



King Herod the Great

King Herod the Great, originally appointed by the Roman Senate, ruled Judea for decades from 37 B.C.E. until his death in 4 C.E. Though he spawned a dynasty, including four descendants who appeared in the New Testament of the Bible, his greatest personal impact may have been the grandiose architectural projects he conducted, from the many palace-fortresses he constructed throughout Judea to the rebuilding and expansion of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. Herod's Temple was not only the Temple that Jesus knew, but also via the Western Wall, the Temple we know today.

In this BAS Library special collection of *Biblical Archaeology Review* articles, read about Herod the man, the cruelty that defined his rule, and his horrific demise. Also, learn about

the archaeological examinations of his building, and the Roman-inspired style that came to be known as “Herodian.”

Scroll down to read a summary of these articles.

The importance of architecture often goes beyond aesthetics, it is not only a manifestation of power but a means of extending and protecting it. In “**Building Power,**” Kenneth G. Holum takes the excavations of Caesarea’s harbor, built by King Herod, to explore both its many cultural uses and the suggestions of how it may have solidified Herod’s power and that of his descendants in the Herodian dynasty.

The Second Temple was Herod’s greatest impact, the construction project for which he is most remembered. A millennium after King Solomon’s Temple, the First Temple, had been built, King Herod undertook his building inspired by Solomon, but with strong Greco-Roman influences on the style of the building itself. In “**Herod’s Roman Temple**” David Jacobson explores Herod’s building project and what motivated him as he completed it.

After the Roman’s destroyed the Second Temple in 70 A.D., what happened to the Cedar of Lebanon wooden beams that had been a part of it? Peretz Reuven, In “**Wooden Beams from Herod’s Temple Mount,**” attempts to answer that question archaeologically, following the possible paths of re-use or destruction.

The expansion of the Portico was a massive undertaking, involving building up the Temple Mount itself before building construction could even take place. In [“Reimagining Herod’s Royal Portico,”](#) Orit Peleg-Barkat undertakes the difficult process of modeling what the Portico must have looked like in Herod’s time.

King Herod followed the Jewish tradition of the time, not allowing depictions of his likeness in picture, on coin, or in statuary. However, outside of Judah, statues were raised in his honor. In [“Searching for Portraits of King Herod,”](#) Ralf Krumeich and Achim Lichtenberger attempt to discover what can be known about Herod’s appearance from the scanty evidence that remains.

[“Herod’s Horrid Death,”](#) looks at what is known of King Herod’s demise. In addition to speculating about what disease might have killed him, Nikos Kokkinos examines the aspects of Herod’s long, cruel reign that led some to feel his terrible death was a sort of poetic justice.

King Herod was buried at Herodium—a fact recorded by Josephus in the first century—but where precisely? In a BAR article published in 2011, archaeologist Ehud Netzer reported that he had found the tomb, but now others are calling his identification into question. In [“Was Herod’s Tomb Really Found?”](#), Hershel Shanks examines the evidence and weighs in as the hunt for Herod’s tomb continues.

Articles

BUILDING POWER

Biblical Archaeology Review, September/October 2004 By **Kenneth G. Holum**

038 In 44 C.E., the Jewish king Agrippa, king of Judea, stood in the theater of Caesarea, clothed in a garment woven of silver threads that glittered in the first rays of sunlight. To those who looked upon him, he seemed awesome and terrible. The spectators were the leading men of the kingdom. [...]

HEROD'S ROMAN TEMPLE

Biblical Archaeology Review, March/April 2002 By **David Jacobson**

For King Solomon's Temple, the Phoenician king, Hiram of Tyre, supplied not only construction materials and masons (1 Kings 5:1–12) but apparently the architectural plan as well. The structure, as it is described in the Bible, is clearly a Syro-Phoenician building, for which archaeology has found several parallels in that cultural sphere.^a Solomon made [...]

WOODEN BEAMS FROM HEROD'S TEMPLE MOUNT: DO THEY STILL EXIST?

Biblical Archaeology Review, May/June 2013 By **Peretz Reuven**

The Romans destroyed Herod's Jerusalem Temple in 70 C.E. Is it possible that some of the wooden beams from his Temple Mount have survived—and may be identified? I believe the answer is "yes." Some of the beams may even be from the Temple. Wooden beams of this quality—especially Cedar of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*) and [...]

REIMAGINING HEROD'S ROYAL PORTICO

Biblical Archaeology Review, July/August September/October By **Orit Peleg-Barkat**

“It is deserving of mention more than any other under the sun.” This is how the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus describes Jerusalem’s Royal Portico in his Jewish Antiquities (15.412). Built along the southern flank of the Temple Mount, the Royal Portico, also known as the Royal Stoa, was one of King Herod’s most ambitious [...]

SEARCHING FOR PORTRAITS OF KING HEROD

Biblical Archaeology Review, November/December 2019 By **Ralf Krumeich , Achim Lichtenberger**

What did King Herod look like? Join classical archaeologists Ralf Krumeich and Achim Lichtenberger as they search for the king’s portraits throughout the ancient Mediterranean world. Their discoveries illuminate aspects of Herod’s rule and how he chose to depict himself.

HEROD’S HORRID DEATH

Biblical Archaeology Review, March/April 2002 By **Nikos Kokkinos**

Physicians have long debated what caused King Herod’s death, but there is no doubt (or disagreement) that his demise was a horrid one. Many would say it was also well-deserved. We know the king’s symptoms in some detail from the first-century Jewish historian Josephus. Josephus actually wrote two accounts, the first in his [...]

WAS HEROD’S TOMB REALLY FOUND?

Biblical Archaeology Review, May/June 2014 By **Hershel Shanks**

It was archaeologist Ehud Netzer's final triumph—the discovery of the tomb of Herod the Great.

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