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**Fishing, fish farming and fish processing during the Roman age in
the Northern Adriatic: literary sources and archaeological data**

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Abstract

During the Roman age, fishing, fish farming and fish processing represented a significant part of the economy around the Adriatic Sea. Ancient written sources celebrate the Northern Adriatic for the abundance of fish, particularly the western side as well as the associated estuaries and lagoons. However, they do not refer to Adriatic plants for the processing of different fish species, either caught or farmed. The written documentation is largely reflected in the archaeological record. Around the Adriatic there are some archaeological remains interpretable as installations for the breeding of fish (*piscinae* or *vivaria*), concentrated on the Eastern side of the Adriatic Sea (Istria), while structures for fish processing are less visible. The abundance of fish and the availability of salt, along with the presence of fresh water supplies, make the hypothesis that not only was fish farming practiced, but also the salting and processing of fish to make various fish sauces - at least for internal consumption and perhaps also for limited trade - appear highly plausible. Factors that may explain the presence of only faint traces of such activity include: the perishable characteristics of breeding, processing and other facilities in areas with a sandy seabed (well described by Columella); significant changes in the coastal environment (a rise of 1,50 m in sea level since Roman times); the possibility of making salted fish and fish sauces with equipment of limited

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