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**GARUM OF HEROD THE GREAT
(LATIN-GREEK INSCRIPTION ON
THE AMPHORA FROM MASADA)¹**

A series of systematic archaeological excavations in Masada, an inaccessible fortress situated in Judea, on the western coast of the Dead Sea, were carried out between the years 1963-5 by the mission of Yigael Yadin. A regular publication of the results of the excavations was delayed considerably. In 1989 the first volume came out entitled '*Masada. The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963-1965. Final Reports*'. To this day seven consecutive volumes have been published². The archaeological objects

¹ This text was originally published in *Analecta Archaeologica Ressoviensia* 1 (2006), 239-57. This version contains a number of minor alteration. I also used two papers, previously unknown to me: J.R. Rea, 'Masada and Pompeii: Another Link', *Scripta Classica Israelica* 18 (1999), 121-24; G. Finkielsztein, 'P. Vedius Pollio, producteur de vin à et Cos et fournisseur d'Herode le Grand', in *Greco, Juifs, Polonais. A la recherche des racines de la civilisation européenne. Actes du colloque [international tenu à Paris le 14 novembre 2003, dédié à Joseph Méléze-Modrzejewski]*, Varsovie-Paris 2006, 123-139. I thank dr Zdzisław J. Kaperka for making these texts available to me.

² Masada I. The Yigael Yadin Excavation 1963-1965 Final Reports. The Aramaic and Hebrew Ostraca and Jar Inscriptions. The Coins of Masada, ed. by Y. Yadin, J. Naveh, Y. Meshorer, Jerusalem 1989; Masada II. The Yigael Yadin Excavation 1963-1965 Final Reports. The Latin and Greek Documents, ed. by H.M. Cotton, J. Geiger, Jerusalem 1989; Masada III. The Yigael Yadin Excavation 1963-1965. Final Reports. The Buildings. Stratigraphy and Architecture, ed. by E. Netzer, Jerusalem 1994; Masada IV. The Yigael Yadin Excavation 1963-1965. Final Reports, ed. by D. Barag. Lamps (D. Barag, M. Hershkovitz); Textiles (A. Sheffer, H. Granger-Taylor); Basketry, Cordage and Related Artifacts (K. Bernick); Wood Remains (N. Lipshnitz); Ballista Balls (A.E. Holley); Addendum: Human Skeletal Remains (J. Zias, D. Segal, I. Carmi), Jerusalem 1995; Masada V. The Yigael Yadin Excavation 1963-1965. Final Reports. Art and Architecture, ed. by G. Foerster, Jerusalem 1996; Masada VI. The Yigael Yadin Excavation 1963-1965. Final Reports. Hebrew Fragments from Masada (S. Talmon); Sira Scroll

from Masada considerably enrich the contemporary narrative testimonies and provide a wide variety of evidence which ‘tells’ us a lot about the life of the residents of the fortress in the periods of its inhabitation³. Many artefacts from Masada are of a unique character. One fine example of this is a bilingual Latin-Greek inscription to be found on the Dreschel 38 amphora, discovered along with jars for wine and other products. The amphora, which was imported to Masada probably at Herod the Great’s request, was filled with garum – a fish sauce very popular at the Roman ‘table’. The inscription from Masada not only throws light on Herod’s culinary preferences, but at the same time provides significant data on the overseas trade in processed fish products. In the face of the enormous disproportions in the distribution of sources connected with the fish salting industry in the Mediterranean basin (a disproportion unfavourable to the *pars orientalis*), our delight should double with every amphora of fish sauces found in the East. In a case such as this, where the amphora bears *titulus pictus* – i.e. a painted inscription (which is a great rarity among the transport jars in the East), and is additionally bilingual, it can be characterized as a unique object, which (apart from the benefits mentioned above) greatly expands our knowledge about Greek and Latin ceramic epigraphy.

The Amphora

The inscription is painted on a poorly preserved amphora. The archaeologists were fortunate to be able to reconstruct from the fifteen salvaged fragments a part of the shoulder, a fragment of the neck and a

from Masada (Y. Yadin), Jerusalem 1999; Masada VII. The Yigael Yadin Excavation 1963-1965. Final Reports. The Pottery of Masada, ed. by R. Bar-Nathan, Jerusalem 2006; Masada VIII. The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963-1965, edited by J. Aviram, et al., Jerusalem 2007.

³ One can distinguish here the reign of Herod the Great (37-4 B.C.), who built one of his residences in Masada, the period of the great Jewish revolt during 66-73 A.D and the years after capture of the fortress in 73 A.D. when the Roman garrison was stationed in Masada. Single inscriptions are dated to the early Byzantine period (sixth to seventh century A.D.) and confirm the presence of monks in the fortress. For Herod’s residence in Masada see E. Netzer, ‘The Palaces Built by Herod – A Research Update’, in *Judea and the Greco-Roman World in the Time of Herod in the Light of Archaeological Evidence. Acts of a Symposium Organized by the Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Archaeological Institute, Georg-August-University of Göttingen at Jerusalem, November 3-4 1988*, ed. by K. Fittschen, G. Foerster, Göttingen 1996, 27-54.

lower handle attachment⁴. The *titulus pictus*, which consists of several lines, is situated on the relatively wide neck of the amphora. The clay of the jar is light red – 2.5YR 6/6 according to the colour classification of Munsell⁵. The exterior surface was covered with a yellow slip – 2.5YR 8/6. On the basis of the preserved fragments the authors of the publication classify the amphora as Class 14 in Peacock and Williams' typology (in the Dressel typology, still commonly used today, it is type 38)⁶. The Dressel 38 amphorae are dated from either the reign of the Emperor Tiberius (the earliest dating) or, as others claim, the mid-first century A.D. to the end of the second century A.D. (in certain provinces, we know of examples dated from the very beginning of the third century A.D.)⁷. The vast majority were produced in the Spanish province of *Betica* in the vicinity of Gades, although Lusitania has been confirmed as an alternate source⁸. It is a fact that the Dressel 38 amphorae there were used to transport fish products, especially fish sauces such as *garum*⁹. The

⁴ In the volume *Masada II*, 166, one can find the information that 'almost a whole jar' was found, and yet in the paper published few years later the authors state *explicitie* that the state of the preservation of the amphora is as mentioned above. This is confirmed additionally by published figure and photo. See H. Cotton, O. Lerna, Y. Goren, 'Fish sauces from Herodian Masada', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 9 (1996), 223-238. All the information about typology of the amphora, its dating etc. comes from this paper. One can search in vain for these in *Masada II* volume.

⁵ See *Munsell colour charts*, Baltimore 1971.

⁶ Cotton, Lerna, Goren, 'Fish sauces from Herodian Masada', 226. Cf. D.P.S. Peacock, D.F. Williams, *Amphorae and the Roman Economy. An Introductory Guide*, London 1991. Alternative typologies are Beltrán IIA, Pélichet 46, Ostia LXIII, Camulodunum 186C and others. In this paper generally I will use the Dressel typology.

⁷ Peacock, Williams, *Amphorae and the Roman Economy*, 123; M. Sciallano, P. Sibella, *Amphores. Comment les identifier?*, Aix-en-Provence 1991, 59; P. Dyczek, *Roman Amphorae of the 1st-3rd centuries AD found on the Lower Danube. Typology*, Warszawa 2001, 115.

⁸ Sciallano, Sibella, *Amphores*, 59.

⁹ The Romans knew four kinds of fish sauces, the most popular of which was *garum*. It was manufactured from different species of fish mixed with salt in large vats and exposed to the sun for one to three months. During this period of time the process of the hydrolysis of naturally occurring enzyme caused the fish mass to almost completely melt. The final stage of the production was straining the fish sauce from the dregs. Thus *garum* became a clear and thin fish sauce used as an obligatory condiment in Roman cuisine. The leftovers after the process of straining constituted another kind of fish sauce called *allec*. The third type of sauce *liquamen* was very similar to *garum*, but not as popular as the latter. From the second or the third century A.D. *liquamen* and *garum* started to be used interchangeably. The last type of the Roman fish sauce was *muria*. However this term was more frequently referred to brine used to preserve different types of food. For more on the subject of fish sauces, see P. Grimal, T. Monod, 'Sur la véritable nature

existence of products like *cordula*, *laccatum*, *lumpa* (*lymphatum*) is attested as well¹⁰.

However, the identification of the amphora from Masada as Dressel 38 type raises one fundamental problem, because the dating of the jar stands in contradiction to the date of the inscription, which is dated to the reign of the king of Judea, Herod the Great (37-4 B.C.). There are strong arguments to consider this dating as firmly fixed (I will develop the question later in the section devoted to the inscription). Cotton, Lernau and Goren are conscious of this discrepancy. They also underline that the petrologic analyses of the jar support rather different forms than Dressel 38, namely Dressel 12-13 (=Peacock, Williams Class 14)¹¹. This type of amphora was manufactured in *Betica* from the mid-first century B.C. to the mid-second century A.D. at least. There is no doubt that, above all else, these containers were used to transport fish sauces and salted fish (*salsamenta*)¹². The Dressel 12-13 type seems to fit the inscription's chronology perfectly, but evidently the taxonomic features differ from those of the photograph published in Cotton, Lernau and Goren's paper. The Dressel 12-13 amphorae have a smooth body and relatively thin neck and are smaller than Dressel 38. In fact, Cotton, Lernau and Goren leave the problem of the discrepancy between the amphora and the inscription dating unresolved. Even the question of the amphora typology remains undecided¹³.

du garum', *Revue des Études Anciennes* 54 (1952), 27-38; C. Jardin, 'Garum et sauces de poissons de l'antiquité', *Rivista di Studi Liguri* 27 (1961), 70-96; R.I. Curtis, *Garum and salsamenta. Production and commerce in materia medica*, Leiden 1991.

¹⁰ M.H. Callender, *Roman amphorae with index of stamps*, London 1965, 14-6; B. Liou, 'Inscriptions peintes sur amphores: Fos (suite), Marseille, Toulon, Portla-Nautique, Arles, Saint-Blaise, Saint-Martin-de-Crau, Mâcon, Calvi', *Archaeonautica* 7 (1987), 116, n. 73; F.P. Arata, 'Un relitto da Cala Rossano (Ventotene). *Tituli picti* su anfore e bollo sulingotii di stagno', in *Epigrafia della produzione e della distribuzione. Actes de la VII^e Rencontre franco-italienne sur l'épigraphie du monde romain (Rome, 5-6 juin 1992)*, Rome 1994, 494-5.

¹¹ Cotton, Lernau, Goren, 'Fish sauces from Herodian Masada', 226.

¹² Peacock, Williams, *Amphorae and the Roman Economy*, 114; Sciallano, Sibella, *Amphores*, 62; Dyczek, *Roman Amphorae*, 66.

¹³ Cotton, Lernau, Goren, 'Fish sauces from Herodian Masada', 226-7: 'The discrepancy between the identification arrived at by the typological analysis (Peacock & Williams Class 18) and that arrived at by the petrologic analysis (Peacock & Williams Class 14) may well be the result of the absence of specific petrologic description in (Peacock & Williams). In either case, we can suggest with a great deal of certainty that Inv. no 1047-650 is an import from Spain and that the *garum* which it contained was manufactured there'.

Of course, not having access to the preserved fragments of the jar, it is difficult to argue with the authors, but on the basis of the published illustrations it would appear that the taxonomic characteristics correspond better to the variant of the Dressel 38 amphora distinguished by Loris Beltrán as the Beltrán IIB form¹⁴. It was either manufactured in *Betica* during the reign of the Emperor Tiberius or at the very beginning of the first century A.D. (as others claim), and the existence of such amphorae has been attested throughout the Roman Empire¹⁵. Both fish sauces and *salsamenta* were transported in the Beltrán IIB amphorae.

However, associating the jar from Masada with the Beltrán IIB form does not solve the problem completely. As a matter of fact the chronological hiatus between the amphora and the inscription is insignificant in this case, but still the composition and the colour of the clay better match the Dressel 12 form (as underlined by Cotton, Lernau and Goren) or Beltrán IVB (a variant of the Dressel 14 form), than Beltrán IIB.

The connection of the jar from Masada with the reign of Herod is strengthened by the archaeological context. The amphora was found in locus 1047, where fragments of a wine jar (No. 812), dated thanks to a fragment of inscription bearing the consular date of 19 B.C., were also found. The inscription on the jar indicates that the PHILONIAN(um) wine was intended for the King himself¹⁶. It is possible that both garum and wine were imported at the same time.

The Inscription

The bilingual inscription is situated on the partly preserved neck of the amphora under discussion. The text is incomplete and far from fully understood. According to Cotton, Lernau and Goren, the diplomatic transcript and the reconstructed version (cf. the photo) are as follows.

Diplomatic transcript:

1. GARUM
2. [symbol]

Reconstructed text:

1. Garum
2. [symbol]

¹⁴ L.M. Beltrán, *Las ánforas romanas en España*, Zaragoza, 420-33.

¹⁵ Sciallano, Sibella, *Amphores*; Dyczek, *Roman Amphorae*, 115. The Beltrán IIA form (i.e. the form identical to Dressel 38) is commonly thought as a little bit younger than Beltrán IIB form and was manufactured from the mid first century A.D.

¹⁶ This inscription is one from the whole series marked in turn from No. 804 to 816. The rest of the series was discovered in different locations in Masada. As inscriptions clearly indicate, all the jars contained wine from the Italian producer *L. Lenius*. See *Masada II*, 149-57; Cotton, Lernau, Goren, 'Fish sauces from Herodian Masada', 236.

3. Δ[3. Δ[
4. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩ. [4. Βασιλέω(ς)
5. ...Ρ.Ο..[5. ...ρ.ο..[
6. Α	6. Α(mphorae) vel Α(nnorum)

The editors interpret the genitive Βασιλέως as relating to Herod the Great, who figures here as the recipient of the amphora of the fish sauce. That seems highly probable, but the reading and interpretation of the other elements of the inscription are controversial and it must be studied with more care. At this point I am going to propose some supplements and interpretations.

First of all, attention should be drawn to the number of lines in the inscription. The photograph published in *Masada II* (and reproduced below) shows that it is highly implausible that five or six lines can be distinguished. The number of lines is one thing, but we should consider the possibility that two or even three separate inscriptions could be painted on the amphora (not necessary simultaneously) which complement each other. We know of sufficient examples of 'compound' *tituli picti* on the jars of fish sauces, olive oil and wine, also on Dressel 38 amphorae. Usually there were three inscriptions. The first, marked conventionally as α, contained the name of the product transported in the jar, its features and advertising elements. The second inscription, marked as β, bore the name of the *mercator*. The third, marked as δ, identified the producer of the foodstuff. In some cases additional inscriptions were present¹⁷.

Let's consider both options, i.e. that the *titulus pictus* from Masada was composed of two or more inscriptions, and that it was written at one time by a single hand. Unfortunately, the analyses of tiny samples of the ink from the letter G in garum and the letter Ω in Βασιλέω(ς) were inconclusive¹⁸. The editors mention only their impression that all parts of the *titulus pictus* were written by the same hand. Of course this does not settle the issue.

If the *titulus pictus* was 'compound', it is most probable that the Greek part of the inscription was inserted at a later date (even in Judea) than

¹⁷ R. Étienne, F. Mayet (1998), 'Les mercatores de saumure hispanique', *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome* 110 (1998), 150-1. Cf. L. Lagóstena Barrios, 'Las ánforas salsarias de Baetica. Consideraciones sobre sus elementos epigráficos', in *Epigrafía Anfórica*, ed. J. Remesal Rodríguez, Barcelona 2004, 197-219.

¹⁸ The samples of pigment were studied by Fourier Transform-Infrared (FTIR) Spectrometry. Probably the amount of the samples was too small for mineralogical analyses. See. Cotton, Lerna, Goren, 'Fish sauces from Herodian Masada', 228.

the original Latin text. The latter could follow the general pattern characteristic of Spanish *tituli picti* from Betica and Mauretania. It would be the inscription classified as α ¹⁹. If the last line was read correctly, it was part of a sequence which referred to the length of time the garum matured²⁰.

It is uncertain whether the editors' interpretation of the letter Δ is correct. According to the structure proposed by R. Étienne and F. Mayet, Δ could be a part of the δ inscription in which the information about a producer or owner of an *officina* was usually given²¹. However, the possible δ inscription should be shifted a little to the right. The idea that the Latin core of the inscription was supplemented by the later addition of the Greek can be supported by the argument that we are unaware of any examples of bilingual Latin-Greek inscriptions on the Roman amphorae from Spain. On the other hand, such bilingual *tituli picti* were found in Masada on wine jars²².

The alternative explanation is that the entire inscription was painted in Spain when the amphora was filled with fish sauce; then the jar was transported to Judea²³. It is true to say that we are unaware of a parallel example from Spain, but bilingual Latin-Greek *tituli picti* on the wine amphorae discovered in Masada (probably written in Italy) support the option of the garum inscription's integrity.

In both cases the proper interpretation of the word βασιλεύς remains crucial for an understanding of the destination of the fish sauce. The last letter in this word is indisputably ω . After it there is enough free space to suggest that it was not followed by a suffix. Thus we can reconstruct the abbreviation in two different ways: the genitive singular βασιλέω(ς) or the genitive plural βασιλέω(v). In my opinion this leads to three plausible explanations:

¹⁹ Étienne, Mayet, 'Les mercatores de saumure hispanique', 150-1.

²⁰ It is not certain that some fish sauces were matured in the same way as wine, but relatively numerous inscriptions on the Spanish amphorae bearing numbers, referring probably to the age of the fish sauce, makes it likely. Cf. Étienne and Mayet, 'Les mercatores de saumure hispanique', 151.

²¹ Étienne, Mayet, 'Les mercatores de saumure hispanique', 151.

²² Masada II, 134-9 (no. 795-99). Without a doubt they are imports from the Western provinces. There is no reasonable explanation for the bilingual character of these *tituli picti*.

²³ The jar could also have been inscribed in Italy in the event that Herod had ordered it as a part of a larger import, for example along with Italian wines, honey, apples (all of them appear in the *tituli picti* on the jars found in Masada). If the garum amphora was a gift for the king it could also have been inscribed in Italy.

- 1) the phrase garum βασιλέως means ‘garum for the king’,
- 2) or ‘garum of the king’ i.e. garum produced by royal shops,
- 3) the phrase garum βασιλέων means ‘garum of the kings’ that should be understood metaphorically ‘the royal garum’ i.e. garum of the highest quality.

In the first two instances we have to determine who the term ‘king’ referred to. The strongest candidate remains Herod the Great²⁴. All the datable inscriptions on the amphorae from Masada, which were imports from the Western provinces, belong to the Herodian period (37-4 B.C.). The rest of the *tituli picti* and the majority of uninscribed jars which constitute the western imports are very likely dated to the reign of the Herod the Great as well²⁵. If we decide to complete the genitive of the βασιλεύς in plural form βασιλέω(v), the title ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ would be a general term stressing the high quality of the garum. In this case it would not necessarily be associated with Herod the Great²⁶.

If the king mentioned in the *titulus pictus* was Herod, it is essential to know if he was the producer or the recipient of the garum. Although the first option is less plausible, we cannot exclude it completely. Our knowledge of the fish salting industry in Syria and Palestine is fragmentary but there is no doubt that the tradition reaches at least the Hel-

²⁴ As a matter of fact the title ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ also appears on the coins of Herod Agrippa I and Agrippa II, but it is highly improbable that during their reign the garum amphora landed in Masada. Cf. *RPC* I 4974, 4991-2; II 2265.

²⁵ *Masada* II, no. 795-825, 827-850.

²⁶ It is not implausible that some of the products attributed to Herod were imports for the needs of the Roman soldiers laying siege to Masada, it is, however, unlikely. The presence of garum and other fish sauces in legionary documents from different provinces of the Roman Empire clearly shows that the Roman soldiers consumed it. See: Egypt: *P. Sakaon* 77 (=SB VI 9614); R. Rémondon, ‘Un nouveau document concernant Probus’, *Revue de Philologie* 28 (1954), 199-210; Britannia: *Auxilia Epigraphica*. Vol. 1. *Inscriptiones Britanniae*, ed. by M. Hainzmann and P. Schubert, 1999, I 5.190,c; 5.202,a; 5.302, R.W. Davies, ‘The Roman military diet’, *Britannia* 2 (1971), 131; A.K. Bowman, ‘Roman military records from Vindolanda’, *Britannia* 5 (1974), 368-9. The amphorae discovered in the places where legions were stationed supplement this picture. See Curtis, *Garum and salsamenta*, 79-85; T. Bezeczky, ‘Amphora inscriptions – legionary supply?’, *Britannia* 27 (1996), 329-36. **John R. Rea thinks that the jar with the inscription No 820 (Masada II), was an import of liquamen from Pompeian distributor of fish sauces C. Cornelius Hermeros. Liquamen might be destined not for Herod, but Roman soldiers. See Rea, ‘Masada and Pompeii’, 122-3. However, even if the single amphorae from Masada should be dated to the second half of the first century A.D., the link of the numerous imports to Herod is firmly established. Cf. Cotton, Lernau, Goren, ‘Fish sauces from Herodian Masada’, 232-6.**

lenistic period²⁷. For the Roman period the sparse archaeological and papyrological material is supplemented by both parts of the Jewish Talmud (*Mishna* and *Gemara*). It is no surprise because the consumption of fish products, as other foods, was subject to detailed religious regulations²⁸. We know that *muria*, a kind of fish sauce (known also in Rome) was produced in Pelusium, Akko, Aspamia and Caesarea²⁹. The Talmud often distinguishes between *muria* produced by Jews and non-Jewish producers. Apparently it was important for ritual purposes. We do not know if the Palestinian salteries exported fish sauces but imports from Egypt are well attested³⁰. The amphorae from Masada (including the *garum* jar) also confirm imports from the Western provinces such as Italy or Spain³¹.

As we see, fish sauces were produced in Judea during the reign of Herod and it is not impossible that the royal salteries operated during the first century B.C. It is worth underlining that apart from the *garum* amphora, the remains of *allec* were found in a locally-made vessel in Masada. *Allec* was another kind of fish sauce obtained as a by-product during the processing of *garum*, or was produced as separate thing³². However, if the *garum* from Masada was a fish sauce originally from the royal fish factories, why was it transported in a Spanish amphora? Why

²⁷ The traces of this activity are proper names as *Magdala* (*Migdal Nunaja*) ‘the tower of fish’ or *Betsaida* ‘the house of fish’. The former was translated by Strabo as *Ταριχέαι* i.e. ‘the place where fish are salted’. See Strabo 16.2.45. On fishing in Palestine see E.W.G. Masterman, ‘The fisheries of Galilee’, *Palestine Exploration Fund* 40 (1908), 50-51; K.C. Hanson, ‘The Galilean fishing economy and the Jesus tradition’, *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 27 (1997), 99-111. On the earlier, Phoenician tradition see Curtis, *Garum and salsamenta*, 65-6.

²⁸ S. Krauss, *Talmudische Archäologie*, Leipzig 1910, Bd. 1, 110-12; Curtis, *Garum and salsamenta*, 143-5.

²⁹ D. Sperber, ‘Some observations of fish and fisheries in Roman Palestine’, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 118 (1968), 265-9; idem, ‘Objects of trade between Palestine and Egypt in Roman times’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 19 (1976), 121.

³⁰ P. Meyer II 65; Sperber, ‘Objects of trade between Palestine and Egypt’, 119-23; Curtis, *Garum and salsamenta*, 143. On *ταριχου Γαζιτια* mentioned in papyri see P. Oxy XVI 1924; C.A.M. Glucker, *The city of Gaza in the Roman and Byzantine periods*, Oxford 1987 (BAR International Ser. 325), 95.

³¹ Also one of the Rabbies in the second century A.D. mentions the tuna from Spain. See. BT. *Makshirin* 6.3; BT. *Aboda Zara* 39a; Curtis, *Garum and salsamenta*, 143.

³² On *allec* see Curtis, *Garum and salsamenta*, 7-8. Cotton, Lerna, Goren, ‘Fish sauces from Herodian Masada’, 237, allow for a possibility that: ‘the word *helek* or *hilek* in *mAbodah* 2.6 may well represent Jewish pronunciation of *allec* = *hallec* at this time’.

did the jar bear a bilingual Greek-Latin inscription, not one in Hebrew, Aramaic or even Greek?

The amphora could have been refilled and used a second time (we know such examples), though it is unlikely. It is more difficult to explain the bilingual character of the Latin-Greek inscription, particularly the presence of the Latin part³³. This makes it very unlikely that ‘garum of the king’ means the garum produced by the salteries of Herod the Great. Finally, the archaeological context at Masada suggests that the garum amphora was a part of luxurious imports which were intended for Herod himself³⁴. Consequently, the amphora under discussion, filled with the best Spanish garum, was also intended for the king and possibly for his court as well. This was not coincidental.

Towards a Definition of the Herodian Court Dining

The arguments presented above suggest that the most plausible interpretation of the presence of the garum amphora at Masada is to connect it to king Herod. Most probably he ordered the fish sauce for himself in the Spanish salteries (certainly with the help of middlemen)³⁵. It was no coincidence that the King chose garum made in Spain: Spanish fish sauces enjoyed a good reputation throughout the Roman Empire³⁶. Pliny the Elder praised the *garum sociorum* from Carthago Nova which was sold for HS 500 per *congius*. An average amphora of this kind of garum could cost as much as HS 2500-3000 per jar, which was – as Pliny underlines – surpassed only by perfumes³⁷. Herod’s garum was indisputably a luxurious product, but it had at the same time to fulfil an additional criterion, one which was fundamental for the Jews; it had to be kosher³⁸.

³³ In the Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire there was not a habit of inscribing transport containers as amphorae etc. Greek *tituli picti* on jars are extremely rare.

³⁴ A series of the jars for wine from Masada (no. 804-816) bear *tituli picti* with the clear statement that the wine was intended for Herod himself. See *Masada* II, 140-58. The former reading of the name of Herod in the dative case had to be modified since 1996 when the new inscription was discovered in Masada in which the name of Herod stands in the genitive: *Regis Herodis Iudaici*. See Cotton, Lernau, Goren, ‘Fish sauces from Herodian Masada’, 233.

³⁵ Alternatively, one can assume that it was a gift for the king.

³⁶ Curtis, *Garum and salsamenta*, 46-64.

³⁷ Plin., *HN* 31.94. See also Hor., *Sat.* 2.8.46; Sen., *Ep. ad Luc.* 95.25; Mart. 13.102; R. Étienne, ‘A propos du « *garum sociorum* »’, *Latomus* 29 (1970), 297-313.

³⁸ See on forbidden foods in the ancient societies P. Garnsey, *Food and society in classical antiquity*, Cambridge 1999, 82-99.

Reading the Jewish rabbinic texts (e.g. Talmud) shows that rabbis spared no effort in instructing Jews which fish product was allowed and which was denied them, as it is clearly stated in the Old Testament that Jews were forbidden to consume fish without scales³⁹. In practice, the information about the species of fish could be painted on the jars, or various labels could be attached⁴⁰. On the local market, it is probable that personal acquaintance with the producer of the fish products (they were both Jews and non Jews) was sufficient assurance of ritual purity. In *B. Avoda Zara* 39A one can read that Rabbi Abbahu (floruit at the turn of the third and fourth century) lets Jews buy oil, eggs and fish in Caesarea from everyone⁴¹. The Caesarean market seems to have been monopolized at this time by deliveries from Aspamia and Pelusium⁴². It is difficult to imagine how it was organized practically, but the quoted text shows that Jews had no problem separating kosher and non kosher foodstuffs in the local market. In all probability the practice was similar during the time of Herod the Great.

In the case of imports from the Western provinces of the Roman Empire, it was more difficult to determine if the food was kosher or not. The Romans had a general concept of the idea of kosherness of food among Jews, but – as demonstrated in the example of Pliny the Elder – this knowledge was at best cursory. Pliny states: ‘But another kind [of *garum*] is devoted to superstitious sex-abstinence and Jewish rites, and is made of fish without scales’⁴³. Pliny is wrong because, as mentioned, fish without scales were forbidden for Jews. It is not beyond the realms of possibility that Pliny referred his observation to the Jewish community in Pompeii, where archaeologists discovered jars which bore the inscriptions *garum castum* and *muria casta*, the dictionary translation

³⁹ *Deut.* 14.10; *Lev.* 11.10.5.

⁴⁰ It is possible that one inscribed amphora referred to the whole series of the transported jars. See H. Cotton, J. Geiger, ‘The Economic Importance of Herod’s Masada: The Evidence of the Jar Inscriptions’, in *Judea and the Greco-Roman World in the Time of Herod in the Light of Archaeological Evidence. Acts of a Symposium Organized by the Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Archaeological Institute, Georg-August-University of Göttingen at Jerusalem, November 3-4 1988*, ed. by K. Fittschen, G. Foerster, Göttingen 1996, 169.

⁴¹ See Sperber, ‘Objects of trade between Palestine and Egypt’, 12; cf. Curtis, *Garum and salsamenta*, 144-5.

⁴² Sperber, ‘Objects of trade between Palestine and Egypt’, 12.

⁴³ Loeb translation. See Plin., *HN* 31.95: <*garum*> *castimoniarum superstitioni etiam sacrisque Iudaeis dicatum, quod fit e piscibus squama carentibus*. Cf. T. Corcoran, ‘Pliny’s *Garum Castimoniarum*’, *The Classical Bulletin* 34 (1958), 69.

of which would be ‘pure garum’ and ‘pure muria’. However, a more accurate translation seems to be just ‘kosher’⁴⁴. Besides the kosher foodstuffs intended specifically for them, the Jews could also consume fish products from specific species. Thus for instance *garum scombri* (‘garum from mackerel’) could be eaten by Jews because mackerel is a fish with scales.

The *titulus pictus* on the garum amphora from Masada did not divulge any information about the fish species the garum was made from. Nevertheless it would be safe to assume that the fish sauce destined for the Jewish king had to be kosher. It is worth mentioning that numerous remnants of small fish were also found in Masada, which are most likely the remains of *allec* – a fish sauce obtained as a sediment and by-product of garum production⁴⁵. Cotton, Lernau and Goren emphasize that tens of thousands of those very small fish belong to only two species, namely herring and anchovy, both of which are kosher⁴⁶. It is clear that the *allec* from Masada was not produced on the spot and had to be imported from elsewhere. It was partly discovered as a residue in locally-made vessels which can be treated as proof of their Palestinian origin. However, Cotton, Lernau and Goren notice that ‘the micro-morphological study of the non-faunal residues in the *allec* strongly suggests that the fish sauce originated in Spain. It is likely to have been imported to Masada in a different vessel, probably a Spanish amphora, which might advertise its contents as *allec*’⁴⁷. Transporting salted fish products in alternative containers and repacking their content at the point of arrival was not unusual⁴⁸. If the *allec* from Masada was indeed imported to Judea from Spain, it had to be of a sort luxurious enough to be worth transporting from the other end of the Mediterranean basin. Although the *allec* cannot be definitively associated with Herod, it is plausible that he ordered it from Spain.

⁴⁴ P. Berdowski, ‘*Tituli picti* und die antike Werbesprache für Fischprodukte’, *Münstersche Beiträge z. antiken Handelsgeschichte*, 22/2 (2003), 37-8. R.I. Curtis (*Garum and salsamenta*, 165), claims that *garum castum* and *muria casta* could be consumed by others who practiced abstinence from some spices of fish. About muries in Palestine see D. Sperber, B. Ilan, ‘On social and economic conditions in third century Palestine’, *Archiv Orientalní* 38 (1970), 11-2

⁴⁵ Plin., *HN* 31.95.

⁴⁶ Cotton, Lernau, Goren, ‘Fish sauces from Herodian Masada’, 237.

⁴⁷ Cotton, Lernau, Goren, ‘Fish sauces from Herodian Masada’, 231.

⁴⁸ Cf. Aelian., *De nat. animal.* 13.6.12.

The garum and the *allec* from Masada are not an isolated example, which shows Herod's penchant for the Hellenic and the Roman taste. When analyzing other data from Masada the picture of the king's culinary preferences becomes more complete.

An interesting series of amphorae (nos. 804-816) were discovered in a variety of places in Masada during Yadin's excavations. In reality, these discoveries consist of fragments of jars of indeterminate type⁴⁹. Thanks to the thirteen inscriptions preserved on the fragments of the jars, we know that they were used to transport Italian wine. In spite of the fact that all the *tituli picti* are only partly preserved it would appear that they consisted of the three lines and followed the same scheme. In the first line the inscription bears a consular date (C. Sentius Saturninus appears in all the *tituli picti*), which allows the wine to be dated to 19 B.C.⁵⁰ In the first half of the second line the name of wine occurs. In eight of the inscriptions the name *Philonianum* can be made out; the rest of the series probably bore the same name. In the second half of the second line one can read the sequence DE L. LAEN[II FUNDO], which most probably referred to the producer of the wine. The editors relate the name from the inscription to the local Italian aristocratic family *Lae-nii*, whose estates were located in Southern Italy near Brundisium⁵¹. The third line of the inscription undoubtedly points at Herod the Great as the recipient of the wine-amphorae.

The series of the amphorae of *Philonianum* wine are yet another example of luxurious foodstuff imported to Judea from the Western provinces of the Roman Empire⁵². The *tituli picti* on the jars from Masada also confirm the existence of other kinds of wine. Wine amphorae were discovered in a water cistern there⁵³. Thanks to the bilingual Latin-

⁴⁹ *Masada* II, 140-141.

⁵⁰ I have not considered if the date referred to the year of vintage (*natum*) or the year of bottling (*diffusum*), because at the moment it is not of the major importance. The editors opt for either the year of bottling or the year of shipment. See *Masada* II, 143-4

⁵¹ *Masada* II, 145-6.

⁵² The *Philonianum* wine, except the *tituli picti* from Masada, is not attested in the literary and epigraphic evidence. The editors of *Masada* II, 145, state that it could be purely accidental and that *Philonianum* could be produced on a small scale like other luxurious and famous kinds of wine, e.g. *Caecubum*. Cf. N. Purcell, 'Wine and Wealth in Ancient Italy', *Journal of Roman Studies* 75 (1985), 1-19; A. Tchernia, *Le vin de l'Italie romaine. Essai d'histoire économique d'après les amphores*, Rome 1986 (BEFAR 261).

⁵³ *Masada* II, no. 795-99. In two cases the abbreviation can be reconstructed as AM(ineum). Cf. *Massicum Amineum*: Tchernia, *Le vin de l'Italie romaine*, 283, n. 68.

Greek inscriptions they can be dated to the reign of Herod. Although the name of the king does not appear in the *tituli picti*, it is exceedingly unlikely that they were imported to Masada by someone else. Another example of luxurious wine is *Massicum*⁵⁴. In this case it is not impossible that the wine was transported from Italy for the Roman officers from the *Legio X*, which laid siege to Masada and after 73 A.D. was stationed in the fortress⁵⁵.

The catalogue of the king's luxurious imports is not exhausted yet. If the *tituli picti* are read properly, one should probably add to it 'apples from Kyme', honey and olive oil⁵⁶. G. Finkielsztejn discerns one more link between Herod and the Hellenic-Roman world. He examined stamps on the wine amphorae from Masada and came to the conclusion that Herod received wines from P. Vedius Pollio, a wine producer in Chios and Kos. The amphorae from Pollio might even have been a gift for the king⁵⁷. Undoubtedly, the list had to be longer: a significant number of jars which seem to be imports cannot be associated with concrete products because of the lack of inscriptions, or the poor condition of the jars.

The archaeological evidence from Masada suggests the great richness of the king's stores. It fits well to the description in Josephus Flavius (*BJ* 8.4), who emphasises that they are a greater object of admiration than the royal palace itself: 'But the stores laid up within would have excited still more amazement, alike for their lavish splendour and their durability. For here had been stored a mass of corn, amply sufficient to last for years, abundance of wine and oil, besides every variety of pulse and piles of dates'⁵⁸.

The jars discovered in Masada show that the stores described by Josephus Flavius consisted of a great quantity of imports from Italy and

⁵⁴ See *Masada* II, 161, no. 819: MAS(sicum) EXCEL(lens).

⁵⁵ Cf. n. 25. There are known examples where the fish sauces were imported on the direct order of the legionary officers. See T. Bezczky, 'Amphora inscriptions – legionary supply?', *Britannia* 27 (1996), 329-36. Por. Rea, 'Masada and Pompeii', 122-24. It was also probable that the king was responsible for the import of wines: *Tarantinum* (no. 818), *Mulsum* (no. 821) and, if the inscriptions are deciphered correctly, *Caecubum* (nos. 832, 836). See Cotton, Geiger, 'The Economic Importance of Herod's Masada', 168.

⁵⁶ See *Masada* II, no. 800, 822; cf. no. 821.

⁵⁷ See Finkielsztejn, 'P. Vedius Pollio', 123-39. Cf. R. Syme, 'Who was Veolius Polio', *Journal of Roman Studies* 51 (1964), 23-30.

⁵⁸ Loeb translation.

Spain. All these products such as luxurious wines, garum, allec, apples from Kyme reveal Herod's strong inclination to emulate the Roman taste. The king's tendency to emulate Hellenic and Roman customs can also be observed in other fields of his activity, for instance architecture and material culture⁵⁹. One could treat the king's behaviour as a part of the wider process of Romanization of Judea, but it is more complicated than that. The phenomenon of Romanization of the peoples conquered by the Romans, especially in the Western and Northern provinces of the Roman Empire is well recognized⁶⁰. The emulation of the Roman way of life concerns many aspects, among them culinary customs. Things happened somewhat differently in the Eastern provinces, but the common feature was that, regardless of where one was, those most open to the notion of change were the local aristocracies, or indeed people from the higher or middle social strata⁶¹. Herod's penchant for Roman tastes

⁵⁹ G. Foerster, 'Hellenistic and Roman Trends in the Herodian Architecture of Masada', in *Judea and the Greco-Roman World in the Time of Herod in the Light of Archaeological Evidence. Acts of a Symposium Organized by the Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Archaeological Institute, Georg-August-University of Göttingen at Jerusalem, November 3-4 1988*, ed. by K. Fittschen, G. Foerster, Göttingen 1996, 55-72; R. Förtsch, 'The Residences of King Herod and their Relations to Roman Villa Architecture', in *Judea and the Greco-Roman World in the Time of Herod in the Light of Archaeological Evidence. Acts of a Symposium Organized by the Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Archaeological Institute, Georg-August-University of Göttingen at Jerusalem, November 3-4 1988*, ed. by K. Fittschen, G. Foerster, Göttingen 1996, 73-119; Netzer, 'The Palaces Built by Herod', 27-54.

⁶⁰ J.B. Tsirkin, 'Two Ways of Romanization of Spain', *Klio* 70 (1988), 477-85; L.A. Curchin, 'Élite urbaine, élite rurale en Lusitanie', in *Les villes de Lusitanie romaine: hiérarchies et territoires: table ronde internationale du CNRS (Talence, le 8-9 décembre 1988)*, Paris 1990, 265-76; M. Wood, E. Queiroga, *Current Research on Romanization of the Western Provinces*, Oxford 1992; J. De Francisco Martín, *Conquista y romanización de Lusitania*, Salamanca 1996 (Acta Salmanticensia. Estudios históricos & geográficos, 58); E. García Vargas, 'La producción anfórica en la bahía de Cádiz durante la república como índice de romanización', *Habis* 27 (1996), 49-57.

⁶¹ J.C. Edmondson, 'Le garum en Lusitanie urbaine et rurale: hiérarchies de demande et de production', in *Les villes de Lusitanie romaine: hiérarchies et territoires: table ronde internationale du CNRS (Talence, le 8-9 décembre 1988)*, Paris 1990, 123-47; Curchin, 'Élite urbaine', 265-76; P. Berdowski, 'Próba nowego spojrzenia na gospodarstwa typu villa i ich właścicieli w Hiszpanii (I-II w n.e.)' [**Economy and ideology – the attitude of Roman elite to craft (I BC-I AD)**], in *Electrum. Studies in Ancient History, vol. 4: Grupy społeczne, ich organizacja i funkcja w świecie starożytnym. Materiały konferencji naukowej PTH Kraków, 4-6 września 1997*, ed. E. Dąbrowa, Kraków 2000, 11-30.

seems to follow a similar pattern. However, Judea was a peculiar example because of the restrictive religious rules of its Jewish inhabitants. Of course, the Roman imports intended for Herod had to fulfil the strict regime of being kosher, but probably the king's culinary preferences were not shared by many, except his court. The garum amphora discovered in Masada was a perfect choice for the Roman type of banquet in the comfortable residence of the Jewish king within the fortress. Nevertheless, it is a sign of the king's caprice rather than a mark of the Jew's profound fascination with Roman cuisine and customs.

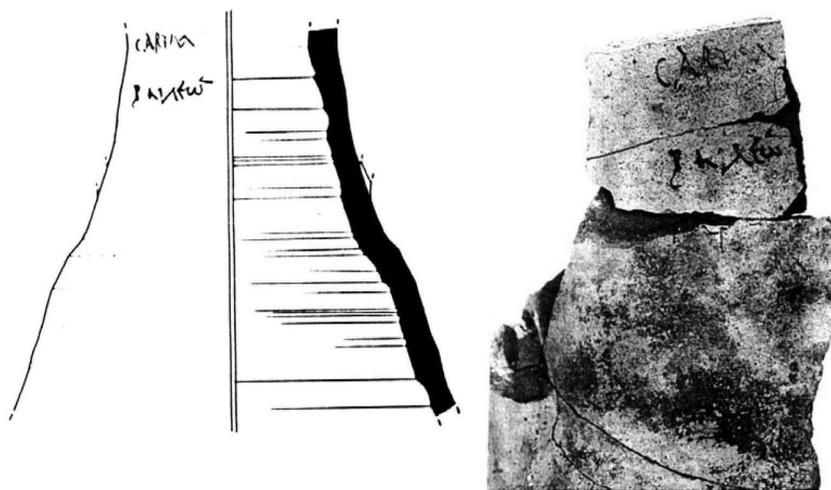


Fig. 1-2. The amphora from Masada; Inv. no. 1047-650
(after Cotton, Lernau, Goren (1996), 228).