

Ein Gedi between the Two Revolts*

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Ein Gedi in the documents — ‘an imperial village’

Ein Gedi is mentioned for the first time in the documents from the Judaeen Desert on 6 May 124 CE in a deed of acknowledgement of debt by Bathatha's second husband, Judah son of Eleazar Khthousion (*P.Yadin* 11 lines 12-13 = lines 1-2):¹

ἐπὶ ὑ[πάτ]ων Μανείου Ἀκειλίου Γλαβρίωνος καὶ Τορκουά[του
Θ]ηβαϊανοῦ[ῦ πρὸ] μιᾶς νωνῶν Μαίω[ν] ἐν Ἐνγαδοῖς κώμῃ κυρίου
Καίσαρος

In the consulate of Manius Acilius Glabrio and Torquatus Thebanianus on 6 May in Ein Gedi, the village of our Lord the Emperor.

An undated fragmentary document which belongs to the so-called Seiyâl collection² describes Ein Gedi in the same way (*P.Hev.* 67 lines 1-3):

Μολιμας...[... τῶν ἀπὸ Ἐν]γαδων κυρίου Κ[αίσαρος κώμης χαίρειν.

Molimas [to X from Ein] Gedi, [the village] of our Lord [the Emperor].

* This paper is based on a lecture delivered (in Hebrew) in spring of 1995 at a colloquium held at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in memory of my teacher and friend Professor Abraham (Addi) Wasserstein. An English version was presented at the Judaeen Desert Documents Workshop organised by Ranon Katzoff at Bar Ilan University, 3-5 June 1998.

¹ N. Lewis, *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters. Greek Papyri*, Jerusalem 1989 (henceforth Lewis). The papyri are referred to in this article as *P.Yadin*, as are the other unpublished papyri found in Naḥal Ḥever in 1960-61, cf. Y. Yadin, ‘Expedition D’, *IEJ* 11, 1961, 36-52; idem, ‘Expedition D—The Cave of the Letters’, *IEJ* 12, 1962, 227-57.

² H.M. Cotton and A. Yardeni, *Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek Texts from Naḥal Ḥever and Other Sites with an Appendix Containing Alleged Qumran Texts (The Seiyâl Collection 2)*, Discoveries in the Judaeen Desert XXVII, Oxford 1997, pp. 244ff.

Notwithstanding the sorry condition of *P.Hev.* 67, the Roman dating at the end of this document, [. ν]ωνῶν Μαίω[ν], combined with the language of the document, implies that we are in the same environment as that of the other documents from the archives found in Naḥal Hever.

When and why did Ein Gedi become ‘a village of our Lord the Emperor’ and what status is implied by this title? It seems self-evident that this is not merely an honorific title like ‘Hadrianic Petra’ in *P.Yadin* 25 line 26 = line 48.³ What then is the reality behind the title?

I know of only one other village in the Roman empire similarly designated: this is the village of Beth Phoura in Syria attested thus in a petition from 28 August 245:⁴

Ἰουλίῳ Πρεῖσκῳ τῷ διασημοτάτῳ ἐπάρχῳ Μεσοποταμίας διέποντι τὴν ὑπατείαν [i.e. of Syria] παρὰ Ἀρχῶδου Φαλλαιοῦ καὶ Φιλῶτα Νισραιοῦ καὶ Οὐορωδου Συμιοςβαραχου καὶ Ἀβεδσαυτα Αβεδιαρδα ὄντων ἀπὸ κώμης Βηφφούρης κυριακῆς τῆς περὶ Ἀππάδαναν (*P.Euphr.* 1 lines 3-5).

To Iulius Priscus, prefect of Mesopotamia, exercising the function of a consular governor (i.e. of Syria), from Archodes son of Phallaios, Philotas son of Nisraiabos, Ouorodes son of Symiosbarachos and Abedsautas son of Abedi-ardas — all from the imperial village of Beth Phoura in the region of Appadana.

Κώμη κυριακή is translated by the editors as ‘village impériale’. Was Beth Phoura part of the imperial domain (*praedia fiscalia*) attested in *P.Dura* 64 (221 CE) as existing near Appadana,⁵ the district to which Beth Phoura belonged (κώμης Βηφφούρης κυριακῆς τῆς περὶ Ἀππάδαναν)? Such an interpretation is rendered very likely by the villagers’ request to the governor

³ As claimed by N. Lewis, ‘The Babatha Archive: A Response’, *IEJ* 44, 1994, 244; see B. Galsterer-Kröll, ‘Untersuchungen zu den Beinamen der Städte des Imperium Romanum’, *Epigraphische Studien* 9, 1972, 55-7 (on titles of peregrine cities).

⁴ D. Feissel and J. Gascou, ‘Documents d’archives romains inédits du moyen Euphrate (III^e siècle après J.-C.) I. Les pétitions (*P.Euphr.* 1 à 5)’, *Journal des Savants* 1995, 71; cf. idem, ‘Documents d’archives romains inédits du moyen Euphrate (III^e siècle après J.-C.) III. Actes Divers et Lettres (*P.Euphr.* 11 à 17)’, *Journal des Savants* 2000, no. 11, ll. 4-5 (p. 159).

⁵ ‘Et peto compellas ordinatum Aug(ustorum) n(ostorum) lib(ertum) equitibus siv[e] mulionib[us] q[u]i in vexill(at)ione Appadanens[i] deg(unt) horde[u]m ex praedis fiscalib[us] dare’, C. B. Welles, R. O. Fink, and J. F. Gilliam. *The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Final Report, V.1: The Parchments and Papyri*, New Haven 1959, 231.

of Syria Koele for the intervention of the imperial procurator who has his seat in Appadana:⁶

διὰ τοῦτο κατεφύγομεν ἐπί σε καί δεόμεθά σου κελεῦσαι δι' ὑπογραφῆς σου Κλαυδίῳ Ἀρί<σ>τωνι τῷ κρατίστῳ ἐπιτρόπῳ τῷ ἐν Ἀππαδάνᾳ, ὕφ' ὃν ἡ διοίκησις ἐστίν,⁷ ἐν ἀκεραίῳ πάντα τηρηθῆναι καί βίαν κωλυθῆναι μέχρι τῆς σῆς εἰς τοὺς τόπους ἑσομ[έ]νης σου εὐτυχῶς ἐπιδημίας (lines 13-16)

Therefore, we had recourse to you and request that in your subscription you order Claudius Ariston, the 'egregius' procurator in Appadana, who is in charge of the *dioikesis*, to preserve the status quo and prevent violence until your joyful visit to these places takes place.⁸

In fact the meaning of κώμη κυρίου Καίσαρος and κώμη κυριακή is not in doubt: a village which belongs to the emperor, part of his private property, the *patrimonium*. But what does this imply about the legal status of the residents of the village and their property; what implications, if any, does the status of 'imperial village' have for its provincial status?⁹ 'The insoluble problem of the juridical status of imperial property in the established empire'¹⁰ cannot be resolved here. However, we should be wary of projecting

⁶ The *procuratores* of imperial estates did not necessarily reside in the properties but in cities, see e.g. *CIL* VIII 20570 col. lii line 10 (for Africa).

⁷ Cf. *P.Euph.* 2 lines 15-16: τῷ ἐν Ἀππαδάνᾳ ἐπιτρόπῳ Κλαυδίῳ Ἀρίστωνι.

⁸ The editors, however, dismiss the possibility that Ariston is approached 'en tant que procurateur des domaines impériaux de Syrie'; instead they regard Ariston as 'un procurateur purement judiciaire, gérant le *conventus* entre deux visites du gouverneur, comparable, à certains égards, à l'épistratège égyptien'. Lastly, they understand διοίκησις to mean 'judicial assize' rather than 'financial administration', Feissel and Gascou (above, n. 4) 83-4. See the objections to their interpretation of the evidence in R. Haensch, *Capita provinciarum*, Mainz 1997, 254-5, n. 139. F. Nasti, 'Un nuovo documento dalla Siria sulle competenze di governatori e procuratori provinciali in tema di interdetti', *Index* 2, 1993, 365-80 also seems to exclude the possibility that Claudius Ariston is a procurator in charge of the imperial domain.

⁹ R. Wiegels, 'Solum Caesaris — Zu einer Weihung im römischen Walheim', *Chiron* 19, 1979, 61-102 is not helpful. He addresses the question on p. 92: 'in welchem Verhältnis der *saltus* zum Umland stand', without offering any satisfactory discussion.

¹⁰ This is F. Millar's formulation in *The Emperor in the Roman World*, London 1977, 177, but see the whole chapter there pp. 175-89. The subject is worthy of serious treatment even if it serves only to show the limitations of our knowledge. See now M. Sartre, 'Les *Metrokômiai* de Syrie de Sud', *Syria* 76, 1999,

backwards our own notions and preconceptions — or misconceptions — of the legal consequences entailed by the status of ‘an imperial village’. Thus for example one notes that the petitions to the governor in *P.Euph.* 1 and 2 clearly imply the existence in Beth Phoura and in Birtha Okbanon¹¹ of private property: *χώρα* (*P.Euph.* 1 line 11) and *ἄμπελος* (*P.Euph.* 2 lines 8, 15). Similar issues, as we shall see, arise in the case of Ein Gedi. Perhaps the documents at hand are the best evidence we have for the reality behind the title.¹²

Before we investigate this, however, we should ask when and why Ein Gedi became ‘the village of our Lord the Emperor’.

Ein Gedi as part of a royal domain. The balsam groves

The first editor of *P.Yadin* 11 offers the following explanation: ‘The oasis of En-gedi and its surroundings were a flourishing part of the royal domain under the Hasmonaean and Herodian dynasties. ... As such they might reasonably be expected to have become part of the Roman emperor’s estates after the suppression of the Jewish Revolt in A.D. 70. That a *priori* assumption is confirmed by the characterization of En-gedi in this document ... as *κώμη κυρίου Καίσαρος*’.¹³ Lewis, as he acknowledges there, embraces the theory propounded by the archaeologists who excavated Ein Gedi in the 1960s.¹⁴

It must be said in warning that no literary or epigraphic source supports the archaeologists’ assertions that it was John Hyrcanus who turned the oasis into ‘a royal Hasmonaean domain’ and settled ‘tenant farmers there’, and that

219ff. on the judicial status of the *metrokōmiai* in the imperial estate in Batanea in the third century CE.

¹¹ It is true that Birtha Okbanon is not described as ‘an imperial village’, but this is an altogether different kind of document by an illiterate person (see line 20).

¹² Cf. Millar (supra, n. 10): ‘we are hopelessly ignorant of the patterns of private ownership and exploitation of land ... which prevailed in the different regions of the empire’, p. 175; cf. H.M. Cotton, ‘Land Tenure in the Documents from the Nabataean Kingdom and the Roman Province of Arabia’, *ZPE* 119, 1997, 255-65.

¹³ Lewis (above, n. 1) p. 42; cf. idem (above, n. 3) 244.

¹⁴ See B. Mazar, T. Dothan and I. Dunayevsky, ‘En-Gedi. First and Second Seasons of Excavations 1961-1962’, *Atiqot* 5, 1966, 4-7. These theories were first formulated by J. Naveh in an unpublished MA dissertation — based on the author’s survey of Ein Gedi in 1956-7 — submitted to the Hebrew University in 1958, and then published for internal use in Hebrew by the Ein Gedi Field School in 1966.

Ein Gedi continued its life as a royal/imperial domain into the Byzantine period. It is only for the balsam plantations that we have Pliny's explicit testimony that they were always in royal hands: *Sed omnibus odoribus praefertur Balsamum, uni terrarum Iudaeae concessum, quondam in duobus tantum hortis, utroque regio, altero iugerum viginti non amplius, altero pauciorum* (NH 12.111).¹⁵ It seems that of the two plantations mentioned in other sources as well one was located in Jericho¹⁶ and the other one in Ein Gedi.¹⁷ The reference to royal possession (*utroque regio*), is likely to refer to the Seleucid(?),¹⁸ Hasmonean and Herodian dynasties. Royal monopoly is also implied by the artificial attempts to limit the balsam's growth in order to ensure that demand always exceeded supply and the price always remained high.¹⁹

However, even if direct royal/imperial control was restricted to the balsam groves, it is still hard to see why they should have become imperial property only in 70 CE. If, as Lewis' interpretation seems to imply, the Roman emperor was the legal heir to the 'royal domain' of the Hasmonean and Herodian dynasties, as he very likely was, then the taking over of the balsam groves would have happened not in 70, but long before. As early as 34 BCE Mark Antony bestowed the balsam together with the dates of Jericho on Cleopatra, from whom Herod leased them.²⁰ After Actium they may

¹⁵ Cf. M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* I, Jerusalem 1976, no. 213 (henceforth Stern). It is obvious that by Pliny's time the balsam grew in more than two places in Palestine; cf. Galen *De Antidotis* 1.4, p. 25 (Kühn) = Stern, no. 391, cited in the text at note 32.

¹⁶ For Jericho see Strabo 16.2.41, p. 763 Kramer = Stern, no. 115; Jos. *BJ* 1.138 (= *AJ* 14.54); *BJ* 1.361-2 (= *AJ* 15.95-6); *BJ* 4. 469.

¹⁷ For Ein Gedi see Jos. *AJ* 9.7 and below n. 28. Pliny's *quondam in duobus tantum hortis* implies that in his time there were more than two, but this does not concern us here.

¹⁸ Possibly Alexander had already taken possession of the balsam gardens; see Pliny, *NH* 12.117 = Stern, no. 213.

¹⁹ Strabo tells us that in Egypt those who wished to obtain greater profits from the papyrus imitated Jewish practice with the balsam: οὐ γὰρ ἑὼςι πολλαχοῦ φύεσθαι, τῇ δὲ σπάνει τιμὴν ἐπιτιθέντες τὴν πρόσοδον οὕτως αὐξοῦσι, Strabo, 17.1.15 = Stern no. 121; this explains τίμιος οὖν ἔστι, καὶ διότι ἐνταῦθα μόνον γεννᾶται in Strabo 16.2.41 = Stern no. 115; see in general H.M. Cotton and W. Eck, 'Ein Staatsmonopol und seine Folgen: Plinius, *Naturalis Historia* 12,123 und der Preis für Balsam', *RhM* 140, 1997, 153-61.

²⁰ Jos. *BJ* 1.361-2; cf. *AJ* 15.96. Herod leased the entire domain taken from him for 200 talents a year. See E. Schürer, G. Vermes, and F. Millar, *The History of*

have been returned to Herod; or else the lease continued, this time between Octavian/Augustus and Herod. The rule of the Herodian dynasty came to an end with Archelaus' exile in 6 CE. Josephus informs us that at that time 'his property was absorbed by the imperial treasury': ἡ οὐκία αὐτοῦ (Archelaus') τοῖς Καίσαρος θησαυροῖς ἐγκατατάσσεται (*BJ* 2.111).²¹ Thus if not already earlier, then at the latest in 6 CE, when Archelaus was exiled and Judaea provincialised,²² the balsam groves must have become part of the *patrimonium*.²³

And yet, at first sight, this seems to stand in direct contradiction to Pliny's claim that the balsam had become only in *his* days subject to taxation: 'it is enslaved *now* and pays tribute together with its people': *servit nunc haec* (i.e. the balsam) *ac tributa pendit cum sua gente* (*NH* 12.111 = Stern, no. 213),²⁴ and only *now* has there begun the cultivation of the balsam by the *fiscus*, 'now the *fiscus* plants it, and it has never been in such quantity': *seritque nunc eum fiscus, nec umquam fuit numerosior* (*NH* 12.113 = Stern, no. 213).

In an attempt to solve this difficulty it has been suggested that Pliny is referring here to drastic changes which were introduced in his time into the methods of cultivating and exploiting the balsam — perhaps as a consequence of the Jewish attempt to destroy the balsam groves ('The Jews assaulted and ravaged it just as they assaulted and ravaged their own life; the Romans

the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ, 175B.C.–A.D.135 I, Edinburgh 1973, 298-300 and especially n. 36 there.

- ²¹ Cf: *AJ* 17.344: Augustus exiled Archelaus and τὰ δὲ χρήματα ἀπηνέγκατο; see F. Millar, 'The *fiscus* in the first two centuries', *JRS* 53, 1963, 30; M. Alpers, *Das Nachrepublikanische Finanzsystem. Fiscus und Fiscii in der frühen Kaiserzeit*, Berlin/New York 1995, 295ff.; see Cotton and Eck (above, n. 19), 155, n. 12.
- ²² For its annexation to Syria, see H.M. Cotton, 'Some Aspects of the Roman Administration of Judaea/Syria-Palaestina', *Lokale Autonomie und römische Ordnungsmacht in den kaiserzeitlichen Provinzen vom 1.-3. Jh.*, Kolloquien des Historischen Kollegs, ed. W. Eck, Munich 1999, 75ff.; eadem, 'Ἡ νέα ἐπαρχία Ἀραβία: The New Province of Arabia in the Papyri from the Judaeian Desert', *ZPE* 116, 1997, 106f.
- ²³ Contra P. Baldacci, '*Patrimonium e ager publicus al tempo dei Flavi*', *PP* 24, 1969, 355ff.
- ²⁴ In addition the balsam was displayed in the triumphal procession of 71, see *NH* 12.111 = Stern, no. 213: *Ostendere *arbutum* hanc urbi imperatores Vespasiani, clarumque dictu, a Pompeio Magno in triumpho arbores quoque duximus*.

warded off the attack, and they battled over the fruit.²⁵) The new methods were aimed at significantly increasing the quantity of the balsam, presumably without lowering its price. They faithfully reflect Vespasian's economic policy of expanding, saving, and exploiting resources untapped before.²⁶ Pliny's *inplet* (i.e. the balsam) *colles vinearum modo* ('it covers hillsides as vineyards do') as well as Jerome's *balsamum quod nascitur in vineis Enggadi*²⁷ may well describe the expansion by the Romans of the area over which the balsam grew after the revolt, as against the previous small dimensions of the two gardens: twenty *iugera* in one case and less than twenty *iugera* in the other.²⁸ Furthermore, the *colles* are likely to be the terraced hills above ancient Ein Gedi. The elaborate water supply system discovered in archaeological surveys of the hills facing ancient Ein Gedi, the terraces, the aqueducts, the water reservoirs, the pools, the cisterns and the canals — all date from the Roman and Byzantine periods, not before.²⁹ The later sources on balsam do not mention Jericho as one of its centres, but only Ein Gedi.³⁰ This may indicate that Ein Gedi, rather than Jericho, became the centre of large-scale production of the balsam. It is therefore not insignificant that already in the second century, Galen expressly connects the balsam with Ein Gedi. He tells us that the Syrian *opobalsamum* has another name

²⁵ *Saeviere in eam Iudaei sicut in vitam quoque suam; contra defendere Romani, et dimicatum pro frutice est*, *NH* 12.113 = Stern, no. 213). See Cotton and Eck (above, n. 19), 155ff.; cf. J. Patrich, 'Agricultural development in Antiquity: improvements in the cultivation and production of the balsam', in Z. Safrai, I. Friedman and J. Schwartz (eds.), *Chikrei Eretz. Studies in the History of Eretz Israel in Honor of Professor J. Felix*, Ramat Gan 1997, 143ff. (Hebrew).

²⁶ E.g. the utilization of the twigs of the balsam, which used to be thrown away, for producing the *xylobalsamum*; this earned the *fiscus* 800,000 sesterces in the five years following the end of the revolt: Pliny, *NH* 12.118 = Stern, no. 213. Two Latin papyri mentioning the *xylobalsamum* were found on Masada, and thus are to be dated ca. 73/74, see H. M. Cotton and J. Geiger, *Masada II: The Latin and Greek Documents*, 1989, nos. 725 and 749b. On the new methods of growing the balsam see in detail Cotton and Eck (above, n. 19) 160f.

²⁷ *Comm. in Hiezechielem 27:17 (PL XXV, col. 256)*; recalling *Canticus Canticorum 1:13: dilectus meus mihi in vineis Enggadi* (דודי לי בכרמי עין גדי).

²⁸ *altero iugerum viginti non amplius, altero pauciorum*, Pliny, *NH* 12.111 = Stern, no. 213. It is generally assumed that the grove in Jericho was the bigger one.

²⁹ See the works cited in note 14, and esp. Naveh, 17ff. The date has been confirmed in recent excavations in Ein Gedi by Gideon Hadas (oral communications by the archaeologist).

³⁰ Above, n. 28 and Patrich (above, n. 25) 143.

derived from the place where it grows most plentifully and most beautifully: 'for it is named "Ein Gedian"; because it is superior to that which grows in other places in Palestine': τὸ Ἐγγαδηνὸν γὰρ ὀνομάζεται· κρεῖτον ὄν τῶν ἐν ἄλλοις χωρίοις τῆς Παλαιστίνης γεινομένων.³¹ And Jerome, as we saw, speaks of the *balsamum quod nascitur in vineis Engaddi*.

Ein Gedi during and after the first revolt: its status

Since the real change in Ein Gedi's status seems to be the consequence of the first revolt, this must be the starting point of any discussion. Ein Gedi fared badly during the first revolt. The Sicarii who had occupied Masada since 66 CE³² raided the village in Passover 68: after driving away the men and killing seven hundred women and children who could not escape, they plundered the victims' homes, removing all fresh supplies which they took with them to Masada.³³ In June 68 Vespasian arrived in Jericho where he was joined by M. Ulpius Traianus, the commander of the Tenth Legion Fretensis.³⁴ Vespasian remained in the area for a while, establishing a camp in Jericho.³⁵ We may assume that the pitched battles over the balsam groves described by Pliny³⁶ took place at this time. Ein Gedi, which had suffered the attacks of the Sicarii earlier on, was now in ruins:

³¹ Galen, *De Antidotis* 1.4, p. 25 (Kühn) = Stern, no. 391. Aelius Aristides (*Or.* 36.82 = Stern, no. 370) must also be referring to Ein Gedi since the balsam which he mentions grows near the Dead Sea. Cf. from the fourth century the testimony of Eusebius: Ἐνγγάδι, παρακειμένη τῇ νεκρᾷ θαλάσσει, ὅθεν τὸ ὀποβάλαμον, *Onomasticon* (Klostermann), p. 86, and that of Jerome quoted in the text at n. 27.

³² Not the Zealots, as our sole source, Josephus, makes quite clear, whereas ideological discussions tend to obfuscate; see H.M. Cotton and J.J. Price, 'Who conquered Masada in 66 C.E., and who lived there until the fortress fell?' *Zion* 55, 1990, 449-54 (Hebrew).

³³ Jos. *BJ* 4.402-4.

³⁴ Jos. *BJ* 4.450.

³⁵ Jos. *BJ* 4.450. Josephus' description of Vespasian's sojourn in the Dead Sea area, exploring it and preparing his next moves (*BJ* 4. 451-90), implies that he spent more than a few days there. He heard of Nero's death (which occurred in 9 June 68) only when he returned to Caesarea (*BJ* 4.491). For Roman and Jewish chronology in book 4 of the *Jewish War* see J.J. Price, *Jerusalem under Siege. The Collapse of the Jewish State 66-70 CE*, Leiden 1992, 218-23.

³⁶ Above in text at n. 25.

Infra hos (i.e. the Essenes) Engada oppidum fuit, secundum ab Hierosolymis fertilitate palmietorumque nemoribus,³⁷ nunc alterum bustum (Plin. *NH* 5.73 = Stern, no. 204).

Lying below the Essenes was (formerly) the town of Ein Gedi, second only to Jerusalem in the fertility of its land and its groves of palm-dates, but now, like Jerusalem, a heap of ashes.

When we next hear of Ein Gedi in *P.Yadin* 11 of May 124 it has become a κώμη κυρίου Καίσαρος and part (or the whole) of the *cohors I milliaria Thracum* is stationed there.³⁸

P.Yadin 11, lines 13-15 = lines 2-3: Ἰούδας Ἐλ[αζ]άρου Χθου[σίω]νος Ἐ[ν]γαδηνός Μαγωνίω Οὐάλεντι (έκατοντάρ)χ(ω) σπείρης πρώτης μειλιαρίας Θρακῶν χ[αί]ρειν· ὁμολογῶ ἔχειν καὶ ὀφείλειν σοι ἐν δάνει ἀργυρίου Τυρίου δηνάρια ἐξήκοντα, οἷ εἰςιν [c]τᾶτῆρες δεκαπέντε.

Judah son of Eleazar Khthousion of Ein Gedi to Magonius Valens, centurion of the *cohors I milliaria Thracum* greetings. I acknowledge that I have from you and I owe you 60 denarii of Tyrian silver, which are 15 staters.

The Jewish attempt to destroy the balsam during the revolt and the intensive cultivation of the orchards after 70 fully account for the presence of a military force in Ein Gedi. The unit could not have arrived there before 91 since it is attested in Syria in this year.³⁹ It may have replaced another unit.⁴⁰ The unit (or part of it) seems to have been stationed right in the middle of the village,⁴¹ as emerges from the description of the abutters of the courtyard

³⁷ Something seems to have dropped out, since the sentence as it stands makes little sense. For an attempt to use this source to identify the archaeological remains above Ein Gedi as an Essene settlement see Y. Hirschfeld, 'A Community of Hermits above Ein Gedi', *Cathedra* 96, 2000, 7ff. (Hebrew); contra D. Amit and J. Magnes, 'The Essenes did not Live above Ein Gedi: A reply to Y. Hirschfeld', *ibid.* 57ff. (Hebrew).

³⁸ This is the only unit which we know for certain was stationed in Judaea both before and after the Bar Kokhba revolt, see J. Russell, 'A Roman military diploma from Rough Cilicia', *BjB* 195, 1995, 88-100.

³⁹ M. Roxan, *Roman Military Diplomas 1954-1977*, London 1978, no. 4.

⁴⁰ Its transfer to Judaea may suggest the enlargement of the Roman garrison in Judaea as a result of the coming of a second legion, see brief summary in H.M. Cotton, 'The Legio VI Ferrata', in *Les légions de Rome sous le Haut-Empire. Actes du Congrès de Lyon (17-20 septembre 1998)*, I, Paris 2000, 351ff.

⁴¹ For military units inside cities in the Roman East see B. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East*, 2nd edition, Oxford 1990, 269-80.

given as security for the loan Judah son of Eleazar contracted from the Roman centurion, Magonius Valens:

ἦς αὐλῆς γείτ[ο]νες ἀπὸ ἀνατ[ο]λῶν κηναὶ καὶ Ἰησοῦς Μανδ[ρ]ῶνος, δύσεος κηνη[αὶ καὶ] ἐργαστήριον τοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἐλαζάρ<ο>υ πατρός μου, νότου ἀγορὰ καὶ Σ[ι]μων Μαθαίου, βορρᾶ ὁδὸς [καὶ πρ]α[ι]δ[ι]ον (lines 17-19 = lines 4-6).

the abutters of the said courtyard being to the east tents and Joshua son of Mandron, to the west tents and the workshop of the said Eleazar, my father, to the south a market and Shime'on son of Mathaius, to the north a road and a praesidium (a military post).⁴²

Lewis reasonably suggests that κηναὶ refers to military tents.⁴³ If so, then the soldiers were camping right in middle of the village, since the courtyard is flanked by them on three sides. A long and narrow Roman bath house excavated in Ein Gedi is dated by the coins to the years between the two revolts;⁴⁴ it is likely to have served the unit. Four years later the unit must have moved. In *P.Yadin* 19 of April 128 Judah son of Eléazar bestows the same courtyard on his daughter Shlamzion. A comparison between the abutters of the courtyard in May 124 and those described in April 128 reveals that in the period of four years which elapsed between the writing of the two documents both the tents and the *praesidium* have disappeared, as the following table makes clear:⁴⁵

⁴² Not 'headquarters' as translated by Lewis on p. 44.

⁴³ See Lewis, p. 45 ad lines 5 and 18, especially the reference to B. Kramer and D. Hagedorn, 'Zwei ptolemäische Texte aus der Hamburger Papyrusammlung', *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 33, 1987, p. 13, ad line 5; H.J. Polotsky, 'The Greek papyri from the Cave of Letters', *IEJ* 12, 1962, 259 is cautious: 'flanked by (presumably military) tents'.

⁴⁴ B. Mazar and I. Dunayevsky, 'En-Gedi. Third season of Excavations. Preliminary report', *IEJ* 14, 1964, 128-30; 'En-Gedi. Fourth and fifth seasons of Excavations. Preliminary report', *IEJ* 17, 1967, 142-3. The latest coin is dated to 117/18 CE.

⁴⁵ ὦν γείτῳνες [τ]ῆς αὐλῆς καὶ οἰκοιμά[των ἀν]ατολῶν Ἰησοῦ Μαρδωνάου καὶ ἀνὴρ κενός, δυτικῶν ὁ διεθετῶν, νότου ἀγορὰ, βορρᾶ ὁδός ('the abutters of the courtyard and the rooms are on the east Joshua' son of Maddaron and an empty lot, on the west the donor, on the south a market, on the north a road', ll. 11-18); see H. M. Cotton, 'Courtyard(s) in Ein-Gedi: P.Yadin 11, 19 and 20 of the Babatha Archive', *ZPE* 112, 1996, 197-201.

Papyrus no.	<i>P.Yadin 11</i> , 6 May 124 CE	<i>P.Yadin 19</i> , 16 April 128 CE
East	tents and Joshua Mand<a>ron	Joshua Maddaron and empty space
West	tents and workshop of Eleazar, Judah's father	Judah son of Eleazar
South	market and Shime'on son of Mathaios	market
North	road and <i>praesidium</i>	road

The presence of an empty space (αὐρίχωρον) where the tents once were and just a road where once there was also a *praesidium* makes it likely, to my mind, that the unit will have left Ein Gedi altogether, rather than merely changed its location inside the village. Later on it is attested in Hebron by a tile stamp of the *cohors I milliaria Thracum* and a military diploma from 186 whose recipient belonged to the unit.⁴⁶

Babatha's land declaration of December 127, *P.Yadin 16*, reveals to us that since the first revolt Ein Gedi had lost its status as the central village of a toparchy and was subsumed into the toparchy of Jericho:⁴⁷

συνπαρόντος μοι ἐπιτρόπου Ἰουδάνου Ἐλαζάρου κώμης Αἰνγαδῶν περὶ
Ἱερειχοῦντα τῆς Ἰουδαίας.

present with me my guardian Judah son of Eleazar of the village of Ein Gedi
in the district of Jericho in Judaea.⁴⁸

It is not insignificant that despite the title κώμη κυρίου Καίσαρος — which we have no reason to believe Ein Gedi had lost by 127 — which implies that Ein Gedi was part of the imperial *patrimonium*, Ein Gedi was not an enclave administratively and juridically detached from the toparchy to which it now belonged. On the contrary, as B. Isaac puts it, 'Ein Gedi was somehow administered from Jericho'.⁴⁹ This fact harmonizes well with the existence of private property in Ein Gedi as attested in *P.Yadin 11*, 19 and 20 which, as I

⁴⁶ See Roxan (above, n. 39) ad no. 69.

⁴⁷ See Josephus, *BJ* 3.55 with Cotton (above, n. 22), 82ff. on the administrative divisions of Judaea (and see following note).

⁴⁸ Judaea here is a geographical notion, Judaea proper, rather than the province; cf. *P.Hev.* 65 lines 3-4: Ἰησους Μαναημου τῶν ἀπὸ κώμης c.8 letters] Σοφθαθε[...].... περὶ πόλιν Λιουιάδος τῆς Π[εραίας].

⁴⁹ B. Isaac 'The Babatha archive, Postscript', in *The Near East under Roman Rule. Selected Papers* by B. Isaac, Leiden 1997, 177.

have shown elsewhere, refer to two different courtyards both of which became the property of Shlamzion, the daughter of Babatha's second husband: she received one in a deed of gift from her father (*P. Yadin* 19) and the other from her grandfather (*P. Yadin* 20).⁵⁰ The possession of private property can also be assumed for the abutters to these courtyards.⁵¹ This private property was registered in the public archives.⁵² Thus the residents of Ein Gedi could own real estate in their village, and I suspect therefore that not all the land in Ein Gedi was the property of the *patrimonium*. But even land owned by the *fiscus* was exploited in different ways: between land leased to tenants and land worked by slaves under a *vilicus* 'there was still an infinite range of local variations'.⁵³ Furthermore, if one can take the Bar Kokhba documents to reflect earlier conditions, then the sale of half a garden in Ein Gedi attested in *P. Yadin* 47 of 134⁵⁴ reveals also the existence of productive land in private hands in Ein Gedi. The people attested in the Babatha Archive in connection with Ein Gedi are not serfs, as is shown by their mobility and the fact that they could own land outside Ein Gedi.

⁵⁰ Two courtyards not one, see Cotton (above, n. 45); eadem, 'The Law of Succession in the Documents from the Judaean Desert Again', *SCI* 17, 1998 (= *Abraham Wasserstein Memorial Volume III*), 120-22; contra N. Lewis, 'In the world of P. Yadin. II. One courtyard or two?' *SCI* 18, 1999, 127ff.

⁵¹ Joshua Mandron (Maddaron), Eleazar Khthousion, Shime'on son of Mathaius and Judah son of Eleazar in *P. Yadin* 11 and 19 and Mathethos son of Zabbaios (perhaps also Aristion of 'lane of Aristion' in *P. Yadin* 20).

⁵² *P. Yadin* 19 lines 25-27: ὅταν δὲ παραγγίλει Σελαψιους τῷ αὐτῷ Ἰούδατι, τευχίτζει αὐτὴν διὰ δημοσίων; *P. Yadin* 20 lines 12-13 = lines 35-36: ταύτην δὲ τὴν αὐλὴν ὅπου ἂν βουληθῆς τευχίτω σοι διὰ δημοσίων σοῦ διδούσης τὸ ἀνάλωμα; for the registration of private property in Egypt in the βιβλιοθήκη ἐγκτησέων, see H.J. Wolff, *Das Recht der griechischen Papyri Ägyptens in der Zeit der Ptolemäer und des Prinzipats II: Organisation und Kontrolle des privaten Rechtsverkehrs*. Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft X.5.2, Munich 1978, 46ff.

⁵³ D.J. Crawford-Thompson, 'Imperial Estates', in M.I. Finley (ed.), *Studies in Roman Property*, Cambridge 1976, 44; cf. D. Flach, *Römische Agrargeschichte*, Munich 1990, 82ff.

⁵⁴ See A. Yardeni, *A Textbook of Aramaic and Hebrew Documentary Texts from the Judaean Desert and Related Material I*, Jerusalem 2000, 62-3 (English translation in vol. II, p. 32). All the Bar Kokhba documents mentioned in the following notes, with the exception of the Greek ones, are now published in Yardeni's magnificent edition with English translations in vol. II; note though that they are designated there *Nahal Hever* rather than *P. Yadin*.

The leases and sub-leases found among the documents from Wadi Muḥrabba'at and Naḥal Ḥever (as well as implied in some of Bar Kokhba's letters to his men in Ein Gedi)⁵⁵ suggest that Bar Kokhba took over the imperial domain in the places recorded. Was the system of leasing and sub-leasing reflected in the Bar Kokhba documents taken over from the imperial *fiscus*? In some, but not all, of the documents (e.g. not in *Mur* 24A-L), the first lessees are *parnasim* of Bar Kokhba who sublease to others.⁵⁶ Should we assume that there was always a sub-layer of tenants left unrecorded in the documents, those who actually tilled the land? Such a three-tiered administration is typical for example of imperial estates in Egypt.⁵⁷ On the other hand the sub-lessees in the Bar Kokhba leases are not share-croppers, but pay for the lease in money. This was not the method employed by the *fiscus*, at least for the balsam in Judaea — and there are hints in some of the Bar Kokhba documents that, as might have been expected, Bar Kokhba took over the precious balsam groves.⁵⁸ We know from Pliny that the *fiscus* itself sold the balsam to retailers, who in their turn sold it to

⁵⁵ Leases: *Mur* 24A-L (134 CE), and *P.Yadin* 42 (132 CE), 43 (132 CE), 44, 45 and 46 (all three from 134 CE); letters: *P.Yadin* 52 (Greek = *SB* 9843); *P.Yadin* 49, 50, 54-58, 60; *Mur* 46; *P.Yadin* 51, 53; *P.Yadin* 59 (Greek = *SB* 9844).

⁵⁶ In *P.Yadin* 46 (134 CE) line 5 there is a reference to a Hananiah who had once 'held' (קִיָּחַ) the property now being sub-leased. If the man 'held' the property before the revolt, then the same system of sub-leasing (presumably by the imperial procurator who would be the equivalent of Bar Kokhba's *parnasim*) may have prevailed when the land belonged to the imperial domain as well. I am grateful to Ada Yardeni and Baruch Levine for showing me their commentary to this document, which will appear in *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters II: Hebrew, Aramaic and Nabatean Documents*.

⁵⁷ On the three-tiered administration of imperial estates in Egypt see G.M. Parásoglou, *Imperial Estates in Roman Egypt*, *American Studies in Papyrology* 18, 1978, 52, 57; D.P. Kehoe, *Management and Investment on Estates in Roman Egypt during the Early Empire*, Bonn 1992, 16ff.; for Africa see D.P. Kehoe, *The Economics of Agriculture on Roman Imperial Estates in North Africa*, Göttingen 1988, 117-53, and for the provinces of Anatolia see S. Mitchell, *Anatolia I*, Oxford 1993, 162ff.

⁵⁸ The balsam is not mentioned in the Bar Kokhba documents. However, one should probably identify the *lotem* in *P.Yadin* 50 with the λῆδος, the shrub from which the gum called λάδανον (or λήδανον) exudes: קִיָּחַ דִּי לֹא יִקְרַב אֶת אֲנָשׁוֹ בְּהַ אֲנָשׁוֹ ('no one should get near the Lotem'). For the identification of the *lotem* with the *ladanum* see Y. Felix, *Trees: Aromatic, Ornamental, and of the Forest in the Bible and Rabbinic Literature*, Jerusalem 1997, 86f.

others for less than a third of what they had paid for it, and yet made a profit by adulterating the pure balsam:⁵⁹

nec manifestior alibi fraus, quippe millibus denarium sextarii empti vendente fisco, trecenis denariis veneunt: in tantum expedit augere liquorem (Pliny, *NH* 12.123).

Nowhere is there more visible fraud, since sextarii (of balsam) bought from the fisco for 1000 denarii are sold again for 300 denarii (each). To such a degree is it feasible to increase the quantity of balsam.

The answers to the foregoing questions must await the commentaries to the Bar Kokhba documents.⁶⁰ On the other hand there is precious evidence in the documents already published for the fate of the Jewish population of Ein Gedi after the first revolt.

The ties between Ein Gedi and Maḥoza (Maḥoz ‘Aglatain): one Jewish community

The existence of intimate ties between families in Ein Gedi in the province of Judaea and those living in Maḥoza (Maḥoz ‘Aglatain) in the province of Arabia strikes one immediately on reading the Babatha archive. Very often we find the expression ‘from Ein Gedi residing in Maḥoza’,⁶¹ or vice versa, as in one of Bar Kokhba’s leases: ‘Alma son of Judah and Tahnah son of Shime‘on from the Lu hit in Maḥoz ‘Aglatain, residing in Ein Gedi’.⁶² Judah son of Eleazar, Babatha’s second husband, is attested in Ein Gedi in 124 in *P.Yadin* 11, but by 125 (*P.Yadin* 15) he is already in Arabia. Between 125 and 128 he marries Babatha of Maḥoza. He continues to hold property in Ein Gedi (*P.Yadin* 19), but also owns date groves in Maḥoza (*P.Yadin* 21-22, 24-26). Judah’s other or former wife, Miriam daughter of Beianos,⁶³

⁵⁹ Pliny, *NH* 12, 123 (= Stern, no. 213); cf. Cotton and Eck (above, n. 19), 159: ‘Denn die für je 1000 Denare gekauften (*empti*) sextarii Balsam, wobei der Fiscus der Verkäufer ist, werden für je 300 Denare (weiter-)verkauft. So sehr ist es möglich, den Balsamsaft zu vermehren’ (this passage has always been misunderstood and mistranslated).

⁶⁰ Above n. 56.

⁶¹ E.g. *P.Yadin* 19 (128 CE), lines 11-12: [']lo'ýðac 'Ela[αζά]ρου Χθουc[τω]νoç 'Hnyqδn[νò]ç oikōν εν Μαωζac.

⁶² *P.Yadin* 44 (November 134), lines 4-6: מן שמעון בן ותחנה בן יהודה ותחנה בן שמעון בן יגדי הלוחית שבמחוז עגלתין שניהם יושבים בעין גדי.

⁶³ For the controversy over evidence for polygamy in the documents see R. Katzoff (denying it) in ‘Polygamy in P. Yadin?’ *ZPE* 109, 1995, 128–32; contra N. Lewis, ‘Judah’s Bigamy’, in *ZPE* 116, 1997, 152; see also A. Shremer,

although called an Ein Gedian, is likely to have lived in Maḥoza.⁶⁴ Both his daughter, Shlamzion, and her new husband, Judah son of Hananiah, are Ein Gedians now living in Maḥoza.⁶⁵ On one occasion we find an Ein Gedian residing in Mazra'a in the so-called Lysna (al-Lisân). Since he is serving as the guardian of Judah son of Eleazar's orphaned nephews,⁶⁶ it is possible that the orphans too lived in Mazra'a. Thus the two brothers, Judah and Joshua, sons of Eleazar Khthousion, both originally hailing from Ein Gedi, settled in two different villages in Arabia. Ein Gedians not only reside in Maḥoza but also own property there and intermarry with the Jews of Maḥoza. It is just possible that Yadin was right to identify Beianos, father of Miriam of the Babatha archive, with the father of one of Bar Kokhba's men in Ein Gedi, namely Jonathan son of Beianos, and that she brought his archive to the 'Cave of Letters' in Naḥal Ḥever.⁶⁷

The impression that people who belonged to the same families lived on both sides of the so-called provincial border is so strong that one is bound to ask: when were they separated? I believe that the families were separated during the first revolt. After the raids by the Sicarii in Passover 68⁶⁸ and the battles over the balsam between the Jews and the Roman army in that year,⁶⁹ Ein Gedi must have been practically abandoned, at least for a while. The Jewish families who escaped from Ein Gedi settled in a place with similar climatic conditions, similar cultivation, a similar watering system, where other Jewish families had settled before: in Maḥoz 'Aglatain — a village in what was then and until 106 the Nabataean kingdom. But the ties with the

'How much Jewish Polygyny in Roman Palestine', *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 63, 1997, 181-225 (forthcoming).

⁶⁴ *P.Yadin* 26 line 3: Μαριαμην Βειανου Ἠνγαδηνήν. I am corrected by N. Lewis who points out that Miriam too is likely to have resided in Maḥoza: 'In the World of P.Yadin: Where did Judah's Wife Live?' *IEJ* 46, 1996, 256-7.

⁶⁵ *P.Yadin* 18 (128 CE), lines 32-37 = lines 3-6: ἐξ[έδ]οτ[ο] Ἰουδα]ς Ἐλεαζάρου τοῦ καὶ [Χθουσί]ων[ος] C]ελαμφ[ι]ώνην τὴν ἰδίαν θυγατέραν παρθένον Ἰούδατι ἐπικαλουμένῳ Κίμβερι υἱῷ Ἀνανίου τοῦ Σωμαλα, ἀμφοτέροι ἀπὸ κώμης Αἰνγαδῶν τῆς Ἰουδαία[ς] ἐνθάδε καταμένοντ[ες].

⁶⁶ *P.Yadin* 20 (130 CE), lines 4-5 = lines 23-24: Βησάκ Ἰησοῦς Ἠνγαδηνός οἰκῶν ἐν Μαζραα ἐ<πί>τροπος ὀρφανῶν Ἰησοῦς Χθουσίανος.

⁶⁷ E.g. *P.Yadin* 52 (*SB* VIII 9843), lines 1-3: Cou[μαῖ]ος Ἰωναθῆι Βειανου καὶ Μα[ς]αβαλα χαίρειν; *P.Yadin* 49 (unpublished), lines 1-2: ד'יג'י ע'ינש' א'נא'ל אבוס' בר' ב'נש'נש'נש' ו'שלש' ע'ין' ב'ע'ין' ב'ר' ב'נש'נש'נש' א'ל'ב'נש'נש'נש', cf. Yadin, *IEJ* 12, 1962, 247-8.

⁶⁸ Jos. *BJ* 4.402.

⁶⁹ Pliny, *NH* 12.112.

home village remained. Communication was facilitated by sea travel: both villages were situated on the seashore, and the Dead Sea was navigable.⁷⁰

The very fact that documents of people from Ein Gedi and of families from Arabia were found in the same cave is the best testimony to the survival of close ties between the families. These ties with the mother community go a long way to explaining why the well-off Jews of Arabia, notwithstanding their excellent relations with their neighbours the Nabataeans (who serve as guardians, witnesses and subscribers in the Jewish documents), left their property behind and crossed over to Judaea soon after the beginning of the Bar Kokhba revolt.⁷¹ This event may tell us as much about the nature of the Bar Kokhba revolt as do the documents left behind by the leader of the revolt and his men. Perhaps the revolt spread into Arabia, something for which there may be now indirect evidence;⁷² or else Jews from Arabia responded to some sort of call and returned home. Was it a messianic hope or what seemed like the renewal of Jewish sovereignty that made them come home? The Bar Kokhba Revolt reunited the families whom the first revolt had rent asunder — tragically, they were reunited in death.⁷³

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⁷⁰ Two of Babatha's date groves in Maḥoz 'Aglatain were named Algiphiamma, which is a Greek transliteration of Aramaic ܐܘܠܦܝܝܡܡܐ: 1) κῆπον φοινικῶνος ἐν ὀρίοις Μαωζων λεγόμενον Αλγιφιαμμα . . . γείτονες ὁδὸς καὶ θάλασσα; 2) κῆπον φοινικῶνος ἐν ὀρίοις Μαωζων λεγόμενον Αλγιφιαμμα . . . γείτονες μοσχαντικῆ κυρίου Καίσαρος καὶ θάλασσα, *P. Yadin* 16 lines 17–24; cf. *P. Hev.* 62 frg. a lines 14–17: Sammuos son of Shime'on, Salome Komaïše's first husband, declares 'a field, called Arenoaratha, within the boundaries of the aforesaid Maḥoza' which is abutted by the sea: μέρος ἤμιου χώρας ἐν ὀρίοις Μαωζων τῆς προγεγραμμένης λεγομένης Ἀρενοαραθα . . . γείτ[ον]εσ Μαγαῆς Μαναῆ καὶ θάλασσα, lines 14–17; *P. Yadin* 49, sent to Masabala and Yehonatan in Ein Gedi, mentions loading the fruit on/from a boat (κλῖψω) as well as harbour; see boats sailing on the Dead Sea in the Madaba Map, cf. M. Avi-Yonah, *The Madaba Mosaic Map*, Jerusalem 1954; G. Hadas, 'Where was the harbour of 'Ein-Gedi situated?' *IEJ* 43, 1993, 45–49.

⁷¹ The last dated document is *P. Yadin* 27 of 19 August 132.

⁷² See W. Eck, 'The Bar Kochba Revolt: the Roman point of view', *JRS* 89, 1999, 76–89.

⁷³ I am greatly indebted to Peter Eich and Rudolph Haensch for discussing with me the problem of imperial estates, and to Magen Broshi and Gideon Hadas for enlightening me on the agricultural aspect.