diameter pipe ("shforferet hanod"), was sunk into the joint wall. At the front of the pool was a surface coated in gray plaster. A six-step stairway descends to the bottom of the pool the entire width of the pool, and the tread of the final step is wider than that of the others. The reserve pool has not yet been excavated in its entirety and it seems to have been larger than the immersion pool. At a later stage, the ritual bath was no longer in use and was covered by a dome constructed of hewn sandstone tiles. One side of the dome had slipped off its base but the part attached to the western side of the pool was preserved.

Residential rooms: These are adjacent to the ritual bath to the west and to the south. To the west is a rectangular room, measuring 5×5.5 m., where a sandstone column drum was found. The base of a burnished stone vessel was found in another room. Outside the rooms, to the west, is a shallow narrow water canal leading to the immersing pool. This canal may have been added at a later stage, as another wider and deeper canal also leads into the reserve pool.

Reception hall: North of the ritual bath a rectangular room was uncovered, 10 m. long by 7.5 m. wide. The walls, 1.0 m. deep, are built of pebbles and were preserved up to a height of 0.2 m., and remnants of plaster were preserved on the inner wall. Signs of paint remain on several parts of the plaster and the walls may have been

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9 On the types of stone vessels and their manufacture, from a typological, chronological, and technological perspective see Amit 2010, who also provides other references.
frescoed. The entrance, 1.0 m. wide, is on the east side. The floor of the room is made of gray plaster. Evidence of burning was found in the northwestern part. The dimensions of the room and the fresco remains make it possible to assume that this was a central and important room that may have served as a hall for receiving visitors.

Bath house: This is located some 30 m. south of the large cistern (Fig. 14). The bath house was damaged by robbers. Many changes made over the different periods of usage are evident in the bath house. The bath house is in the form of the Hebrew letter nun (נ). It is 16.5 m. long and its maximal width is about 7.2 m. The depth of the walls is variable, 0.75–1.0 m. The walls are built of chiseled stone and large unhewn stones and were preserved up to a height of 0.8 m. from the surface level. Remnants of gray plaster are evident in many parts of the walls. The entrance to the bath house is from the north, leading to a narrow entrance hall covered in a mosaic (dressing room?). Under the mosaic floor is a covered water canal that led water to the pool located after the entrance hall, to the west. The pool has a square outline; its sides are 2.0 m. long and its depth 1.0 m. The height of the pool floor is lower than that of the entrance hall, such that in order to enter it steps must be climbed and descended. This pool must have served as a Frigidarium for initial immersing before entering the Tepidarium. The western and southern walls have entranceways for water pipes. To the left of the pool, on the east, is a narrow room measuring 2.7×4.2 m. with a simple white mosaics, leading to the Tepidarium. Around three sides it had benches for sitting, and between the benches and the wall were square earthenware pipes leading hot air (tubuli) into the room. The entrance to the Caldarium is on the western side of the Tepidarium. The Caldarium was badly damaged by antique robbers, and most of the floor was not preserved. This exposed the hypocaust, 5 m. long and 2.7 m. wide, with columns 1.2 m.
high made of refined bricks that held up the floor of the room with the white mosaics. Three pools/baths arranged in the form of the Hebrew letter *het* (ח) survived, facing the entranceway. Along the eastern and southern walls of the Caldarium that include the entranceway there are square and round components for releasing the hot air.

Once the excavation was expanded to the northern side of the bath house, a room that separated the bath house complex from the courtyard was revealed, with a sunken pool in its center (Fig. 15). The room, measuring 3.80×4.30 m., is covered with colored mosaics (black and white) framed in a meander pattern. The corners have square black and white mosaic stones. Within the frame are two mosaic patterns embellished with geometric forms. One is a white square surrounded by a black frame and a square divided into four triangles, two white and two black. The second is a rosetta ornament, part black and part white, creating squares with a black frame around an uncolored rosetta. In the lower and upper part of the mosaics it is possible to discern repairs that were made. The section in the lower corner, facing the entrance, was not fully preserved. The mosaics were preserved thanks to a floor that was laid on top of it at a later stage. Part of the floor was preserved in the upper, southeastern corner of the room. The entranceway to the room, 1.0 m. wide, is in the northeastern corner, and it leads to a courtyard in front of the bath house. The courtyard, 10×10 m., is paved in a colored mosaic, here too in black and white. The mosaics was preserved very badly and only several sections were preserved, showing a carpet with a black frame and within it diamond shapes in black and white and triangles with a similar filling in the meander pattern, a circle around a black rosetta, and a black diamond within a rectangle. In the center of the courtyard is an excavated pool. Its size is 3.60×3.60 m. and its depth is about 1.2 m. The bottom of the pool is reached by a stairway of 5 rounded steps located in the southeastern corner. The pool was plastered in thick gray plaster that was mostly preserved on its four sides. At the bottom of the pool, in the northeastern corner, is a hole for draining the water, connected to a covered canal leading northwards. The pool is surrounded by nine columns, three on each side. Of the columns only the base

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10 The results of the excavation in this part of the bath house have not yet been published.
remained on site. To the west of the courtyard a small room was found, with many stucco sections (Fig. 16).

Fig. 16: Stucco findings

The southern complex – Area S: Area S is in the south part of the site, and remnants of structures were found there, as well as a complex evident on the surface. Two structures were uncovered in the excavation: a church and a double complex, probably a monastery (Fig. 17).

The church: This was built in the form of a basilica with an outward projecting apse (Fig. 18). At the front of the church is a narthex that deviates, in its northern part, from the outline of the church. The floor of the church is covered in simple white mosaics. The floor was damaged when the place was used by locals as a burial site. The walls are constructed of two rows made of medium sized local pebbles filled with gravel. The walls were preserved up to a height of 0.4 m. on average. The aisles and the nave are divided by a row of built piers. At the end of the nave is a narrow platform attached to the apse such that they both form one unit. The platform is separated from the nave by a row of stones. The level of the platform and apse is higher than the hall floor by some 0.20 m. On the two sides of the platform are two square rooms, measuring 3×3 m., with an opening that connects them to the aisles, and they were preserved very badly. In the southern room the southern doorpost and the floor were

Fig. 17: Monastery complex

Fig. 18: Church
not preserved. In the northern room a cross shaped facility was found, surrounded by a construction of stones covered with white plaster. This appears to have served as a baptizing font, a baptisterium. In the front of the church there is a narthex, 4 m. wide, whose northern part deviates from the outline of the church by 4 m. Three openings led from the narthex to the nave and the aisles. The middle opening leading to the nave is wider than the openings to the aisles, 1.2 m. versus 0.5 m. The floor of the nave bore three dedication inscriptions in Greek (Fig. 19). These mention the names of people, among them Theophanes and Leon. The inscriptions are dated in the late 5th - early 6th centuries AD. At a later stage, when the church was no longer in use, the narthex was used for residential purposes. The floor was covered by stone panels and it was divided internally into several rooms. A sloppily built room was also added to the east of the protruding part of the narthex, on the northwestern side.

![Fig. 19: Inscriptions](image)

The double complex: South of the church, at a distance of about 80 m., is a double complex. Both complexes are built in a similar way. The first is constructed in the form of a trapezoid. Its measurements: the length of the top base is 60 m. and of the bottom base 44 m. The long side is 70 m. and the short western side – 65 m. The complex consists of two units, each with an inner courtyard surrounded by a series of different sized rooms. In the northwestern corner of the northern complex an opening was discovered, leading to a long narrow corridor ending in a square room in the northeastern corner. Along the western wall is a series of rooms and in the room before the last a row of four ovens was found. Another series of rooms was constructed along the southern wall. One has a large impressive entranceway constructed of big stones (Fig. 20). On the doorpost and threshold stones signs of burning were found, evidence of destruction. In the rooms square piers were found, which seem to have borne arches that held up the roof beams.

The second complex is rectangular. No piers were found in the rooms next to the northern wall, probably because the spaces were smaller and it was possible to
support the roof without using piers. On the two sides of the eastern wall there are square rooms with openings connecting to the adjacent rooms. The western wall and the courtyard of the complex, as well as the north complex, have not yet been excavated.

It is not yet clear what the use of the two complexes was, but they seem to have been used to house the clergy. The findings, which include daily utensils and architectural items decorated with crosses, may indicate that the place served as a monastery, as stated in literary sources.

Phasael's water source: In the description of Phasaelis's establishment no mention is made of the new city's water source. The water source was probably the fountainhead about two and a half kilometers west of the site, as assumed by Guérin. The flow rate of these springs is among the lowest in the Jordan Valley, some 150 cubic meters an hour at high tide and some 30 cubic meters at low tide (Flexer 1971: 254–255; Ben Yosef 1979: 271–273). The fountainhead produces two springs that flow from an alluvial step pool to the south of the wadi. The northern spring flows from a pit (6 m. deep and 32 m. wide). The water gathers in a half-meter pool and flows eastwards into a concrete canal (coordinates: IGR 1619/1885). The second spring (coordinates: IGR 1619/1885) is located about 200 m. southwest of the first and its water flows through a pipe to an excavated ditch lined with pebbles (sized 3×5 m. and 1 m. deep). Here too the water rises at first to a similar level of half a meter and flows eastward towards the town. The water from the fountainhead is directed towards a large cistern at the foot of Tel Shaykh el-Diab (Marcus 1992:123–124). A large cistern (coordinates: IGR 1615/1908), with a total volume of some 15,000 cubic meters (45×45 m., 7–8 m. deep), is connected to the Phasael springs and an ancient irrigation system. The walls of the pool are built up to a height of 15 layers of unhewn stone and large polished stones. Small stones were stuck in the spaces between the stones to stabilize the layers. Thick plaster coating has remained on the bottom part of the walls and on the floor (Marcus 1992:128).

The results of the excavation at Phasaelis show that the site was in use in two main periods: the Second Temple period and the Byzantine period, as evident in historical literary sources that mention Phasaelis. Moreover, although it is early days,
the area of the city dating from the Second Temple period seems to have been in the northeastern part of the site, while the Byzantine city and maybe the monastery were in the southern part. The findings of a ritual bath, stone vessels, pottery, architectural items, and coins, show that the city was first occupied in the Herodian period and its population was Jewish. Furthermore, none of the findings can be attributed to the Hasmonean period, thus proving Josephus Flavius's claim that Herod built a new city in a previously barren place and that there had been no previous settlement on the site. The composition of the inhabitants appears to have changed only in the Byzantine period when the church and monastery were erected.

Pliny's Livias – development and identification of the town

As stated earlier, in the 1st century AD Pliny mentions in his work *Natural History* a town named Livias, together with the towns of Archelais and Phasaelis. In this part of the paper I shall try to show that Pliny's Livias developed in stages, similar to those of Archelais. It began with an agricultural estate that Salome received from Herod and then developed into a town called Salome on the west bank of the Jordan River. Later on, the name of the town was changed to Livias, for the wife of Caesar Augustus, and that was how it was preserved in the Byzantine period as well.

Before describing the town's stages of development I wish to disprove the possibility that Pliny's Livias may be one of two towns of the same name mentioned by Josephus Flavius. One is a town located on the shore of the Lake of Gennesareth in the land of Golan; the second is on the eastern side of the Jordan river, and it is called Betharamatha (Beth-haram, Beth-ramtha). Notably, the name Livias is for Livia, wife of the Roman Caesar Augustus, renamed Julia when she joined the Julian family (Stern M. 1974; Rappaport 1995).

The first town was at first called Bethsaids, on the shores of the Lake of Gennesareth and in the land of Golan. The town was renamed Julias by Herod Philip in honor and appreciation of the daughter of Caesar Augustus, who was also called Julia. Josephus Flavius writes: "He also threw a wall about another city, Betharamphtha which he called Julias, after the name of the emperor's wife. Philip too made improvements at Paneas, the city near the sources of the Jordan, and called it Caesarea. He also raised the village of Bethsaide on Lake Gennasaritis to the status of city by adding residents and strengthening the fortification. He named it after Julia, the emperor's daughter" (*Ant. XVII:28*). "At about this time the force from the king arrived, both cavalry and infantry, with Sula who was commander of the bodyguards..."

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11 Pliny was a contemporary of Josephus Flavius and lived from 23/24–79 (Stern M. 1974:465).
12 The new name given to Bethsaids was not retained in the long term and it reverted to its original name (Kokkinos 1998:238). On the results of the excavation at the site, see Arav 2000.
leading it. This man, then, having established a base five stadia away from Julias, posted a patrol on the roads, both the one leading to Seleucia and the one leading to the fortress Gamala" (The Life of Josephus, 398). The location of this town in the land of Golan disproves its identification with Pliny's Livias. This town was also mentioned by and known to Pliny (Pliny, N. H., V, 71) and Eusebius (Notley and Safrai 2005:38,122), who set its location in the north, in the Galilee.

The second town renamed Julias is Betharamatha (Beth Haram). Herod Antipas renamed the town for Julia, wife of Caesar Augustus, probably in appreciation of the ruler. Josephus Flavius relates: "He also threw a wall about another city, Betharamphtha which he called Julias, after the name of the emperor's wife " (Ant. XVII:27). 13 "... on his accession, Herod (Antipas) and Philip continued to hold their tetrachies and respectively founded cities. Philip built Caesarea near the sources of the Jordan, in the district of Panea, and Julias in lower Gaulanitis, Herod built Tiberias in Galilee and a city which also took the name of Julia in Perea" (War. II:168). The location of Betharamatha (=Julias) occupies us due to possible confusion between the eastern and western banks of the Jordan River. Josephus Flavius's descriptions of transferring territory to Agrippa I in the Galilee and in TransJordan indicate the location of Betharamatha. Thus, he is given Julias and another fourteen villages (Ant. XX:159).

His son, Agrippa II, also received the town of Julias (=Livias, originally Ιουλιαδὰ) in TransJordan, in addition to the cities of Tiberias and Tarichae in the Galilee (War. II:252). The location of Livias (=Betharamatha) in TransJordan is also confirmed by Ptolemy, who described the geography of Judea in the days after the Bar Kochba revolt (Geographia 337a). 14 Eusebius identifies the city of Livias as "Betharran – across the Jordan, which the tribe of Gad built" (Notley and Safrai 2005:32), as well as Betharamatha in the Syriac language and biblical Beit Haram.

The Christian pilgrim Egeria, 15 who visited the holy sites of the Land of Israel, stopped at Livias on her way to Mount Nevo, after crossing the Jordan River. Together with the town's presbiter (abbot), Egeria toured and observed Livias from Mount Nevo, noting that Livias is located on a great plain in TransJordan, with Jericho on the western side. Egeria did not identify Livias as a Jewish town (see below). Theodosius 16 as well stated that Livias is in TransJordan, 12 miles from Jericho. The identification of Betharamatha or Beit Haram (=Livias) with Tel el-Rameh in TransJordan is accepted

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13 The archeologist who excavated the site of Bethsaida, R. Arav (Arav 2000), claims that the town was named for Caesar's wife rather than his daughter as mentioned by Josephus Flavius, and Smith concurs (Smith 1999).
15 On Egeria's journey in the Holy Land, see Limor 1998.
16 On the route of Theodosius's travels see Bernard 1893; Tzafrir 1979.

If so, where was Pliny's Livias and when was it established?

In my opinion, the town of Livias mentioned by Pliny together with Phasaelis and Archelais is a town to the west of the Jordan, as I will attempt to prove, and it is also mentioned in the Byzantine period. Notably, Pliny described and was well acquainted with the regions of Judea in general, including the Jordan Valley, and distinguished between Perea (TransJordan), the Galilee, and Judea (Stern M. 1968). Therefore, the town of Livias (=Betharamatha), within the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas, cannot be identified with Pliny's Livias. Moreover, it is clear from Josephus's words that one of the toparchies in Perea is Livias (the second is Abila), confirming that this is a different town.

Below, I shall attempt to show that Pliny's Livias was initially an agricultural estate belonging to Salome, sister of King Herod, and after a while was named for her. When Salome bequeathed all her property to Livia, wife of Caesar, the town received her name and was called Livias. Renaming towns was not a rare occurrence in the Herodian period, as we saw in the case of Herod Antipas and Herod Philip. Moreover, when Archelaus established a new village he named it for himself and it is quite possible that Salome did so as well, naming her estate for herself.

Salome, sister of King Herod, inherited an agricultural estate from which she received a considerable income of sixty talents, aside from being the ruler of the cities Jamnia, Azotus, and Phasaelis. Josephus's descriptions show that, following Caesar's instruction, Salome's house was under the dominion of Archelaus. It is also evident that she received the position of ruler over territory not under Archelaus's dominion, i.e., Jamnia, Azotus, and Phasaelis. Therefore, the territories received by Salome were not congruent with those received by Archelaus when he was appointed governor (Ant. XVII:317–321; War. II:98). Hence, since Salome's house was, as ordered by Caesar, under Archelaus's dominion, this means that she held territories within the toparchy of Jericho, which were territories she had inherited from her brother Herod, as he stated in his last will. Moreover, Josephus Flavius used two different terms to define Archelaus's dominion in Herod's will. In Wars of the Jews he uses the term "Jurisdiction of Archelaus" (=Toparchy of Archelaus) (τήν Ἀρχελάου τοπαρχίαν) and in Antiquities of the Jews the term "Territory ruled by Archelaus" (τήν Ἀρχελάου ἄρχην). These appear to be two different terms but they reflect a similar meaning. The first term describes the status of a local supervisor, which does not reflect Archelaus's true status as an ethnarch, as designated by the second term. A reasonable interpretation is that the term "Toparchy of Archelaus" was intended to define his rule over Jericho, as Jericho differed from the other toparchies in Judea (it served as a royal estate) and was under his direct rule. Moreover, the village he established in Archelais and named for himself was not given the status of a city in order to avoid affecting Jericho's status.
This interpretation helps understand the sentence whereby Salome's house was under the dominion of Archelaus (Fig. 21).

Other allusions to territories belonging to Salome within the toparchy of Archelaus (=in the region of Jericho) are evident in the actions taken by Archelaus upon his ascension: he renovated the palace in Jericho; planted a palm orchard; diverted half of the water intended for Narea to the orchard; established a village in his name and called it Archelais (Ant. XVII:340). The three latter acts arouse doubts as to their necessity, as he already had a palace and many orchards in Jericho. Moreover, as governor of the area, why did he use only half the water and not all of it? His actions may indicate two main issues: One, Archelaus sought to take control and dominate the empty territories between Jericho in the south and Phasaelis in the north, where he planted palm trees and established Archelais. The second, diverting only half the water intended for Narea to Archelais indicates that there was another figure in the area who also wielded authority, power, and influence, and who shared this water source. This figure may have been Salome, who as stated had an estate in the area. Her estate became, in time, a town that bore her name.

As stated, Josephus Flavius relates that Salome's house was under the dominion of Archelaus, and thus under his direct holding. With regard to Salome's other towns and cities, she is said to have been the governor in all respects. If so, were the cities of Jamnia, Ascalon, Azotus, and Phasaelis part of the Judean kingdom governed by Archelaus? Before the division of Herod's kingdom to his three sons and to Salome, it was all held and owned by the Roman treasury (the fiscus) and the division only changed the administrative system and not the ownership. Therefore, in my opinion, the territories held by Salome had a similar equal status to those held by Herod's three sons.
We find evidence of a town by this name in Rabbinical literature. First, in the Tosefta (Bechorot 7:3)\(^\text{17}\) it says: "If he had on the other bank of the Jordan from here and from there, such as from Salome Nimeri and two autonomous towns, they shall not be joined, and all the more so if they are in the land of Israel and outside the land", and in the Jerusalem Talmud (Bava Batra 3:3, 14:4): "R. La'azar said: And even two autonomous towns, such as Salome\(^\text{18}\) and Nabiru, shall be separated (i.e., divided) by the Jordan".

These two sources show that there were two towns with an autonomous-independent status and they were located facing each other, with the Jordan River in between. One is Nabiru or Nimeri, identified with Bait Nimrin in TransJordan, and the other is Salome or Suleme, which is a Greek transcription of the name of King Herod's sister, Salome,\(^\text{19}\) located on the western side of the Jordan. The identification with Salome rather than Queen Shlomzion is reasonable and logical for two main reasons: One, the name Salome does not appear among the names used for Queen Shlomzion in Rabbinical sources, as shown by Gafni (1995); and the second reason is the evidence of the town's autonomy, compatible with the status of King Herod's sister. Additionally, the town's location in the Jordan Valley is also compatible with the location of her agricultural estate.

Livias after destruction of the Second Temple

After Livias's\(^\text{20}\) death, in 29 AD, her territories passed to the dominion of the Roman governor (Avi-Yonah 1962:60), who held them until 41 AD. In this year, in the period of Claudius, the territories that belonged to Archelaus were awarded to Agrippa I. Due to his sudden death in 44 AD, they reverted to the Roman governor until 54 AD, in the

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17 According to Klein (1925:15) this source reflects the reality in Hasmonean times and hence it sought to link the name Salome with Queen Shlomzion. However, sources dealing with the Hasmoneans make no mention of a town by this name established by them.
18 Klein sought to link Salome to the Alexandrion fortress, as it was located facing Beit Namirin in TransJordan (Klein 1925:15; 1939b:81–82) while Ben-Dov identifies Alexandrion in TransJordan with "Tuvia's Tyre" (Ben-Dov 1982). In this matter see the response of Ir-Shay (Ir-Shay 1983). On the identification of the fortress at Sartaba and the archeological findings, see Tzafrir 1984. On the water supply to the fortress, see Amit 1989. Abramsky suggested identifying Salome with Nearn (Abramsky 1983) and so did Peres (Peres 1952). These identifications, which I do not accept, show that some of the researchers assume that in this period there was a town by this name.
19 Notably, the rabbinical sources normally reflect a later state of affairs, however this Tosefta reflects the period of Herod's heirs and not as stated by Klein (see Note 17). Rabbinical sources do not use the name Salome for Queen Shlomzion (Gafni 1995:261–267).
20 In Hebrew the name Livias is spelled both with the letter bet and with the letter vav. Pliny mentions the name as Liviade, while the Christian source has Ατρόκλα, i.e., the transcription varies. The reference to the names follows the attitude to the historical source.
period of Nero, who awarded Agrippa II the territories in Judea and the Galilee, which he held until the beginning of the uprising against the Romans.

We have no evidence of occurrences in the town of Livias from the destruction of the Second Temple to the Byzantine period. Livias does not appear in the Tabula Peutingeriana, dated in the 2nd century AD, nor in the lists of Eusebius from the early 4th century AD, nor in the Madaba Map, nor in the maps owned by Theodosius dated in the 4th century AD. Livias's absence from these maps is not surprising as they refer mainly to towns on the main roads while Pliny's Livias was in the inner part of the Jordan River. The absence of Livia from Eusebius's lists is also logical, as Eusebius refers in these lists only to places mentioned in the Scriptures and the New Testament, which Livias was not.

In any case, a Christian source from the 6th century AD (Notita) tells of a Christian monk who left his monastery on Mt. Sinai: "Got up and suddenly left the holy mountain and moved to Palestine to Neara or to Livias, which are Jewish centers". This source mentions two Jewish towns located in the Holy Land: (a) Neara, and (b) Livias:

A. Neara (=Naarah; Naarath) is initially mentioned as one of the cities bordering on the territory bequeathed to Ephraim (Joshua 16:7; I Chronicles 7:28). From then until the time of Archelaus Neara is not mentioned in any literary source, aside from Josephus Flavius who mentions it only in the context of Archelaus's establishment (Ant. XVII:340). This testimony does not indicate whether it was a town or an agricultural area. Neara is mentioned again only in the early Byzantine period, when Eusebius states that the town of Naaratah (Naarat) is located 5 miles from Jericho and populated by Jews who know the secret of growing persimmons (Notley and Safrai 2005:76,147). Another Christian source (The Life of Chariton) describes the enmity between the residents of Neara and the monks at Doq: "And (Alfidos) held off the zealous attacks of the Hebrews". A tense relationship existed also with the residents of Jericho (Lamentations Raba 1:17; Leviticus Raba 23:5). The source of the conflict is unclear and it may have been associated with control of the water source. On the identification of Neara and its location there are many opinions, as to date no findings have been uncovered dated in the Israeli period on one hand or the Second Temple

21 On the dating of the Madaba Map see also Bahat 1996; Piccirillo and Alliatta 1999.
22 Translated by Klein.
23 Translated by Klein.
period on the other, although most of the researchers agree with its identification with Tell el-Jurn.

The excavations held at Tell el-Jurn, at the foot of the cliffs at the entrance to the wadi, near the a-Doq spring, were conducted following the random discovery of a mosaic floor. A synagogue from the Byzantine period was revealed, paved with a colorful mosaic rich in geometric forms, animal depictions, and inscriptions. The inscriptions in Hebrew and Aramaic characters are dedications to donors; they indicate the donors' financial status, occupation, and roles in the community.

B. Livias: Similar to the town of Neara, Livias too is defined as a Jewish center and, according to the source, the two towns were adjacent. Mentioning the name of Livias after Neara, with regard to the route taken by the monk from south to north, makes it possible to assume that Byzantine Livias was located north of Neara, a location that is compatible with that of Pliny's Livias, as shown above. Furthermore, the name of the town preserves that of the Second Temple settlement. For these two reasons, it is highly likely that Livias mentioned in the Christian source is Pliny's Livias. If this conclusion is correct, as I believe, then the site closest to Neara from the north is Khirbet el-Auja – which should be identified with Pliny's Livias (Fig. 22), previously called Salome. An initial test excavation was held at the site of Khirbet el-Auja, but it has not yet produced findings that can be conclusively dated in the Second Temple period. Further tests of the site may reveal other findings that will confirm my proposal.

Fig. 22: Location of Livias

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24 In an excavation conducted in 1983 by the author, some 500 m. east of the synagogue, no evidence from the Second Temple period nor from the Israeli period was found. On the results of the excavation see Hizmi 1983:34–36; 2002.

25 The researchers are disagreed as to the location of Neara. Guérin identified Neara on the northern bank of Wadi Auja (Guérin 1984:150); Klein – with a-Doq (Klein 1939b:92); others identified Neara with Khirbet el-Auja al-Foqa or Khirbet Aisha adjacent to Khirbet Auja al-Tahta. See Avi-Yonah 1992 and additional references there. On the inscriptions in the synagogue see Naveh 1978.
Epilogue

Salome, sister of King Herod, was a dominant woman who had, on the one hand, a good relationship with the Roman government and on the other a bad and distrustful relationship with Herod's son, her nephew Archelaus. These relationships were manifested in the autonomy she was awarded by Caesar to manage the property she had received from Herod and from Caesar himself, the royal palace in Ascalon and Archelais. By awarding the town of Archelais to Salome, Caesar Augustus created a continuous territorial swath that included Phasaelis, Archelais, and her estate, which in time became a town bearing her name, Salome, thus establishing the Toparchy of Salome (Fig. 23), as described by Josephus Flavius. In appreciation of Caesar, Salome bequeathed all her property to his wife Livia and Salome's estate is named for her, Livias, a town whose name was preserved until the Byzantine period.

Fig. 23: Toparchy of Salome
References


**Historical Sources**


* Hananya Hizmi, Israel Antiquities Authority