

# Israeli archaeologists find ancient bathhouse

March 26 2009

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(AP) -- The Israel Antiquities Authority says archaeologists have discovered a Byzantine-era bathhouse in the south of the country dating back more than 1,500 years.

Archaeologist Gregory Serai headed the [excavation](#) and says the impressive size of [bathhouse](#), 20 by 20 yards (meters), showed the area between Beersheba and [Gaza](#) was more heavily populated in the Byzantine era than previously thought.

Serai added in Wednesday's statement that the evidence found at the site shows "the villagers based their economy on [wine production](#)."

The statement said the bathhouse was destroyed in a cave-in and the site became a garbage dump.

The dig precedes work to lay a railroad track through the area.

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