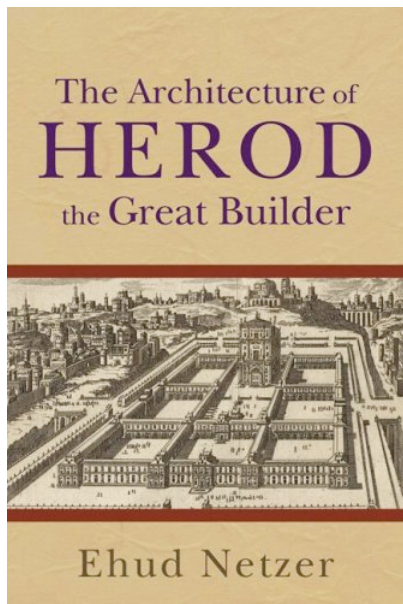


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**Netzer, Ehud**

*The Architecture of Herod, the Great Builder*

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David W. Chapman  
Covenant Theological Seminary  
Saint Louis, Missouri

In this volume Ehud Netzer concisely summarizes current knowledge on the major architectural achievements of Herod the Great within his royal realm. This book continues Baker Academic's helpful reprints of Mohr Siebeck titles (here from TSAJ). Netzer, in his short preface to this edition, updates the original 2006 publication by briefly summarizing his own recent highly publicized discovery of Herod's mausoleum at Herodium.

Netzer is preeminently qualified to study the subject, having excavated at most of these Herodian sites. Among other matters, Netzer served as a staff architect with Yadin's Masada excavations and was the lead author of the architectural volume in the Masada final reports. He has also dug Herodian era finds at Jericho, Herodium, Cypros, Caesarea, Baniyas, and Jerusalem. Indeed, the bibliography refers to some forty-nine relevant previous publications from Netzer himself on Herodian architectural matters—many of them in prestigious academic journals and volumes.

Netzer's expertise and firsthand knowledge makes the book a goldmine of information within a concise and readable package. Carefully selected architectural top-plans, occasional isometric drawings, and a fine collection of photographic plates at the end all assist the reader. Netzer, who insists that Herod must have been personally involved in his

building programs, clearly admires Herod's devotion to architectural matters (xviii). Rather than merely mimicking Roman style in order to please his political patrons (as some have charged), Herod advanced, Netzer, believes an esthetic, practical, and imaginative approach to his buildings. Herod was not engaged in some megalomaniac endeavor. Rather, it was Herod's vision that achieved such a diverse yet continuous array of architectural works. Although Herod likely did not act as an architect himself, he nevertheless carefully selected the sites, developed meticulously planned architectural programs for each, and followed through on those plans (295–300).

Chapter 1 contains Netzer's brief biography of Herod (essentially summarizing Josephus's *Ant.* 14–17). Subsequent chapters are collected into two parts. The first part (chs. 2–10, divided by geographic locales) provides a careful building-by-building overview of each of Herod's major architectural projects. The second portion (chs. 11–17) looks at the whole Herodian architectural corpus and treats synthetically his different building types and influences. Five helpful appendices (written by Netzer and other colleagues) provide seventy-four more pages of summary analysis of Herod's use of building materials and decorations.

In chapter 2 Netzer, who acknowledges little evidence for Hasmonean construction atop Masada, recognizes three stages to Herod's building work on this desert fortress. The Western Palace and three similarly designed smaller palaces form the key features of phase one. The second phase brought a more methodical approach to Herod's designs, evidenced in the Northern Palace and nearby storerooms and water-cisterns. The third phase continued expansion of the Western and Northern Palace areas and included the important addition of the casemate wall that encompassed the summit.

In the next chapter Netzer carefully considers the three Herodian palaces at Jericho (modern Tulul Abu el-Alayiq). The smaller size of the first palace built during Cleopatra's reign, followed by the increasing complexity of each subsequent palace, indicates Herod's own growing status and wealth. At nearby Tel es-Samarat, Herod constructed what Netzer considers a multifunction facility serving as hippodrome, theater, and amphitheater.

At Sebaste (Samaria), Herod's architects incorporated new elements into the original city plan. Although insufficient archaeological evidence currently exists for much of the Herodian city (aside for some additions to the city walls), the acropolis certainly housed the temple of Augustus with an accompanying "fortified compound" of storerooms and royal rooms. A large rectangular structure with enclosed courtyard has been excavated on the northeastern end of the ancient city. Netzer identifies this as a stadium with probable Herodian date (based on extant frescoes and proximity to the Herodian wall).

In the chapter on Caesarea Maritima, Netzer provides a detailed portrayal of the harbor, aqueduct system, temple of Augustus and Rome, Promontory Palace, theater, and hippodrome. The analysis of the palace unmistakably draws on Netzer's firsthand archaeological experience. While Netzer is fairly definitive on the ground plan for the temple, he rightly notes the sparse evidence for its specific architectural details. Despite Josephus's mention of an amphitheater at Caesarea, Netzer identifies the facility northwest of the theater as a "hippodrome-stadium," arguing that it is not quite as multifunctional as the above-mentioned structure at Jericho.

Chapter 6 summarizes Herod's buildings in Jerusalem, and chapter 7 is devoted to the Jewish temple. Fascinatingly, Netzer locates the Antonia Fortress not merely adjacent to the rectilinear Temple Mount but partially across the northern wall-line on the northwest of the outer temple enclosure. Netzer acknowledges the meager archaeological evidence for any reconstruction of the Antonia, but his reconstruction draws on analogies with the "mountain-palace-fortress" atop Herodium. He also discusses the design of the three high towers (Phasaël, Hippicus, and Mariamme) in west Jerusalem in light of potential parallels to Herodium. Netzer locates Herod's main palace in Jerusalem just south of these three towers. He intriguingly suggests that Josephus's mention of an amphitheater and hippodrome in Jerusalem implies the existence of a single structure: a multifunctional complex like that found at Jericho. I suspect that many readers will wish to read carefully Netzer's fine discussion of the Jerusalem temple, where he draws heavily on extant literature (Josephus and rabbinic) to reconstruct the temple design. Among other matters, Netzer suggests that the Stoa Basileia had a lower central hall than in some other proposals, and he advocates for the holy of holies to have been located over the "sacred rock" currently housed in the Dome of the Rock.

Chapter 8 discusses both the "mountain-palace-fortress" of Herodium and the structures found below. Again, Netzer's personal excavation experience at the site comes through. Netzer concludes that the mound of the fortress originally supported a monumental stairway from the northeast. Fill from the construction was used to create the conical shape that now surrounds the mount. It was on the northeast that Netzer discovered the mausoleum he believes was Herod's (see ix–xiv). Lower Herodium offers evidence of a pool complex with bathhouse, a large palace, and other features.

Chapters 9 reviews the desert fortresses of Alexandria (Sartaba), Doq, Nuseib Uweishira, Cypros, Hyrcania, and Machaerus. Other small-scale projects are surveyed in chapter 10 (e.g., the temple at Paneias, the Cave of Machpelah at Hebron, the fortified villa at Khirbet al-Murak, and two "edifices" at Callirrhoe). Only four short pages (237–40) are devoted to a quick summary of Herod's building activities outside his royal territory.

The second part of the book, drawing on the meticulous building analyses of part 1, succinctly compares the architectural principles involved in Herod's palaces, temples, entertainment facilities, and general city plans. A chapter devoted to influences on Herod acknowledges that Herod and his architects drew on plans of earlier Hasmonean structures, as well as Hellenistic building designs from neighboring territories. However, Herod was also truly a cosmopolitan citizen of the Roman Empire, and he often imported influences from Roman building design. Among other matters, Herodian decorative work indicates artisans trained in techniques from Italian locales. I have already noted Netzer's insistence that Herod, though not an architect himself, took direct interest in his building programs.

This excellent volume focuses intently on Herodian-era architecture. Thus there is little or no analysis here of later developments in these buildings (such as those during the First Revolt at Masada, Herodium, Machaerus, etc.), and pre-Herodian structures at these sites receive only passing mention. Also, aside from the opening chapter, the book does not often contemplate how these architectural features relate to the broader events of Herod's life.

Given the many fine qualities of this volume, it is difficult to suggest negatives. The beginning archaeological student may need more assistance to understand architectural terminology. The brief biography of Herod in chapter 1 rarely incorporates current scholarly discussion, especially on issues concerning Josephus's historiography; however, this is hardly the central thrust of the book. Perhaps most notable is Netzer's occasional tendency to defend his positions in this book simply by referring to his previous writings rather than by providing here direct archaeological supporting evidence. For example, Netzer's three phases of Masada are developed without reference to how he delineated the phases of construction (e.g., via ceramics, architectural features, construction seams).

Certainly this volume provides an extremely useful and up-to-date summary of Herod's architectural corpus. It thus serves as an excellent introduction to Herodian architecture. Moreover, by gathering all this information in one place, Netzer himself is able to engage throughout in vital comparative analysis. One hopes that this will inspire others to continue in such synthesizing endeavors. I highly commend this book to students and scholars of Early Roman archaeology, of historical architecture, and of Second Temple Judaism.