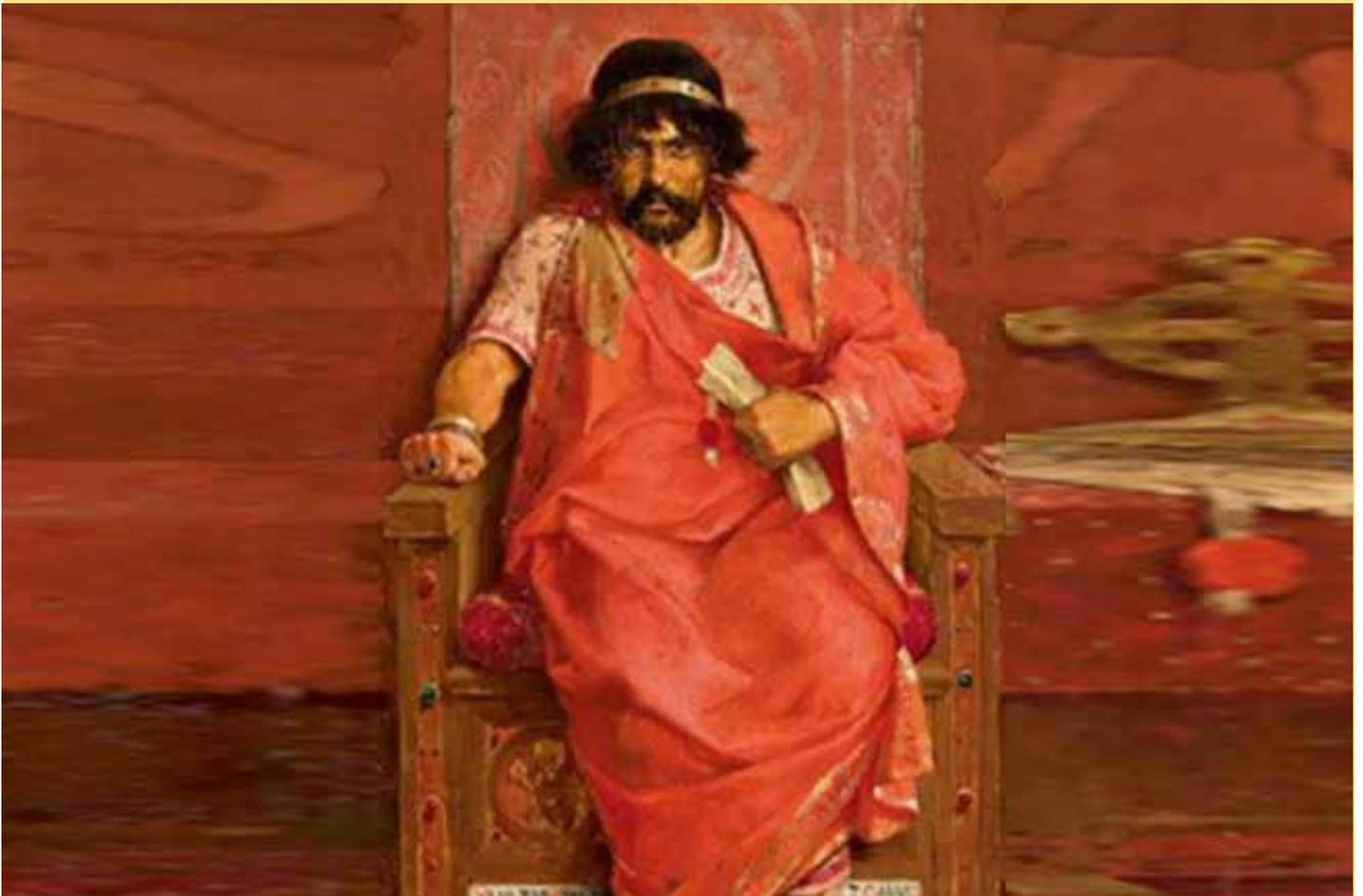


Herod the Great

King of Judea (37 BCE – 4 CE)
Master Builder, Architect and Engineer
Study Packet



Caesarea Maritima, Masada, Herodium



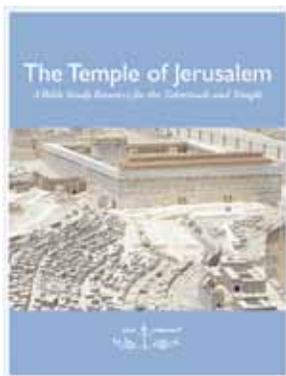
Section I: Herod the Great's Background

Section II: Caesarea Maritima (Seaport City and Harbor)

Section III: Masada (Desert Fortress near Dead Sea)

Section IV: Herodium (Summer Palace and Herod the Great's Tomb)

For further research:



(Herod the Great also built the Temple - see our Study Packet, "The Temple of Jerusalem")

www.biblosfoundation.org,
Member Research Section ONLY, "Study Packets")

Timeline of Herod the Great

BCE = Before the Common Era (no longer *before* Christ)

CE= Common Era (no longer AD, *after* Christ)

DATE	EVENT
73 BCE	Birth of Herod the Great
37 BCE	Reign of Herod the Great Begins
37 - 31 BCE	Herod renovates Masada
22 - 9 BCE	Herod creates magnificent city called Caesarea Maritima
23 - 20 BCE	Herod builds Herodium
20 BCE	Herod begins rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem
4 - 6 BCE	Jesus is born, Herod dies in 4 BCE
0	
27 or 30 CE	Jesus is crucified
63 CE	The Temple is completed
70 CE	Zealots rebel against Rome, the Temple is destroyed, Small group of rebels flee to Masada



Masada
©2010. Biblos Foundation.



Caesarea Maritima
©2010. Biblos Foundation.



Model of the Temple Mount
©2010. Biblos Foundation.



Herodium
©2010. Biblos Foundation.

Background

Herod the Great's biographical information (b. 73 BCE - d. 4 CE)

Herod was born in 73 BCE and grew up in a time of great political upheaval and unrest in Judaea. Being from an Idumaean background – his mother was an ethnic Arab and his father was an Edomite – Herod was always an outsider to the Jewish establishment. Although he was raised as a Jew, he lacked the social connections and priestly authority that a king of the Jews should have.

Consequently, the Jews never really accepted him, and he stood with one foot in the Jewish religious culture and one foot in the Roman world, trying to walk a thin line of appeasement for both; he was hated and resented by the general population of Jews. With Rome's help, after fighting in Judaea for three years, he was able to conquer Jerusalem and to hold the territory politically.



Rendering of King Herod the Great
(artist unknown)



Wojciech Stattler, *The Seleucid Greeks and the Hasmonean Dynasty, Machabeesze (Maccabees)*, 1844
(The "Hasmoneans" are Herod's family)

Herod was a brilliant politician and spent his life amidst numerous civil wars and conspiracies, both with his own family members and with outside powerful enemies.

He had a very large family: ten wives and more than twelve children. Over a period of time, he grew to be paranoid and suspicious of everyone, and had one loved wife murdered, her brother murdered, and even one or two of his sons. He was known to be a cruel tyrant; however, he was an extremely intelligent and creative man as well as a very astute politician.



Illustration of Herod the Great

Herod was a master builder-engineer and patron of massive construction projects during his reign, many of which are still visible today. With astonishing imagination and creativity, he supervised extraordinary building projects like Masada, Caesarea Maritima (a harbor city on the Mediterranean Sea), Herodium and the magnificent Temple in Jerusalem. Much of what remains architecturally was built during the Herodian period, and is remarkable. Herod even rebuilt the ancient city of Jerusalem. Much to the displeasure of the Jews, he brought in architects from Rome to add a Greco-Roman flavor to an otherwise Jewish environment.

Herod the Great was jealous of anyone whom he feared might take over his kingdom, hence his response to the Magi who told him they had come to Jerusalem to see a newly born king. After Herod asks the chief priests and scribes “where Christ should be born” (Matt. 2:4, 5), he orders his soldiers to slay the children of Bethlehem who were two years old or younger (Matt. 2:16).



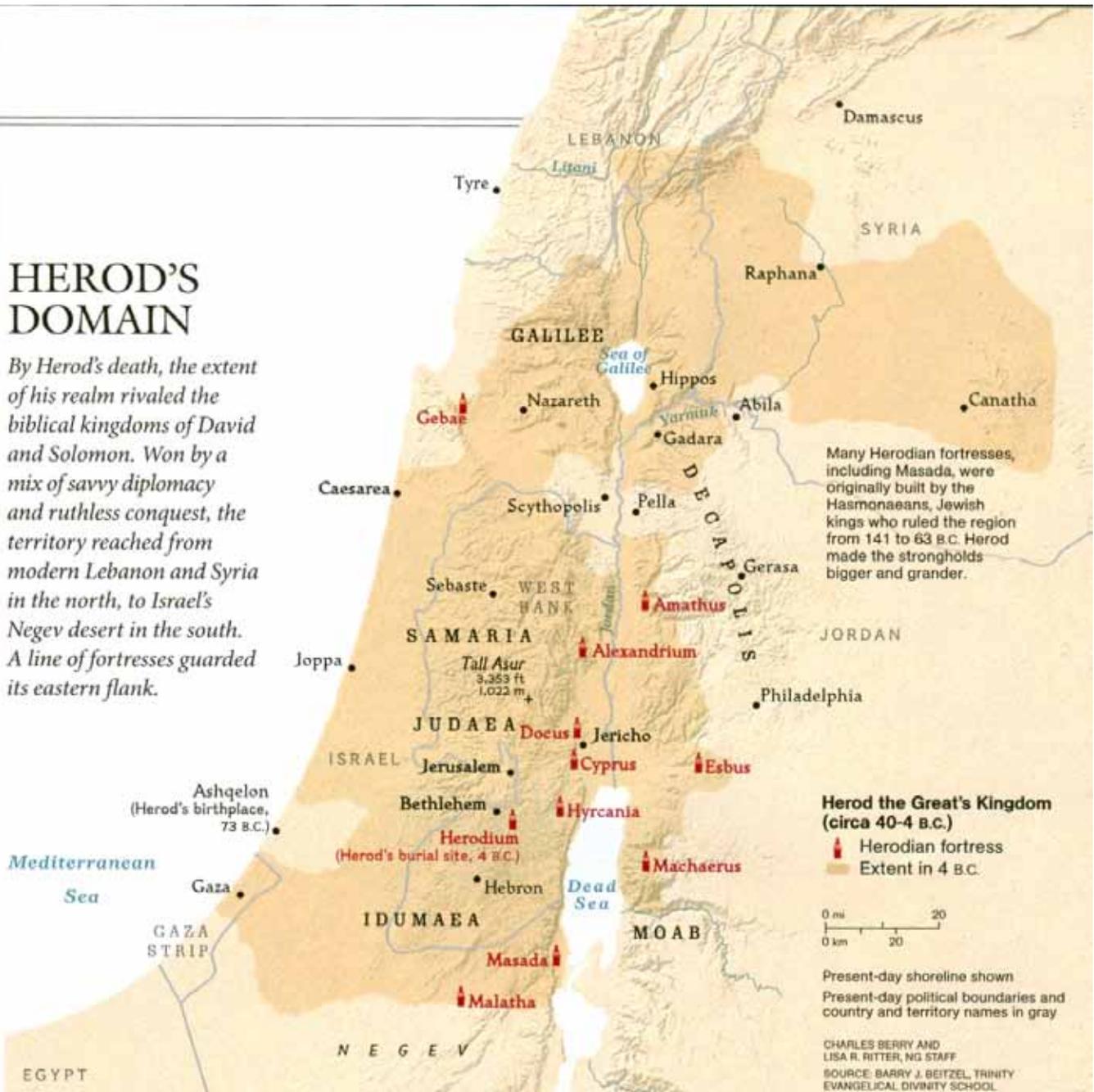
Herod Talking to the Three Wise Men
© 1987. *Jesus and His Times*.

Although there is controversy about this event, if it really did happen, for a town the size of Bethlehem, probably about 26 children would have been killed, with a dozen or so more in the surrounding areas. This incident came to be known throughout the centuries as the “massacre of the innocents.”

Kingdom of Herod the Great

HEROD'S DOMAIN

By Herod's death, the extent of his realm rivaled the biblical kingdoms of David and Solomon. Won by a mix of savvy diplomacy and ruthless conquest, the territory reached from modern Lebanon and Syria in the north, to Israel's Negev desert in the south. A line of fortresses guarded its eastern flank.



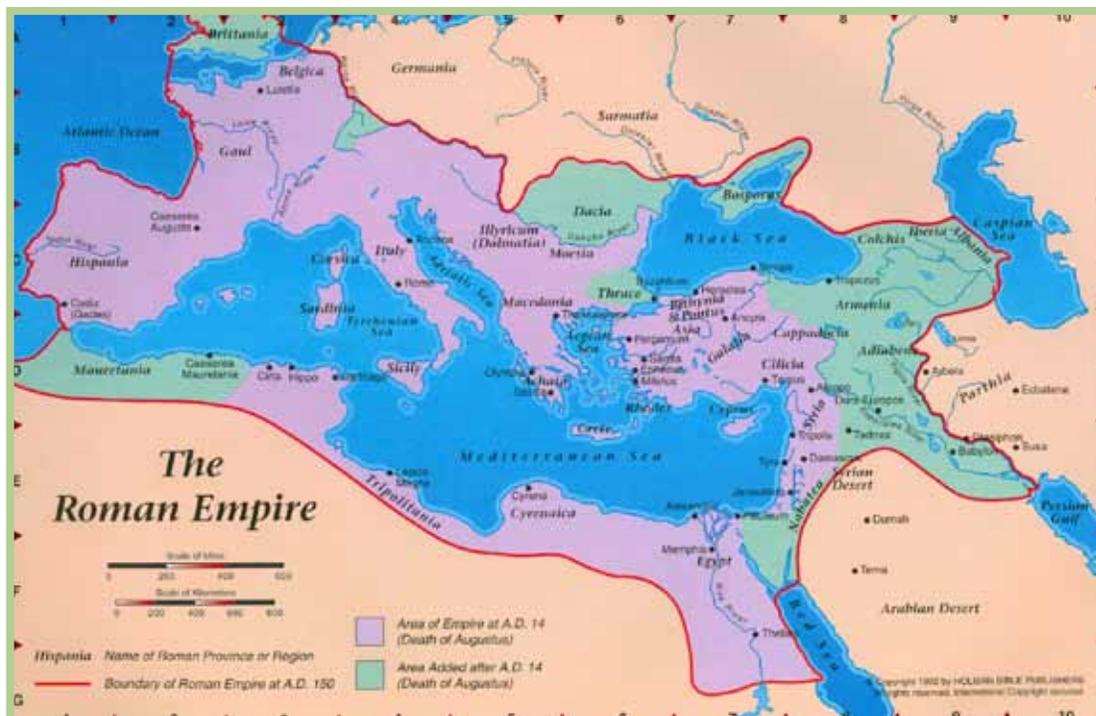
© 2008. Tom Mueller, *National Geographic* ('08).

The Roman Empire



The legions of Pompey the Great established Roman domination over Jewish rulers in 63 B.C. A quarter century later, Herod's rise to power relied on the endorsement of Caesar and the senate. In turn, Rome relied on Herod for 35 years to control a restive frontier territory and keep the empire's eastern enemies at bay.

© 2008. Tom Mueller, *National Geographic* ('08).



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Caesarea Maritima

Magnificent Port City along western coastline of Palestine
(22 BCE - 9 BCE)



Aerial View of Caesarea Maritima Ruins
© 1988. Kenneth G. Holum, *King Herod's Dream: Caesarea on the Sea*.

Between the years 22 BCE and 9 BCE, Herod the Great created a magnificent city along the northwestern Mediterranean seacoast of Palestine and called it “Caesarea Maritima” after Caesar Augustus, his patron.

The man-made harbor was a triumph of ancient engineering; it was the first large-scale harbor ever built in the open sea and was engineered using the technique of hydraulic concrete. The method Herod’s engineers used was amazingly close to the modern day technique of pouring concrete underwater today. A mixture of stone rubble bonded together with a mortar of lime and volcanic ash was lowered into a wooden frame; it immediately hardened upon contact with water.



The Building of the Harbor
© 1988. Kenneth G. Holum, *King Herod's Dream: Caesarea on the Sea*.



Aerial View of Caesarea Maritima Ruins



Building the Palaces
© 1987. *Jesus and His Times*.

Engineers had to create two huge breakwaters out in the open sea. The waves offshore at Caesarea were 8 to 10 feet high in summer and in winter they were much higher. Strong offshore currents shifted the sand underwater. Engineers had to construct a huge sea wall, to keep back the sand and the current. On top of the wall were large towers with warehouses, loading areas and walkways. Statues of the Imperial Roman family stood just outside the harbor, beckoning the ships into the safe port.

The harbor entrance was to the left of the great lighthouse that could be seen for miles out in mid ocean. To the right of the lighthouse, there were vaulted buildings for receiving and storing goods.

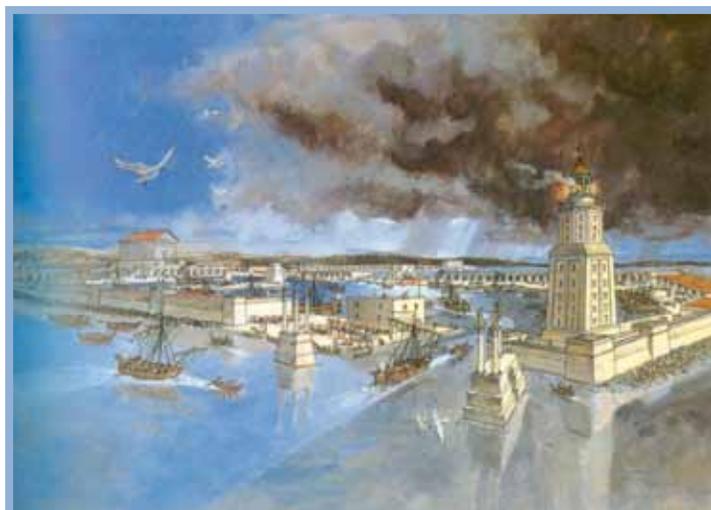
Underwater diving archaeological teams have discovered beams from the harbor dating back 1,900 years. The creation of this harbor was a staggering accomplishment for ancient times.



Aerial View of Caesarea Maritima Harbor
© 1988. Kenneth G. Holum, *King Herod's Dream: Caesarea on the Sea*.

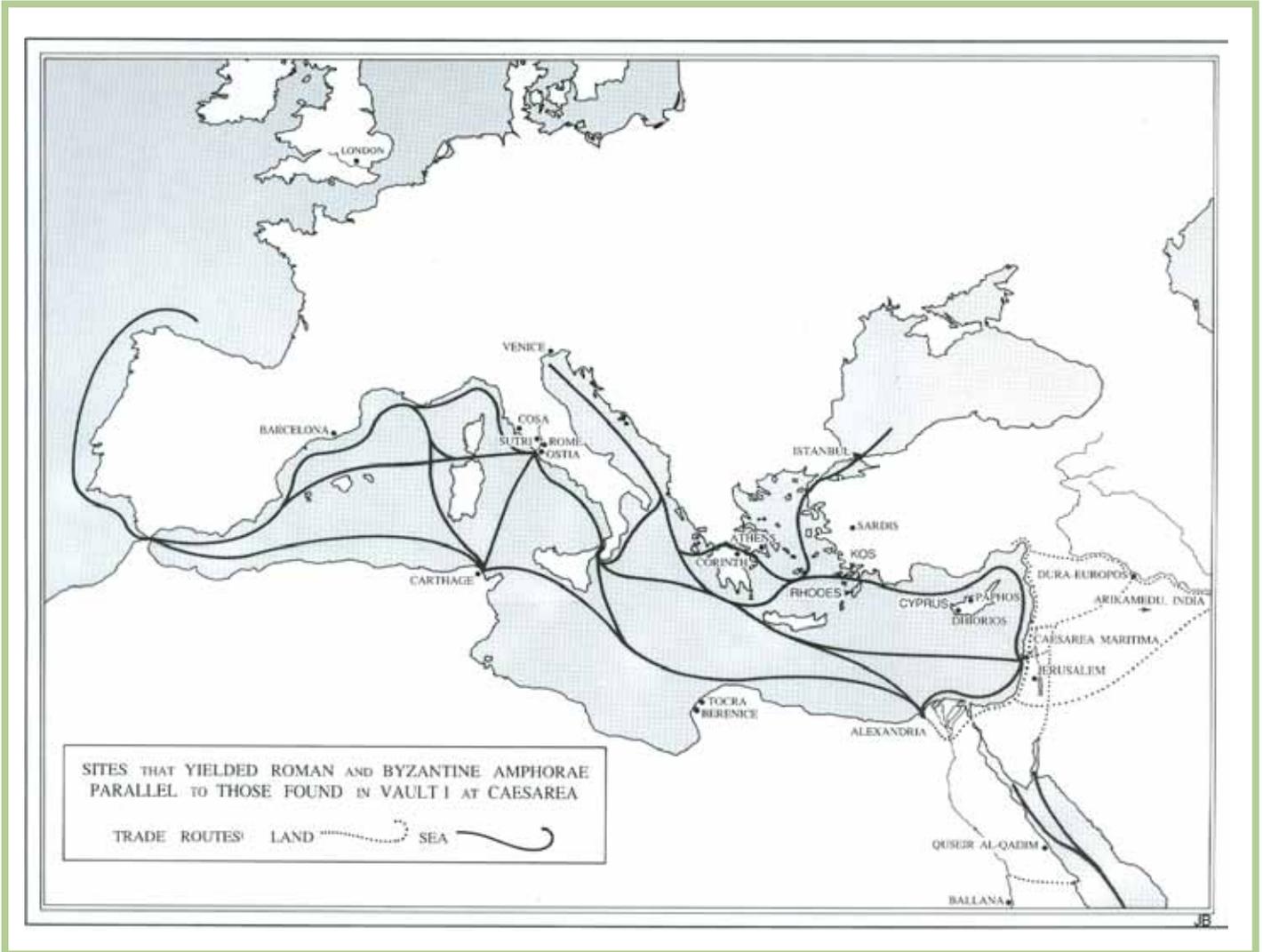


Seaport and Harbor
Drawings by E. Barashkov, Ron Andromeda and Leen Ritmeyer
Miriam Feinberg Vamosh, *Daily Life at the Time of Jesus*.



Lighthouse and Harbor
© 1988. Kenneth G. Holum, *King Herod's Dream: Caesarea on the Sea*.

Mediterranean Trade Routes



© 2011. Biblos Foundation.



Illustration of Caesarea Maritima as a flourishing city
 © 1993. Peter Connolly, *Living in the Time of Jesus of Nazareth*.



Illustration of the Harbor at time of Herod
 © 2010. Biblos Foundation (at the site of Caesarea Maritima)

Caesarea eventually became one of the busiest and most important seaports in the ancient world and continued flourishing until the Muslims destroyed it in 1291.

One of the first sewage systems in the ancient world was developed at Caesarea. The water during high tide would rush into the city along street canals and flush out the sewage during low tide.

The city of Caesarea Maritima was constructed using the Classical Greco-Roman style. Such lavish buildings included a hippodrome, amphitheater, temples to Pagan gods, Roman-style baths, marble palaces and villas for the wealthy. During New Testament Bible times, the city's population exceeded 50,000 people, most of whom were Gentiles.



Ruins of the Hippodrome (Aerial)
 © 1988. Kenneth G. Holum, *King Herod's Dream: Caesarea on the Sea*.



Illustration of the Hippodrome races
 © 2010. Biblos Foundation (at the site of Caesarea Maritima)

Hippodrome Ruins
 © 2010. Biblos Foundation



Ruins of a wealthy house with ocean views
 © 2010. Biblos Foundation

Illustration of a wealthy house with ocean views
 © 2010. Biblos Foundation

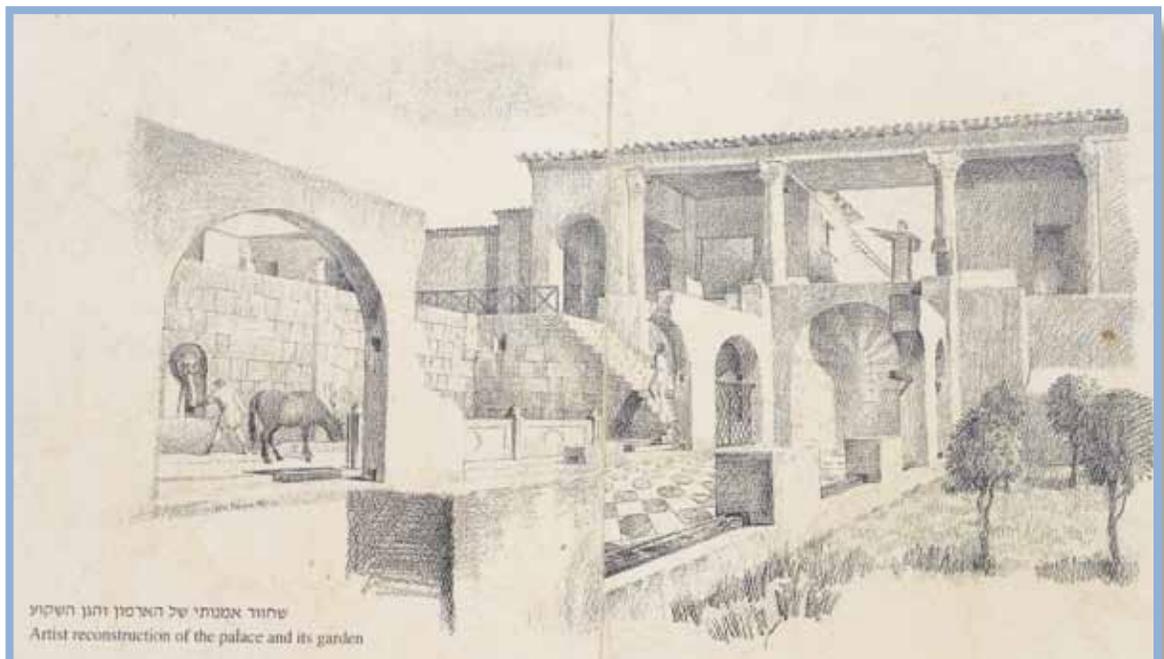


Illustration of a palace and its gardens with ocean views
 © 2010. Biblos Foundation



Ruins of the Aqueduct
© 2010. Biblos Foundation

A huge aqueduct brought water all the way from Mt. Carmel, which was almost nine miles to the northeast. Remnants of this aqueduct still stand today.

Next to the harbor, Herod built a huge temple to Augustus. It faced out over the aqua blue water, creating a landmark for sailors to go by as they brought in their ships.



Caesarea Maritima with Lighthouse and Temple
Drawings by E. Barashkov, Ron Andromeda and Leen Ritmeyer
Miriam Feinberg Vamosh, *Daily Life at the Time of Jesus*.



Ruins of Herod's Palace
© 2010. Biblos Foundation.

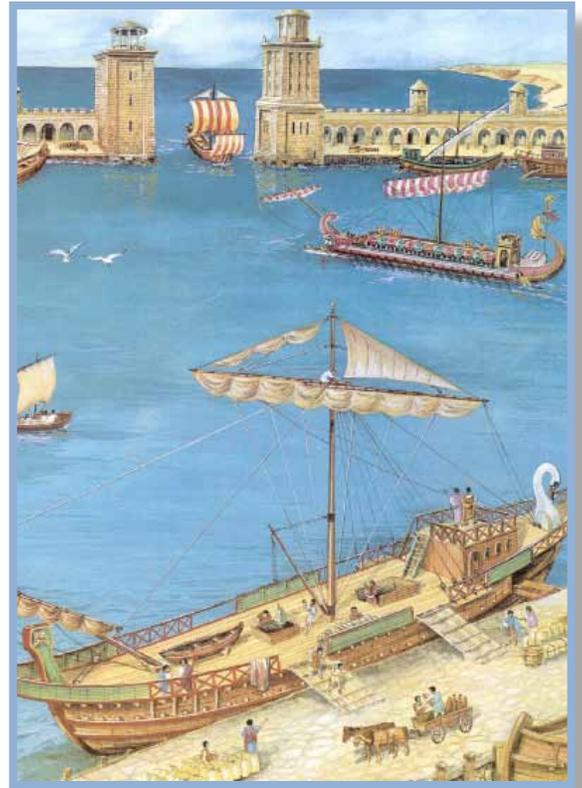


Illustration of Harbor
Drawings by E. Barashkov, Ron Andromeda and Leen Ritmeyer
Miriam Feinberg Vamosh, *Daily Life at the Time of Jesus*.

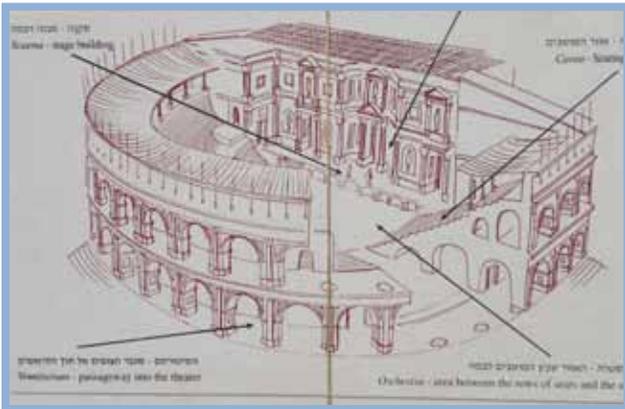


Aerial of Herod's Palace and Bathhouse extending into the ocean.
© 1988. Kenneth Holm. *King Herod's Dream: Caesarea on the Sea*.

Herod also had a palace built along the same coastline. It jutted out over the water, with a beautiful large decorative pool between the palace and the sea.



Ruins of Herod's Palace and Bathhouse extending into the ocean.
© 2010. Biblos Foundation.

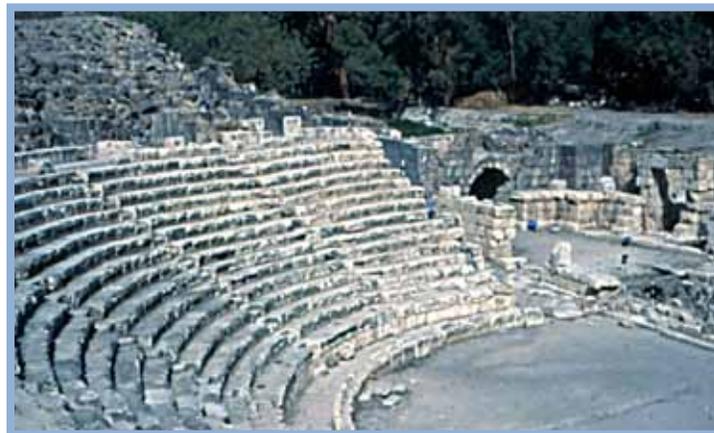


Ruins of the Theater were discovered in the 1960's and excavation was begun in earnest.

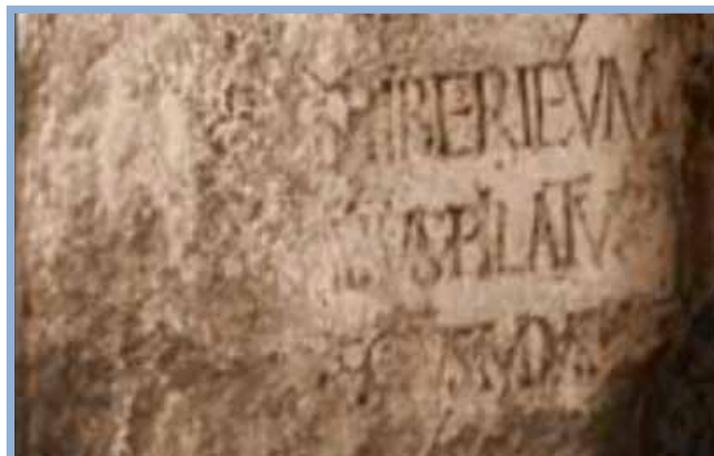
Today the theater is used for modern concerts and programs.



The Theater
© 2010. Biblos Foundation.



The Theater (Ruins before renovation)
© 1987. Biblos Foundation. (at the Caesarea Maritima site)



"Pontius Pilate, Procurator of Judea" (Pilate's seat in the theater)
© 2010. Biblos Foundation.

During the years just before and after Jesus' ministry, Caesarea was the military capital of Judaea and also where the Roman procurators and governors always lived. Pontius Pilate would have lived here and only gone to Jerusalem for the feasts, when large crowds of Jews congregated there; his presence helped keep the order. Around 1960, great excavations were begun at Caesarea and a limestone seat from the theater was found with "Pontius Pilate, Procurator of Judaea" on it. This is the only secular record found that Pontius Pilate existed.

In 66 CE, the Romans killed a great number of Jews and destroyed the local synagogue after a riot there, which started the First Great Jewish revolt. After the revolt was put down in 70 CE, the Roman General Titus celebrated his victory by slaughtering 2,500 Jewish slaves in gladiatorial games in Caesarea's arena.



Francesco Trevisani,
*Peter Baptizing the
Centurion Cornelius*, 1709.

Peter baptized Cornelius, a Gentile of Caesarea, “As Peter was coming in Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshipped him” (Acts 10:5-31). This was one of the first gentile conversions.

Paul stayed in Caesarea many times and was imprisoned for two years there. According to tradition, he was taken to Rome for trial before the Emperor from the harbor in Caesarea.



Rembrandt, *Paul the Apostle in Prison*, approx. 1635.
(sourced from rembrandtonline.com)

Origen, (d. 254 CE), an early Christian historian, wrote some of his works at the library.



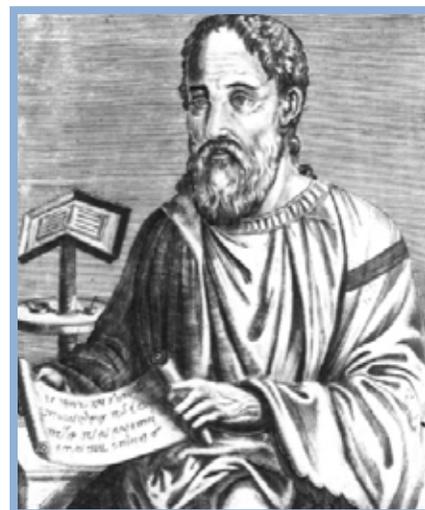
This picture of Origen (also Origenes) is probably a fantasy picture drawn by a medieval artist.

As source of the picture is there indicated: “Origenes, in Numeros homilia XXVII, Schäftlarn” (approx. 1160).

Today the picture is in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München.

The ecclesiastical library at Caesarea was supposedly one of the grandest of ancient times. It contained over 30,000 manuscripts, many of extant literature, early gospels, etc. Great thinkers of that day spent time studying at the Library at Caesarea.

Eusebius was one of Caesarea’s archbishops from 315-339 CE. Eusebius authored the *Ecclesiastical History of Christianity* which tells the history of the Early Church, stories of the destruction of Jerusalem, Masada’s resistance, and where the disciples ended up according to tradition.



Eusebius of Caesarea, church historian.

Masada

Desert Fortress overlooking The Dead Sea
(37-31 BCE)



Aerial view of Masada Fortress
© 1987. *Jesus and His Times*.

On the eastern edge of the Judaean Desert, near the western shore of the Dead Sea, stands an enormous mountain plateau, an isolated rock cliff some 1,300 feet above sea level. The area on the top of the mountain was equivalent to about twenty football fields. Because the location is so remote and isolated, it provided a natural defense for Herod and his family.

Between 37 and 31 BCE, Herod worked to renovate the top of Masada, creating a luxurious palace fortress, a refuge for himself and his family in times of necessity. Throughout his reign, Herod used Masada for a winter retreat. It was large enough to hold all of his family, his wives, his servants, his army, and guests.



Aerial view of Masada Fortress
©2008. Itmar Grinberg (sign of Masada at Masada site)



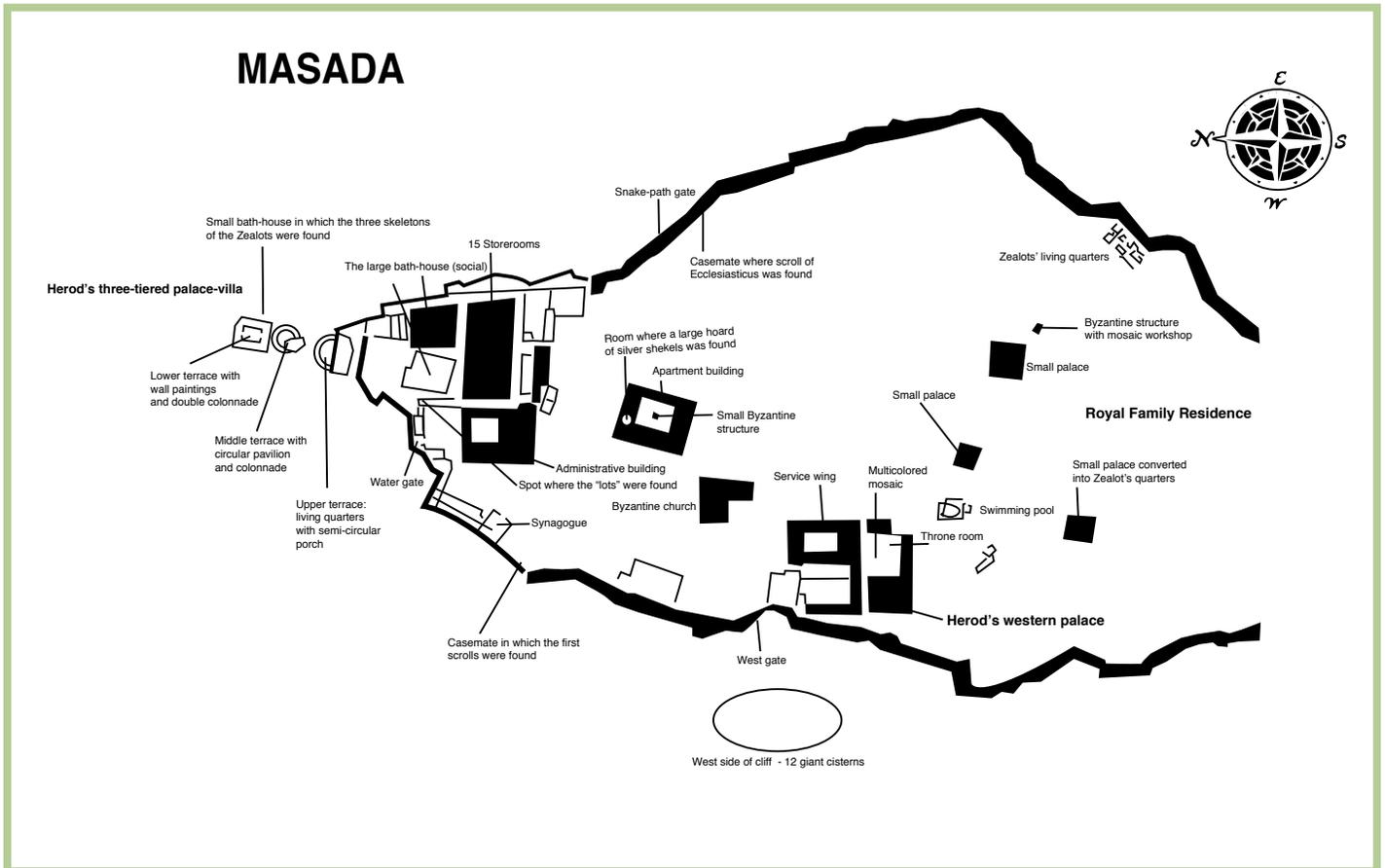
View of the Dead Sea from Masada
©2010. Biblos Foundation.

Typographical Map

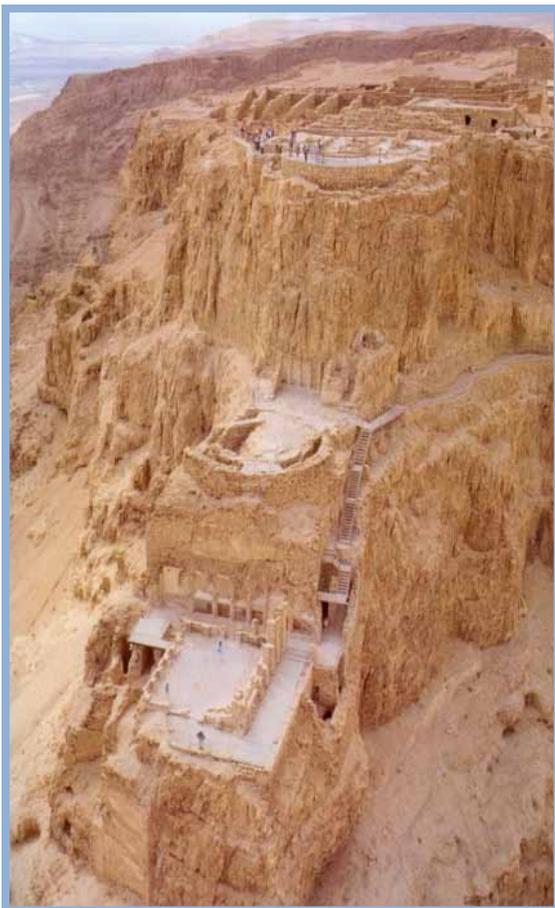


Aerial view of Masada Fortress © 1987. *Jesus and His Times*.

Masada Diagram



© 2000. Garrard, *The Splendor of the Temple*.



One of the most extraordinary buildings ever constructed was Herod's three hanging palaces that cascade down the side of the northern cliff at Masada.

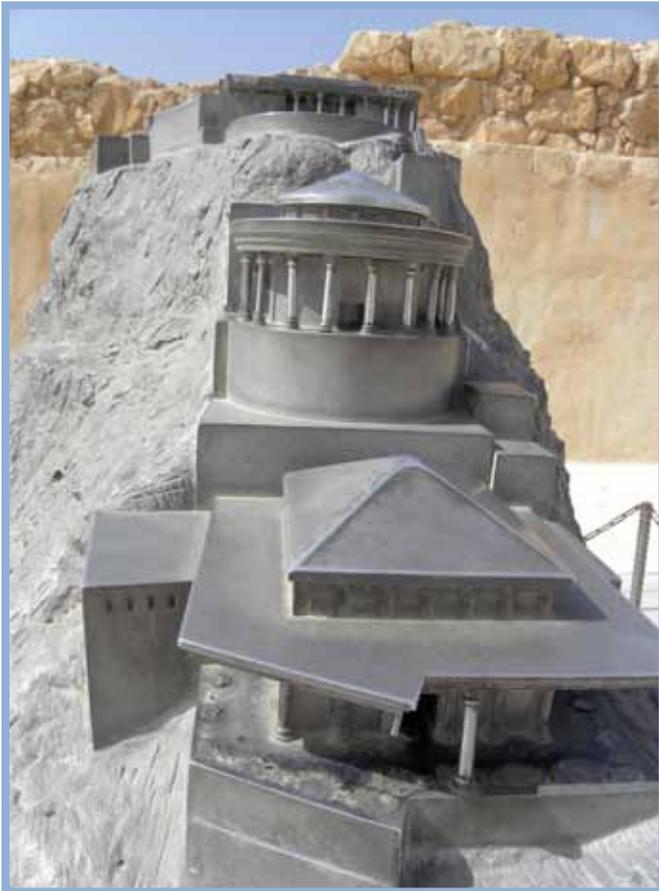
It has been described as an "elegant, intimate, private, palace-villa, separated by a wall that made it totally private and secure." There were three levels of terraces, with a narrow, rock-cut staircase connecting them. The upper terrace had four main rooms, with a semicircular veranda. There was also a semicircular balcony with rows of columns.

Each room had black and white mosaics in geometric patterns.

Hanging Palace Ruins at Masada
©2010. Biblos Foundation.



Model of the Hanging Palace
©2010. Biblos Foundation.



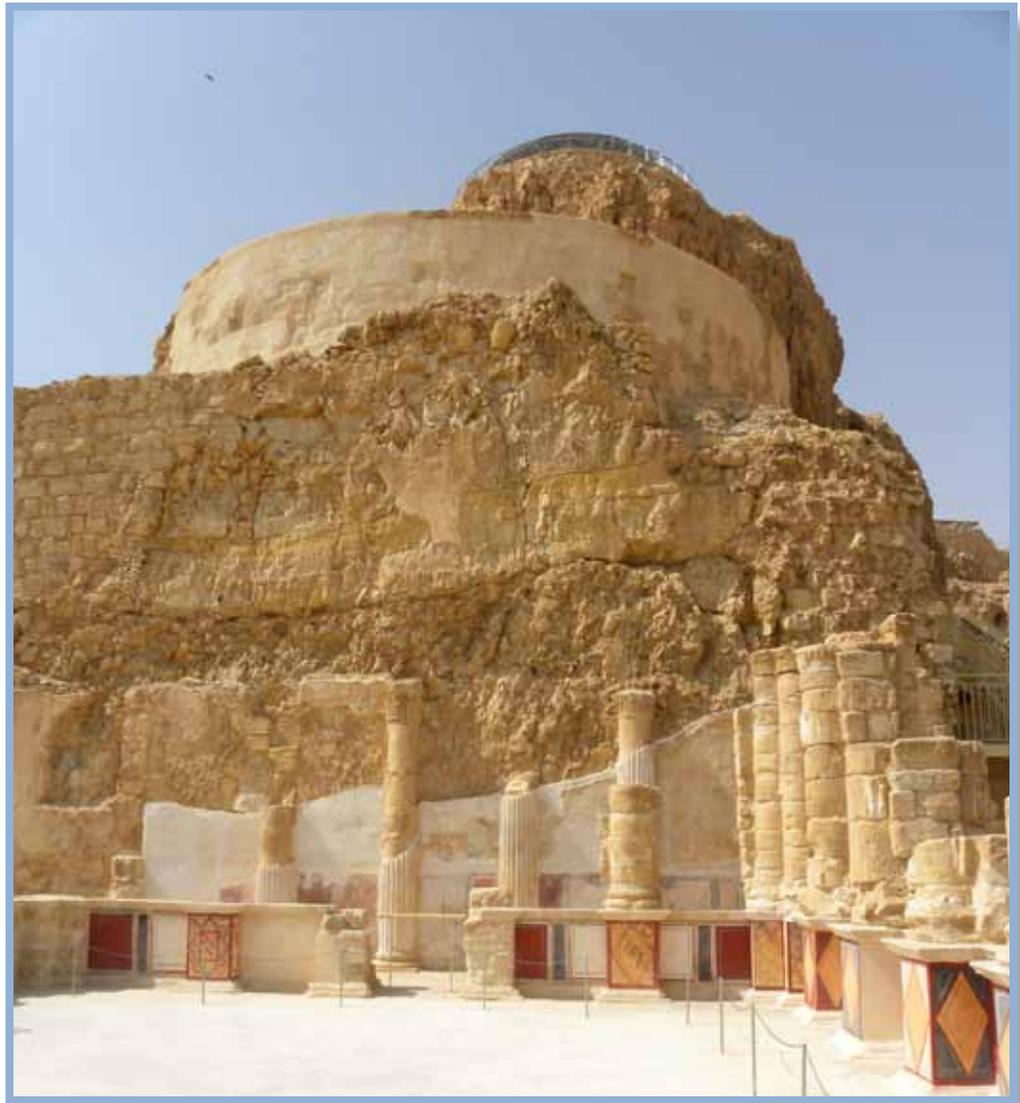
Model of the Hanging Palace
©2010. Biblos Foundation.



Ornate Column Ruin of Hanging Palace
©2010. Biblos Foundation.

A staircase led down the cliff sides to the middle terrace, located on a ledge twenty meters below. It had a circular hall enclosed by a portico. A large room was cut out of the rock next to the hall.

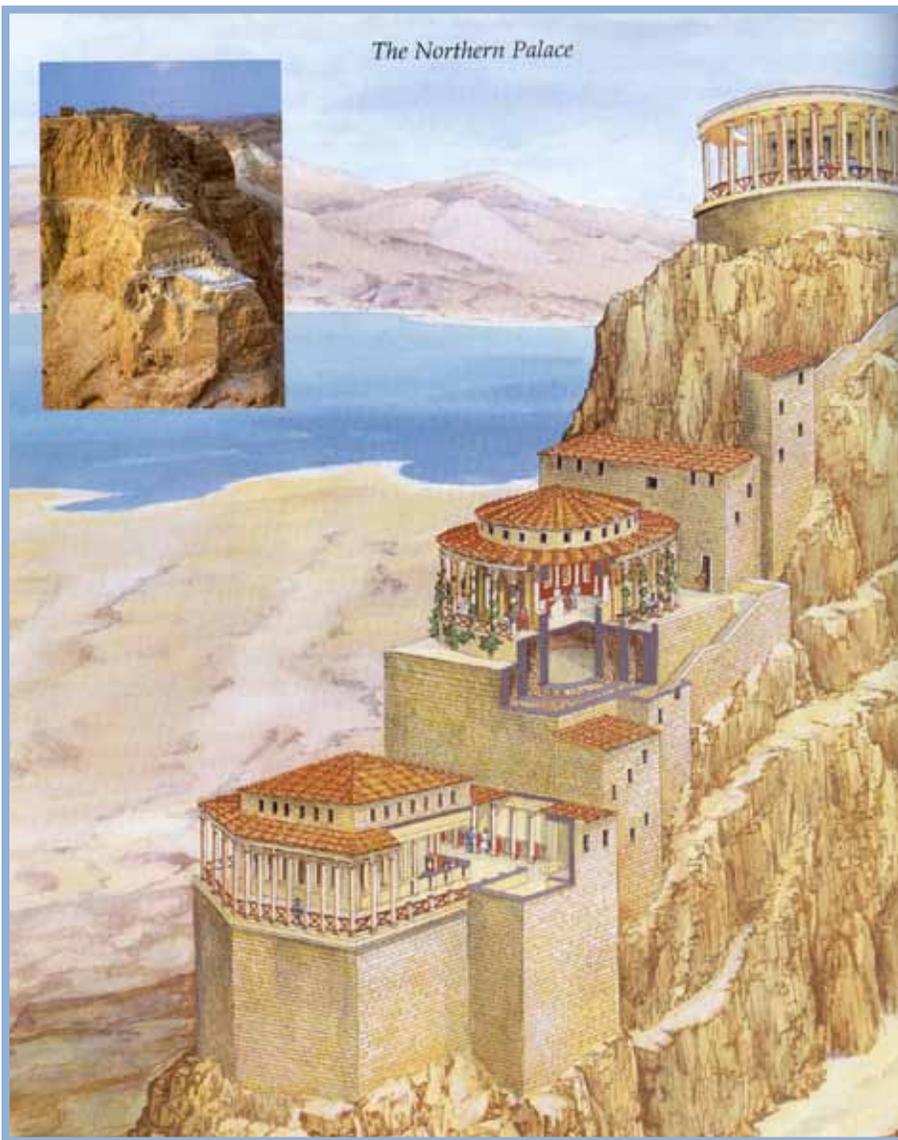
Another staircase dropped 13 meters down the cliff to the lower terrace. This had a large rectangular hall and was surrounded by columned porticoes. There was a wing of two rooms and underneath a bathhouse. All walls were decorated with frescoes, segments of columns made from stone, plastered over to give the illusion of a single carved column.



Ruins of the Hanging Palace
©2010. Biblos Foundation.



Steps leading to and from the Hanging Palace (recreated today but the steps in Herod's time were carved in and around the palaces)
©2010. Biblos Foundation.



The Northern Palace

The palaces and buildings at Masada were a massive investment of money, planning and design. Herod did not shy away from taxing his people heavily to build all of his gigantic projects.

The Western Palace covered one acre and was built before the Hanging Palace. This was the King's ceremonial residence, with four wings and royal apartments around a central courtyard. It included a throne room and administrative buildings.

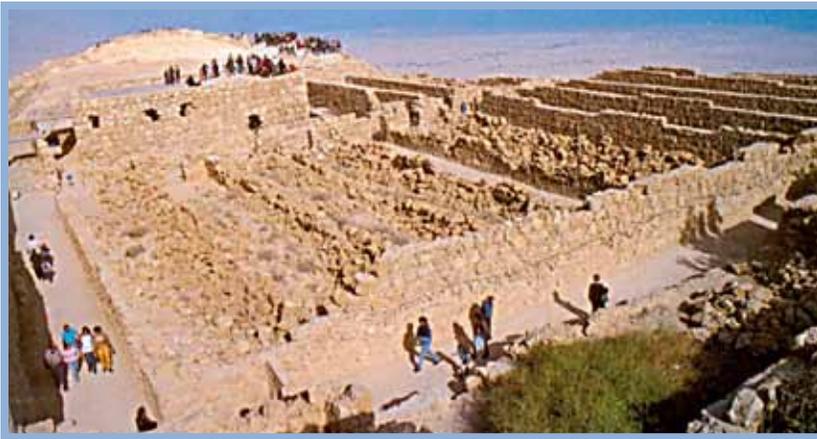
There were four other large palaces that existed for Herod's family and wives to live separately.

Artist Rendering of Hanging Palaces
 Drawings by E. Barashkov, Ron Andromeda and Leen Ritmeyer
 Miriam Feinberg Vamosh, *Daily Life at the Time of Jesus*.



View from top of Masada, looking down to the Hanging Palace Ruins on the side of the cliff
 ©2010. Biblos Foundation.

Ruins of the storage houses
 ©2010. Biblos Foundation.



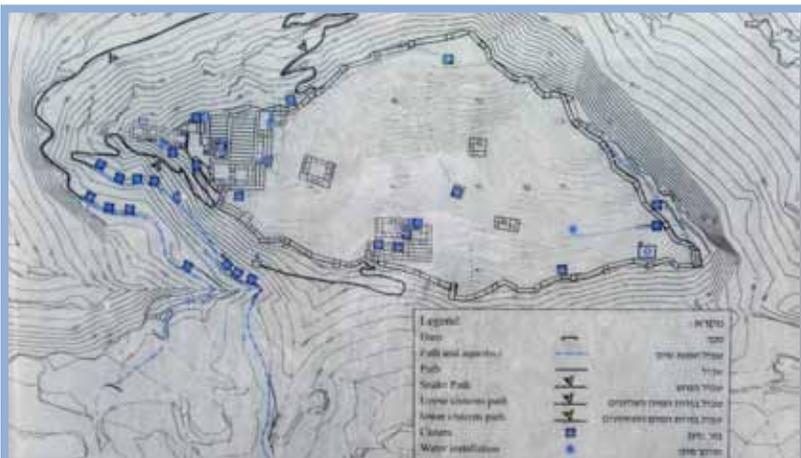
The ruins of the store rooms
©2010, Biblos Foundation.

Near the Palace were 23 large store-rooms. They held oil, wine, flour, grain and other foodstuffs. There were also storerooms for weapons and other war equipment stockpiled in case of attack. All had to be carried up the mountain by slaves along the snake path on the side of the plateau.

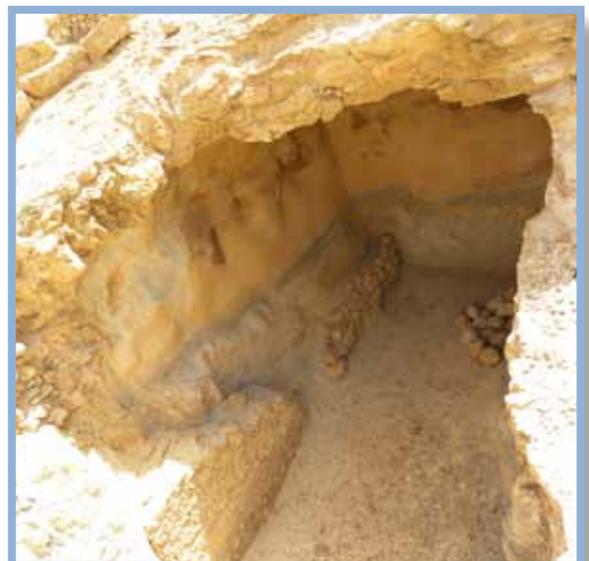


Model of the snake path on the western side to supply the cisterns with water
©2010, Biblos Foundation. (sign at Masada site)

Giant cisterns were built along the sides of the cliff to hold the water coming from flash floods washing down the cliffs. There was an elaborate system of channels to force the water into the cisterns. The capacity was 40,000 cubic meters. Mules or donkeys would transfer the water from the cisterns along the sides of the cliff to the summit, where the water was used in the swimming pool, for drinking, gardening and royal baths. The gardens along the top were so big that they provided fresh produce for Herod's entourage.

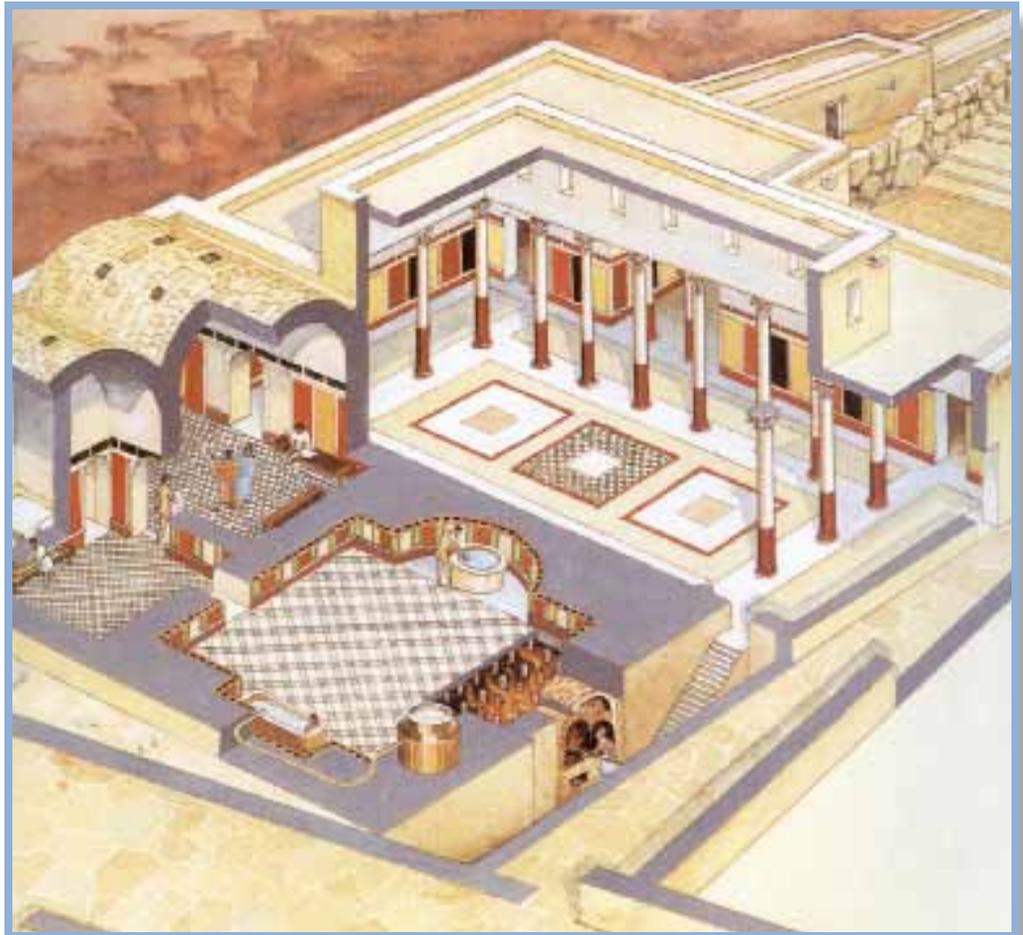


Typographical Map of all the cisterns and water installation wells throughout Masada complex that were built by Herod's engineers
©2010, Biblos Foundation. (sign at the Masada site)



Cistern
©2010, Biblos Foundation.

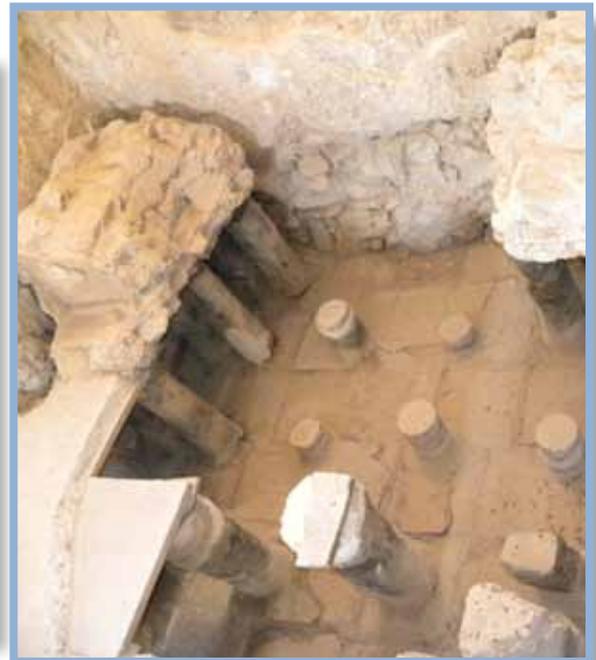
There was a large bathhouse on the top of Masada. One would enter first the Caldarium, or hot room, where hot air circulated from an oven outside the building underneath the floor and up along the walls of earthenware pipe. Hot water then entered the room through metal pipes into a basin. Then one could go into the Tepidarium: the lukewarm room, and finally the Frigidarium or cold room. Colored frescoes with tiles and mosaic floors have been found everywhere on Masada, including the bathhouse. Masada had two more separate bathhouses: one in the Western Palace and one in the Hanging Palace.



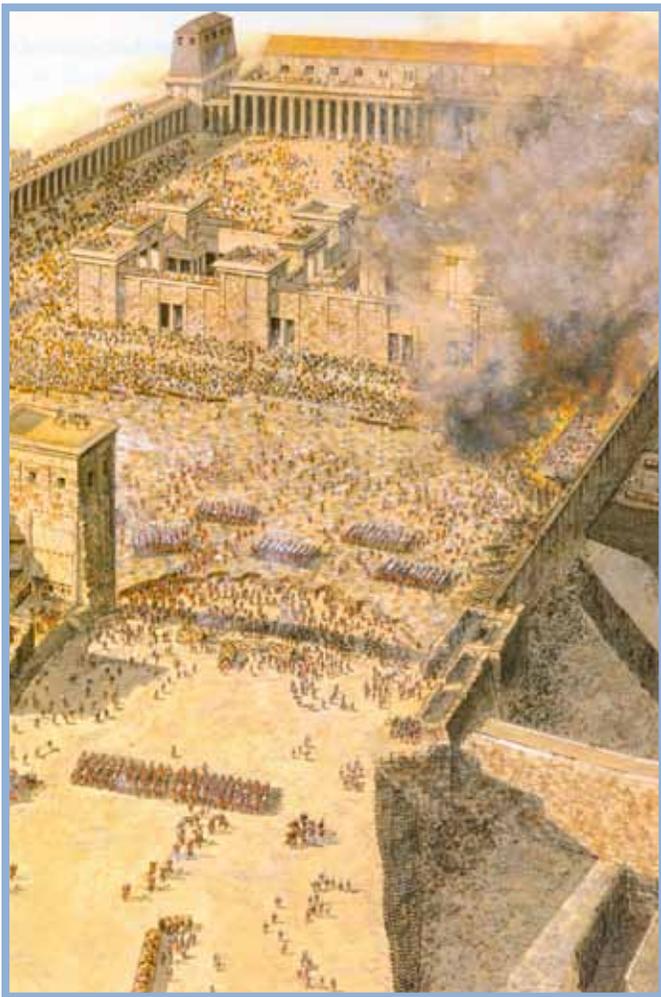
Artist Rendering of the Bathhouse
© 1993. Peter Connolly, *Living in the Time of Jesus of Nazareth*



Model of the pipes and plaster which created steam and heat for the bathhouse (model built on top of bathhouse ruins)
©2010. Biblos Foundation.



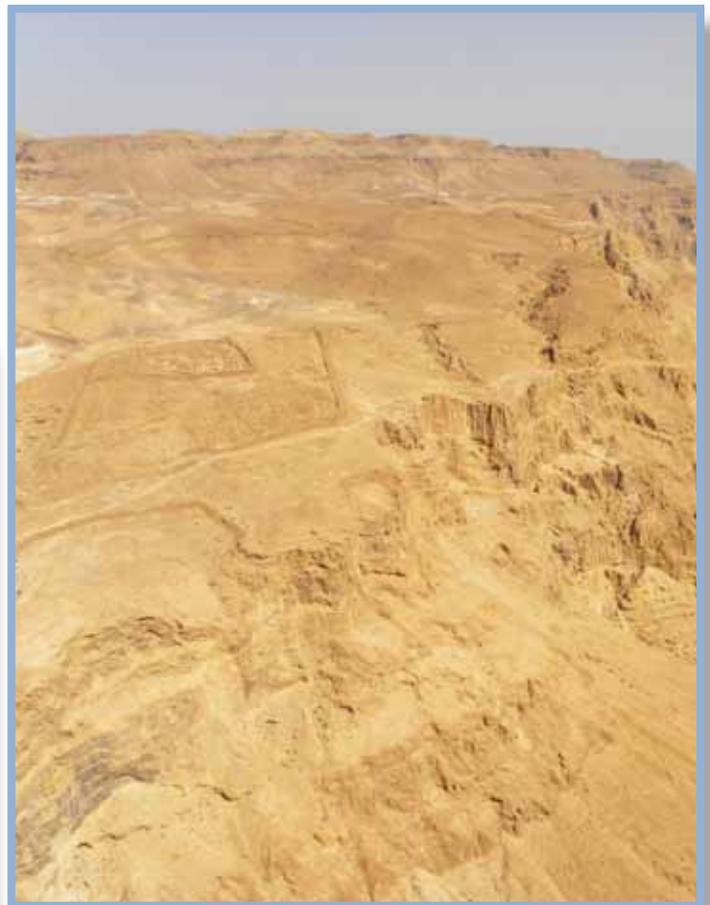
Ruins of the bathhouse (hot pipes)
©2010. Biblos Foundation.



The First Jewish Revolt began in Caesarea in 66 CE. The Zealots organized a full rebellion against Rome, starting in Galilee and catching fire all the way down to Jerusalem. After three years of fighting, the Temple fell and Jerusalem was burned to the ground.

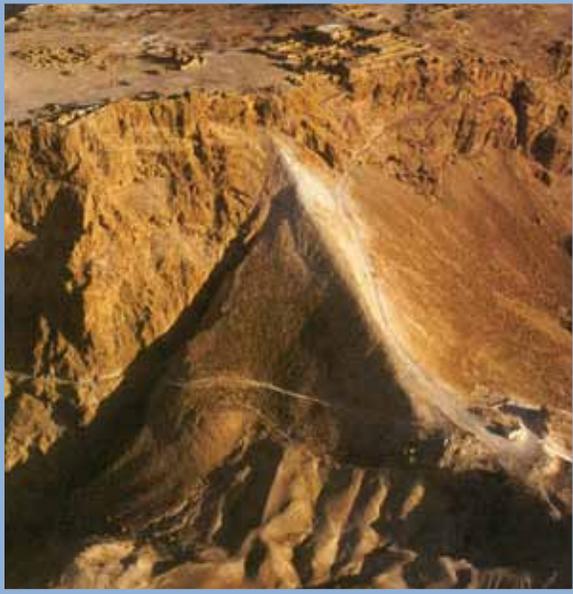
Nine hundred sixty men, women and children fled to the top of Masada. Roman general Silva, leader of the Tenth Legion, and his 8,000 troops, built eight camps around the base and laid siege to Masada. During this time, his troops built a long ramp up the western side. The siege lasted several months. The ruins of eleven barracks constructed for the Roman soldiers still remain at present.

The Destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem 70 CE
© 1993. Peter Connolly, *Living in the Time of Jesus of Nazareth*

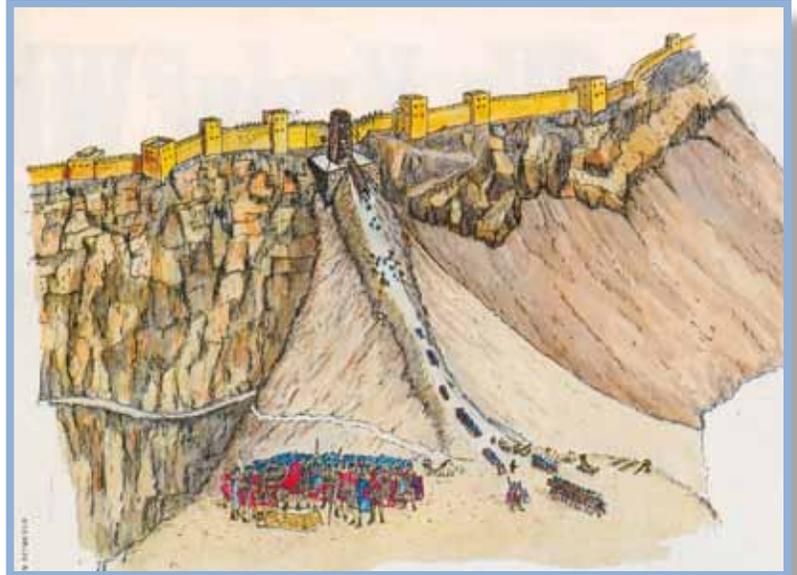


Roman encampment ruins
©2010. Biblos Foundation.

View of the Roman Rampart ruins from further away (on top of the Hanging Palace, northwest view)
©2010. Biblos Foundation.



The ruins of the earthen ramp built by the Romans



An artist rendering of the ramp
©2010. Biblos Foundation.

The earthen ramp was completed in 73 CE after two or three months. The soldiers used tons of earth, stones and rocks to build up the slanted mountain. It was 100 meters high and on top of it they built a stone platform 25 meters high to hold a tall wooden tower. The soldiers were then able to shoot down into the fortress and disperse the defenders back from the walls. Silva brought up a battering ram to breach the wall and set fire to it, enabling him to attack the citadel the following day.



Lots discovered by archeologist, Yigael Yadin, with names of the Jewish men fated to kill their friends and family.
©2010. Biblos Foundation. (sign of photograph of the lots, at Masada site)

The leader of the zealots convinced the people to commit mass suicide rather than become slaves or face horrible execution by the Romans. They set everything atop the mountain on fire and burned it all to the ground except for the storehouses filled with foodstuffs. In this manner they demonstrated their defiance of Rome by showing that they had made a conscious choice to die.

Since suicide is forbidden to Jews, ten men were chosen, by drawing lots, to kill the people and finally, the last man killed himself.

Only two women and five children, who had hidden in the water conduits, survived to tell the story. They supposedly related the events to Josephus the Jewish historian. They told him verbatim the words of Eleazar as he spoke to inspire his people not to surrender.

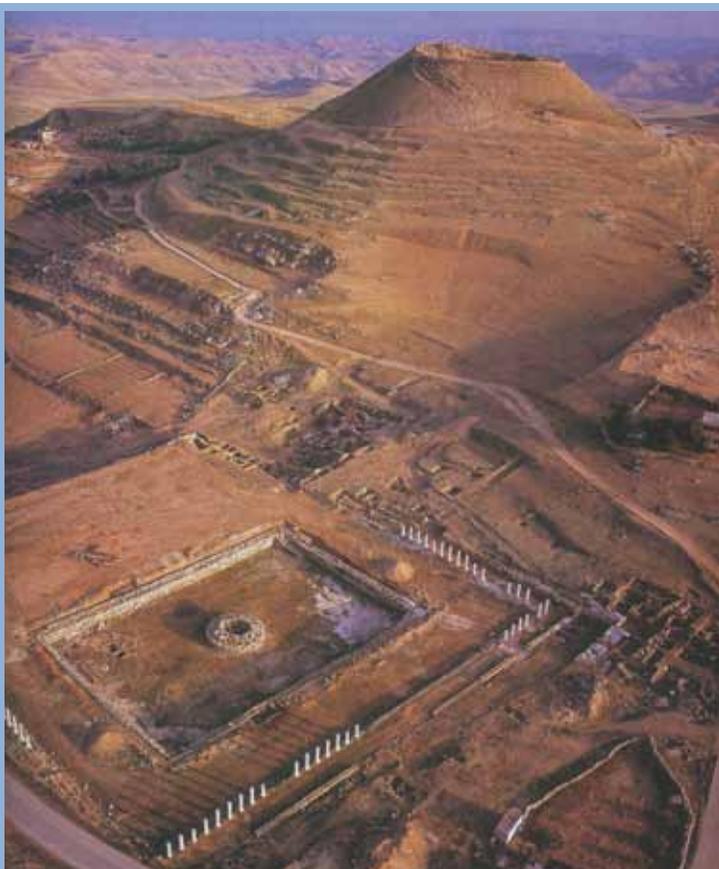
Herodium

Summer Palace & Herod the Great's Tomb (23 - 20 BCE)

Herodium was located fifteen kilometers from Jerusalem and five kilometers southeast of Bethlehem on roads to the Dead Sea. Probably built in 23 to 20 BCE Herod had his slaves cut an entire hill off and carry the dirt to another hill until it formed a man-made volcano-like mountain. It grew to become a massive cylinder of limestone and rock and dirt. The slope was deliberately covered with steep, slippery limestone rocks.



Aerial View of Lower and Upper Herodium



Aerial View of Lower and Upper Herodium

"Its construction employed thousands of skilled and unskilled workers. Cadres of master stonemasons quarried huge blocks of limestone from the bedrock; choosing cracks carefully, they drove in wooden wedges and doused them with water so that they would swell and split the rock. Regiments of workers labored to move the huge blocks and stonemasons chiseled them to precise shape so that, when they were hoisted into place, not even a knife blade could be slid between them. Carpenters shaped doors and window frames from great logs, and slaves and unskilled day laborers were busy digging, heaving, carrying, hauling water, and carting off debris. There were glassmakers, plasterers and fresco painters, workers in stucco and mosaic, inlay workers, ivory carvers and goldsmiths and silversmiths to add finishing brilliance" (Jesus 63).



Herodium and Palace Ruins
©2008. Biblos Foundation.



Engraving of Herod at the end of his life

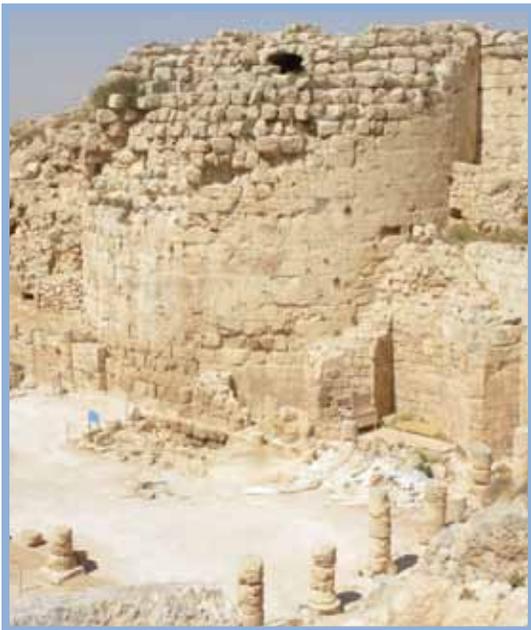
Herodium was used as a summer palace, a fortress, a monument to Herod, his final burial ground and the district capital. The mountain was almost impregnable. The only way up the mountain was using a steep staircase of 200 steps inside the hill. At the top of the hill it stood 2460 feet above sea level.



View from Herodium overlooking Judea (Jerusalem in the distance)
© 1988. Kenneth Holm, *King Herod's Dream: Caesarea on the Sea*.



View from Herodium overlooking Jordan (north)
©1994. Biblos Foundation.



Ruins of Tower at Herodium
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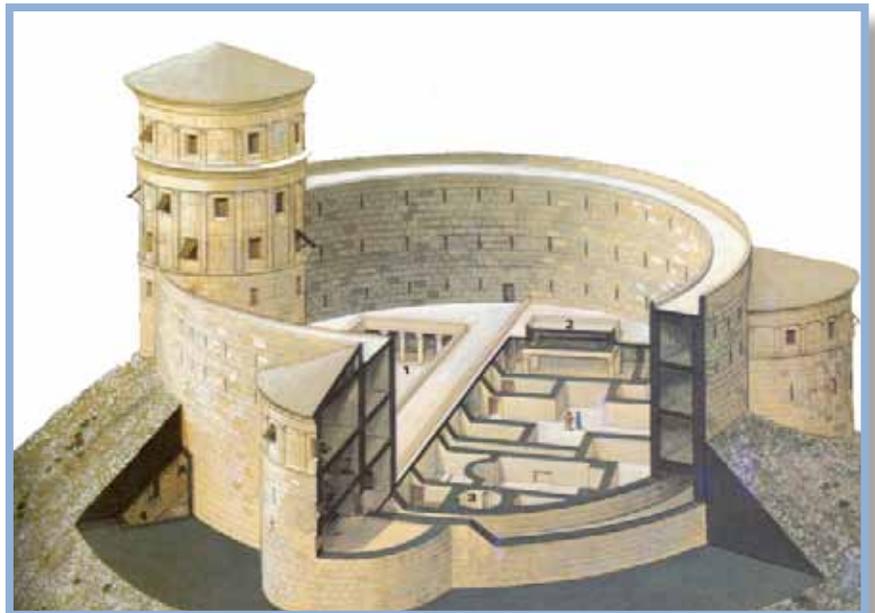
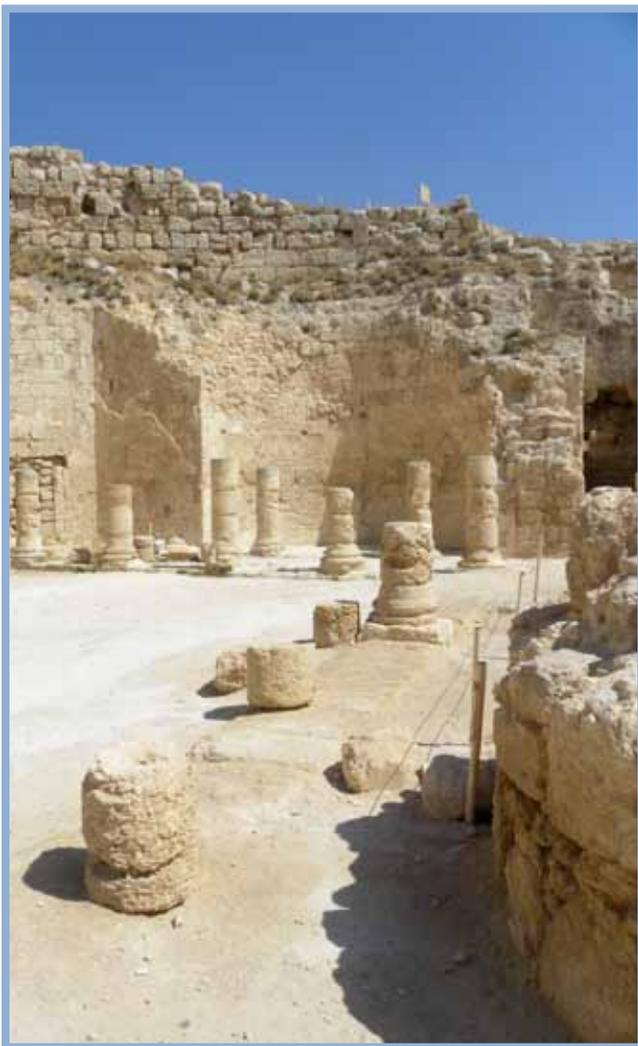


Diagram of the Palace Fortress
© 1993. Peter Connolly, *Living in the Time of Jesus of Nazareth*.



Ruins of Palace at Herodium
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A sentry could see for hundreds of miles around and if an army was coming, he could send a message to another fortress within sight range. The king would have time to flee if he needed to.

There were four round towers at each of the direction points on top. The city on top of the hill was called Upper Herodium. There was a large reception hall, Roman baths, and lavish private quarters.



Ruins at Herodium
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Excavations of the Pool and Garden City at Lower Herodium
©1994. Biblos Foundation.

At the base of the hill was an area called Lower Herodium. There were numerous palaces for use by family and friends and officers of the capital.

There was an enormous artificial pool of water fed by aqueducts near Bethlehem. It was nine feet deep and as big as a soccer field. In the center of the pool was an elegant colonnaded island pavilion reachable only by boat.

The whole complex at Lower Herodium was the largest group of royal buildings in the ancient world, covering 45 acres of land. It was a gorgeous garden city.



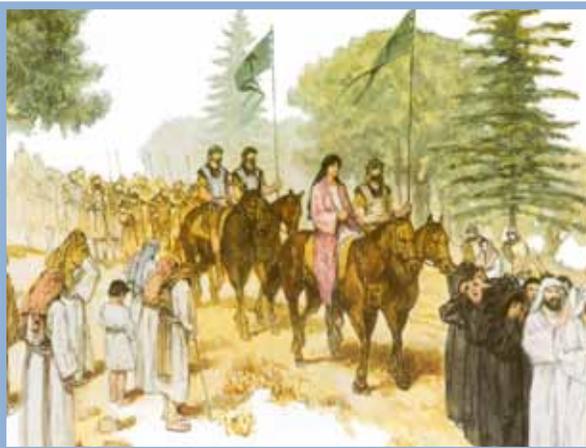
Close-up of the Pool
©2010. Biblos Foundation.



Recently discovered Theater on side of the hill
©2010. Biblos Foundation.



Artist Rendering of the Burial of Herod the Great
© 2008. Tom Mueller, *National Geographic* (Dec 08).



Herod was a cruel tyrant of a leader. When Herod died in Jericho, according to Josephus,

“Archelaus saw to it that his father’s burial should be most splendid, and he brought out all his ornaments to accompany the procession for the deceased. Herod was borne upon a golden bier studded with precious stones...and with a cover of purple over it. The dead man too was wrapped in purple robes and wore a diadem...” (14)

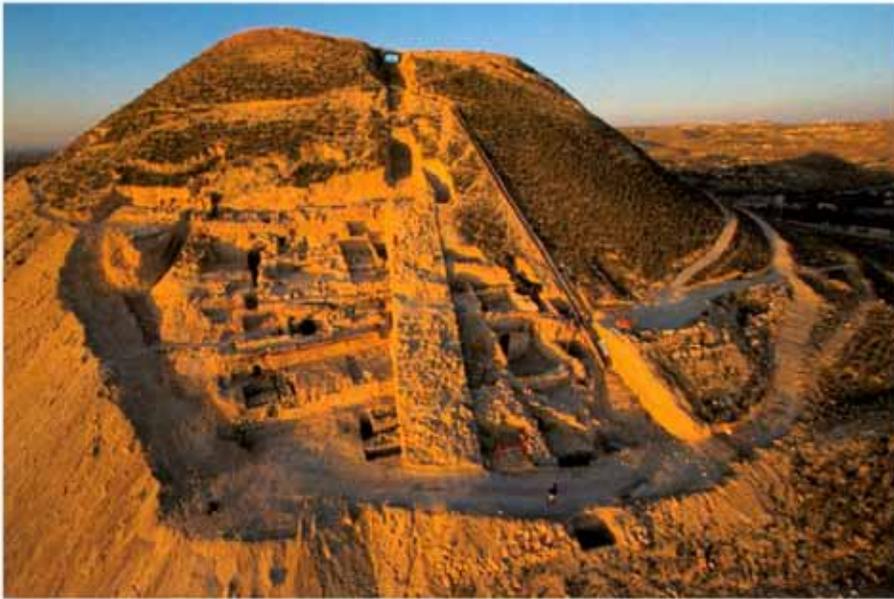
Respecting custom, Archelaus hired a band of pipers and professional mourners.

After the host of relatives came his bodyguards, then the Thracians, Germans and Gauls, “all equipped for battle. Right behind them came the whole army as if marching to war...followed by five hundred servants carrying spices.” The body was conveyed to Herodium. “So ended Herod’s reign” (*Jesus* 87).

When he died, he wanted the kingdom to mourn for him. He knew they would not do that voluntarily, so he ordered his army to imprison a crowd of leading Judaeon citizens in the hippodrome in Jericho and see that they were massacred when his death was announced, so that the whole city would weep for him.

After long months at his winter palace in Jericho, Herod died a horrible, painful death, described in Eusebius, from “internal pains, burning sensations, swelling of feet, convulsions, ulcerated colon, putrefied and worm-eaten genitals, and very, very bad breath.” Scholars today believe he may have had syphilis, diabetes, chronic kidney disease and gangrene.

Funeral Procession from Jericho to Herodium
© 1987. *Jesus and His Times*.



MONUMENTAL DISCOVERY

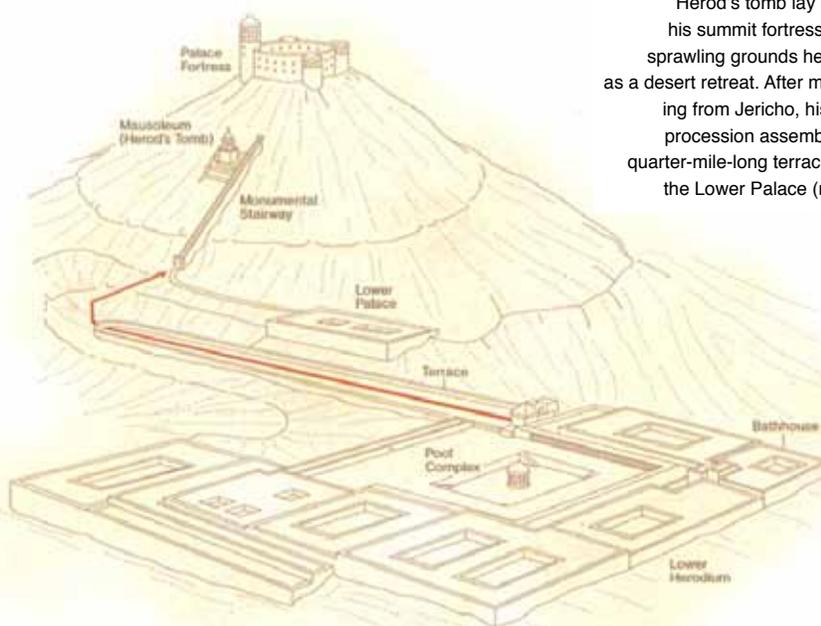
Finding Herod's grave was an epic labor for Israeli archaeologist Ehud Netzer. He had long thought the king was buried in the palace complex at the foot of Herodian's man-made hill, eight miles south of Jerusalem. But in 2007 Netzer's team located a tomb in a dramatic setting halfway up the 300-foot-tall mound (above). Intact stone blocks mark lower courses of the hillside mausoleum (right).

The Herodium tomb was a hidden secret for over 2,000 years until just recently, when Ehud Netzer, a Jewish archaeologist, discovered the site of the tomb at Herodium. It is presently being excavated.

Herod the Great also rebuilt the fabulous Temple in Jerusalem. (See study packet on The Temple at www.biblosfoundation.org)

HERODIUM

Herod's tomb lay between his summit fortress and the sprawling grounds he created as a desert retreat. After marching from Jericho, his funeral procession assembled on a quarter-mile-long terrace beside the Lower Palace (red line).



Artist Rendering of the Burial of Herod the Great

© 2008. Tom Mueller,
National Geographic (Dec 08).

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Biblos Foundation

196 Spring Oaks Drive

Ballwin, MO 63011

Phone: 1.888.5BIBLOS (1.888.524.2567) or

636.220.4380

Fax: 636.220.2315

Email: info@biblosfoundation.org

www.biblosfoundation.org

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