

## THE OIL LAMPS FROM THE EASTERN CIRCUS AT CAESAREA MARITIMA

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The excavations along the *spina* (barrier) of the Eastern Circus at Caesarea (see Porath, this volume) yielded one intact oil lamp and 37 oil-lamp fragments, all produced in the Early Roman period, from the late first century BCE to the second century CE.<sup>1</sup> The oil lamps were retrieved from sealed loci of Stratum IV, from Stratum IV loci disturbed by the later foundation trenches of Stratum III, and from Stratum II pits in Area VI (graves) and in Area VIa. The oil lamps are divided into two groups: wheel-made and mold-made. The form designations are based on a corpus created by the author for the lamps retrieved from the IAA excavations at Caesarea (Porath and Gur 2015; Porath, in prep. a, b; Gendelman, in prep.).<sup>2</sup>

### *Wheel-Made Lamps*

The wheel-made lamps comprise about one-third of the assemblage. The knife-pared nozzles, representing Form C5R/51,<sup>3</sup> were very popular in the Early Roman period, from the second half of the first century BCE to the first half of the second century CE, and have been uncovered in abundant numbers at many sites. They have been termed ‘Herodian Lamps’ (Seller and Baramki 1953:31) and ‘Wheel-Made Knife-Pared Lamps’ (Barag and Hershkovitz 1994:24–58). These lamps were very common at Caesarea in the Early Roman period, from the founding of the city by Herod in 22–10 BCE to the first half of the second century CE (Porath and Gur 2015:7). Their fabric contains lime grits, suggesting they were made of raw material that originated in the Judea and Samaria Hills. Thus, the lamps were either produced at one of those locales or alternately, the raw material was imported to (yet uncovered) pottery workshops at Caesarea.

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<sup>1</sup> The lamps were photographed by the author. The article was edited by Shoshana Israeli.

<sup>2</sup> The classification and nomenclature used here are explained in Gendelman, in prep. Briefly, the letter ‘C’ refers to Caesarea, the number refers to the general form (here, ‘5’; lamps), the following letter refers to the period (R= Roman) and the number after the slash is the serial number of the particular type with a lowercase letter connoting a subtype.

<sup>3</sup> The most comprehensive study of these oil lamps was published in the final report of Masada (Barag and Hershkovitz 1994).



Fig. 1. Oil lamps.

| No. | Basket No. | Locus | Form    | Description                                 |
|-----|------------|-------|---------|---|
| 1   | 600,035/41 | 60024 | C5R/51  | Knife-pared nozzle fragment; wheel-made     |
| 2   | 600,031/42 | 60024 | C5R/51  | Knife-pared nozzle fragment; wheel-made     |
| 3   | 601,186/41 | 61054 | C5R/51a | Knife-pared nozzle fragment; wheel-made     |
| 4   | 600,031/41 | 60024 | C5R/51a | Knife-pared nozzle fragment; wheel-made     |
| 5   | 601,077/41 | 61058 | C5R/51a | Knife-pared nozzle fragment; wheel-made     |
| 6   | 600,049/41 | 60010 | C5R/51  | Ridged filling hole fragment; wheel-made    |
| 7   | 600,051/41 | 60033 | C5R/61  | Intact; mold-made                           |
| 8   | 601,077/43 | 61058 | C5R/72  | Body fragment, light black gloss; mold-made |
| 9   | 600,032/42 | 60024 | C5R/71  | Handle fragment; mold-made                  |
| 10  | 601,205/41 | 61065 | C5R/71  | Handle fragment; mold-made                  |

Seven of the eleven nozzles are short of any decoration (e.g., Fig. 1:1, 2) and are classified as Form C5R/51; four (e.g., Fig. 1:3–5) are decorated and ascribed to Variant C5R/51a. The stratified evidence from Herod's Circus indicates that the decorated Variant C5R/51a was introduced sometime in the beginning of the first century CE, while Form C5R/51 appeared in about 25 BCE (Porath and Gur 2015:7–15; Porath, in prep. a, b). The decoration was applied to the lamp when it was semi-dry. Two have a single incision across the nozzle (Fig. 1:3); one has three parallel incisions across the nozzle, which probably continued

toward the missing body (Fig. 1:4); and one has two parallel rows of dots impressed across the nozzle and an encircled dot at each end of the nozzle (Fig. 1:5). A fragment of a ridged filling hole (Fig. 1:6), made of similar fabric, apparently belongs to Form C5R/51.

### *Mold-Made Lamps*

A single intact specimen and many fragments belong to mold-made lamps, either locally made or imported. The intact lamp (Fig. 1:7) is made of a fabric similar to that of the wheel-made lamps of Form C5R/51. It is undecorated and has a splayed nozzle, a rounded body with a large filling hole, a flat base and a winged projection on either side of the joint between the nozzle and the body. The lamp was found cracked along the seam between its upper and lower parts, and was apparently disqualified in antiquity. It belongs to a group of Judean mold-made lamps, known from the mid-first to the mid-second centuries CE. Similar lamps were found in the fill excavated outside the eastern and southern tiers of Herod's Circus, and classified as Form C5R/61 (Porath and Gur 2015:8–9). Two undecorated body fragments made of similar clay (not illustrated) probably belong to other lamps of the same form.

Many small, mold-made body fragments belong to black- and red-glossed, imported discus lamps (Fig. 1:8). They were classified as Form C5R/72 (= Broneer 1930, Type XXII; Bailey 1980, Type AII). These lamps were very popular throughout the Roman Empire, from Augustan times to the Flavian period, and were very common at that time at Caesarea (Porath and Gur 2015:9, see dating and references therein).

Two fragments—a loop handle (Fig. 1:9) and a shield (Fig. 1:10)—belong to handles of Imperial lamps, equivalent to Broneer Type XXI (Broneer 1930) and Bailey Type DII (Bailey 1980). They were produced from the late first century BCE to mid-first century CE. These lamps, classified as C5R/71, are common at Caesarea (Porath 2007: Fig. 4; Porath and Gur 2015:9).

### *Conclusions*

It seems that the intact lamp and the lamp fragments described above arrived at the Eastern Circus together with city refuse to fertilize the fields outside the Herodian fortifications of Caesarea prior to the building of the circus (Stratum IV), or to level the arena for the erection of the circus (Stratum III). The oil lamps date to the Early Roman period (late first to second centuries CE) corresponding to the pottery (see Gendelman, this volume) and the coins (see Bijovsky, this volume) that were found in the IAA excavations, as well as in the JECM excavations (Humphrey 1986:489–490).

The date of the oil lamps indicates that the construction of the Eastern Circus (Stratum III) was initiated not earlier than the beginning of the second century CE. Other archaeological evidence (see Porath, this volume) attests that the Eastern Circus was constructed around the mid-second century CE.

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