

Sarah JAPP, Die Baupolitik Herodes' des Großen. Die Bedeutung der Architektur für die Herrschaftslegitimation eines römischen Klientelkönigs. Internationale Archäologie Band 64, hrsgg. von C. DOBIAT und K. LEIDORE, Rahden/Westf. 2000. XII+ 169 + 85 Seiten.

It is always amazing how much of a hold the historical personality of Herod the Great still has over the imaginations of scholars, both historians and archaeologists. For historians a full description of the period is available from Flavius Josephus' writings – for better or worth, since he is our only source. Perhaps this makes the large number of historical summaries easier to understand, in contrast to the archaeological approach. However, in both the historical and archaeological 'Herodian'¹ literature, the attribution of certain building projects to the activity of Herod the Great has mostly preceded firm archaeological attestation and a real historical analysis of Josephus' statements.² Even now, the evidence of excavated sites is far from having been presented and analyzed in a satisfactory manner, in spite of the abundance of sites from the Herodian period, which have been intensively excavated in the last decades. One of the most outstanding features of the 'Herodian' literature is the way authors (apparently seduced by the thrilling personality and multifarious activities of Herod the Great) tend towards risky generalizing summaries, unable to go further because of weak material basis published so far.

It is only natural that scholars should seek not only to present Herod's achievements but also their rationale, and their more general social, political, economic and ethnic/religious context, a trend, which should be welcomed enthusiastically. It seems symptomatic that three such independent summaries have been published in the last four years, all of them focused on Herod's

¹ We use the term 'Herodian' frequently in this review, while aware of its disadvantages. This term should be used for Herod's lifetime/reign only (40-4 BCE), while that of his successors and the Roman procurators up to the Destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem (70 CE) should be defined either as 'post-Herodian period', 'Early Roman period' or just '1st century CE'. This distinction is supported by changes in material culture, including architecture and decoration.

² Such as in the case of A. Schalit, *König Herodes. Der Mann und sein Werk* (Studia Judaica. Forschungen zur Wissenschaft des Judentums 4), Berlin 1969 [curiously never translated into English!]; E. Schürer, *The history of the Jewish people in the age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. – A.D. 135)*. A new English version, edited by G. Vermes and F. Millar, Vol. I, Edinburgh 1973, 287-329; for the latter see recently B. Isaac, "Between the old Schürer and the new: archaeology and geography", in: A. Oppenheimer, ed., *Jüdische Geschichte in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit. Wege der Forschung: Vom alten zum neuen Schürer*, München 1999, 181-191.

building program and his *Baupolitik*. The earliest one is Roller's *Building program* (1998), a richly documented scholarly work, which has already been reviewed rather critically in the past.³ One of the main reproaches of the author by his critics was the lack of evidence for some of his assumptions, and the discrepancy between historical declarations and the weakly-based archaeological evidence. Roller included in his work every small piece of evidence, which was not always part of a royal *building program* but simply belonged to the building activity of the time, a distinction, which must be made (see also below). That archaeological evidence is weak is a sad reality, which creates a *circle vicieux*, preventing those who are willing to relate to the issue from doing so, since they are not personally involved in exposing 'Herodian' remains and thus implicitly do not know their 'secrets'. These 'secrets' sit in store rooms for many years and remain unpublished, or published only in a preliminary and often just a popular form.

The publication reviewed here goes some way towards filling this gap. Most excavation of and research into Herodian architecture and art during the last decades has been done by Israeli and American archaeologists, co-operating in large projects such as Caesarea, Sepphoris and Jericho. Yet one of the most important initiatives in research has come from a rather unexpected side, namely a German-Israeli co-operation which led to the symposium 'Judaea and the Greco-Roman world in the time of Herod in the light of archaeological evidence' held in Jerusalem in 1988.⁴ During that symposium the German and Israeli scholars developed a stimulating approach towards the analysis of architectural and artistic remains against the background of the meeting of East and West, of local and Hellenized or Romanized trends, and of the development of the royal builders' consciousness of his *voyeurs*. For the German archaeological school and its main trend in Classical archaeology influenced mainly by Paul Zanker, Herod's reign became an attractive target for analysis, reflecting the interaction between the Greek-Hellenistic and Late Republican-Early Imperial Roman world and the East, and including, as it were, the power of Herod's strong personality, a sort of Herodian power of images periphrastically to contemporary Augustus' *Macht der Bilder*.⁵ Following this develop-

³ B. Burrell and E. Netzer, "Herod the Builder", *JRA* 12, 1999, 705-715; B. Burrell, *Biblical Archaeology Review* 24.4, 1998, 59-6; See now K. Fittschen, *Gnomon* 73, 2001, 180-183.

⁴ K. Fittschen and G. Foerster, Eds., *Judaea and the Greco-Roman world in the time of Herod in the light of archaeological evidence* (Acts of a symposium organized by the Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Archaeological Institute, Georg-August-University of Göttingen at Jerusalem November 3rd – 4th 1988), Göttingen 1996.

⁵ Cf. P. Zanker, *Augustus und die Macht der Bilder*, München 1987 (translated into English as: *The power of images in the age of Augustus*, Ann Arbor 1988).

ment it comes as no surprise that in a relatively short time two German scientific works have been conceived dealing with the *Baupolitik* of Herod the Great, one of Achim Lichtenberger, and the second one of Sarah Japp, which is the subject of our review.⁶

The preparation of this book belongs almost to the same time span as Roller and Lichtenberger. Unlike Lichtenberger, but like Roller, the author attempts at presenting all those remains which might be associated with Herod, even if she expresses her doubts as to the possibility of succeeding in this, as did Lichtenberger and others before her.

The book is composed of two big parts: Part Two (Chapter VIII) with the Catalogue, which one might have expected to be Part One, since it represents the structural basis of the book, and Part One, chapters I-VII, including two summaries in German and English. The catalogue includes "all those sites, where any building activity of Herod the Great can be assumed, following sources or archaeological evidence ..." (p. 95). It is in fact divided into two parts, the first one containing the building projects described by Josephus, including those carried out outside Judaea ('Ausland'), and the second part including a large variety of non-official building complexes, such as farmsteads and 'Wirtschaftsanlagen', fortified complexes,⁷ 'dwelling architecture' ('Wohnarchitektur') and tombs. One has the impression that the second part of this catalogue is a kind of second-hand appendix, the two last items (dwellings and tombs) being in fact just short summaries of a great amount of data existing today.⁸

⁶ Achim Lichtenberger, *Die Baupolitik Herodes des Großen*. Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins, Bd. 26. Herausgegeben von S. Mittmann und D. Vieweger unter Mitarbeit von J. Kamlah, Wiesbaden 1999. But it is all the more astonishing that no Israeli scientific work of this kind has been done so far! S. Japp's book has been recently reviewed by B. Burrell, *American Journal of Archaeology* 106, 2002, 107-110. It is also of some interest that Sarah Japp's PhD supervisor was Henner von Hesberg, one of the active participants and contributor at the German-Israeli symposium of 1988.

⁷ Sometimes not sufficiently updated, e.g.: W. Neidinger, "A typology of oil lamps from the mercantile quarter of Antipatris", *Tel Aviv. Journal of the Tel Aviv Institute of Archaeology* 9 (1982) 157-169. (s.v. Antipatris); S. Loffreda, *La ceramica di Macheronte e dell' Herodion (90 a.C.-135 d. C.)*, Jerusalem 1996, (s.v. Machairous); V. Tzaferis, "A tower and a fortress near Jerusalem" *IEJ* 24, 1974, 84-94 (s.v. Givat Sha'ul); M. Fischer, "Die Strassenstation von Horvat Masad (Hirbet el-Qasr). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Weges von Jerusalem nach Emmaus, *ZDPV* 103, 1987, 117-136 (s.v. Horvat Mesad).

⁸ Two crucial works on these are surprisingly omitted: Y. Hirschfeld, *The Palestinian dwelling in the Roman-Byzantine period*, Jerusalem 1995, and A. Kloner, *The necropolis of Jerusalem in the second temple period*, PhD Diss. Hebrew University, Jerusalem 1980 (Hebrew with English abstract).

We have here an accurate presentation of the sites but with the sort of archaeological and historical details which belong to an encyclopaedia rather than to the *catalogue raisonnée* which was presumably intended. As in the case of Roller and Lichtenberger, here too a critical analysis of the facts should have been considered, not merely some short remarks and personal field impressions.

In fact, the second part of this book is an attempt at a handbook of Herodian architecture,⁹ whereas it is the first part which deals with the stated subject, namely Herod's *Baupolitik*, which is necessarily based on the catalogue. Unfortunately the linkage between these two parts is only partially carried out. Moreover, it is questionable whether some of the sites included are really relevant to a discussion of an official *Baupolitik* (stressed by the subtitle *Bedeutung der Architektur für die Herrschaftslegitimation ...*). It is rather difficult to understand what connection the author sees between such a *Baupolitik* and, say, farmsteads, smaller fortified complexes, dwellings and tombs (except perhaps the *pax Herodiana* offering an adequate frame for their building and development). *Post factum* it might have been preferable to change the title into *Bautätigkeit* (building activity) and use the data for aspects relevant for *Baupolitik*, or to reduce the catalogue only to those sites and aspects relevant for the *Baupolitik*. Beside these somewhat technical and semantic observations, some points should be made about the first part, which in fact is the core of the book reflecting its title. Here we deal with an intelligent and well-delimited presentation of facts and their analysis. After concise but well based introductory chapters on the historical, political and historiographical background, the author dedicates chapter III to the main issue itself. Basing herself on the data from the catalogue (for some reservations, see above) she reveals the most important fields of the issue, such as urban design, official civic building projects, official religious buildings, fortifications and palaces, and projects carried out outside Judaea. Japp succeeds in pointing out the main aspects, reflecting Herod's self-consciousness as a successor of the Hasmoneans, king of the Jews and partner of the Roman Empire. Japp's chapters on the role Herod's *Baupolitik* played in the stabilising of his kingdom are a step forward in the political and ideological appraisal of architecture in general and late Hellenistic and early Roman architecture in the Middle East in particular.

Following Roller's *Building program*, reviewers stated that 'an archaeological analysis of Herod's building program is still badly (my emphasis, M.F.)

⁹ A first attempt: R. Wenning, "Herodianische Architektur. Eine Bibliographie", *Boreas* 14/15, 1993/94, 109-129.

needed' (Burrell 1998). This is still true even after the praiseworthy attempt presented here. This is by no means the fault of the author, but is rather due to the lack of sufficient data and summaries of the varied aspects of material cultural of Herod's time. While it would not argue against the legitimate right of any scholar to deal with summaries – even if they have only an incomplete material basis – I wonder whether such attempts are not premature, and should wait for the final publications which would provide a better basis and leave fewer questions unanswered. In spite of such reservations, it is clear that Sarah Japp has made her contribution to the elucidation of the questionnaire we will need in the future in order to tackle the Herodian problems in a way that takes full account of their complexity. As demonstrated above, in addition to more fully presented archaeological data – which, we know takes time – more specific case studies become a real desideratum, in order to analyze architectural decoration, mosaics, paintings, pottery, glass etc. etc. I would like to hope that further MA and PhD theses will deal with such issues and thus lay down a better foundation for further conclusions beyond the works discussed here. It is superfluous to point out that archaeological and architectural reports of Herodian palaces in general and the Jericho excavations in particular recently published by Ehud Netzer¹⁰ had given Sarah Japp a more complex basis for her attempt.

Nevertheless, her analyses and summaries reviewed here represent a real contribution to a better approach of the subject in the future.

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¹⁰ E. Netzer, *Die Paläste der Hasmonäner und Herodes' des Großen*. Sonderhefte der Antiken Welt. Zaberns Bildbände zur Archäologie. Mainz 1999 (=The palaces of the Hasmoneans and Herod the Great, Jerusalem 2001, Hebr. and Engl.); E. Netzer, *Hasmonean and Herodian palaces at Jericho. Final reports of the 1973-1987 excavations. Volume I: Stratigraphy and architecture* (Israel Exploration Society Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) Jerusalem 2001.