

# Movement, vision, and quotation in the gardens of Herod the Great

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#### IV

RABUN TAYLOR

### MOVEMENT, VISION, AND QUOTATION IN THE GARDENS OF HEROD THE GREAT

Herod the Great's position of importance in the material history of the Helleno-Roman world is now secure. Though his character remains notoriously elusive, his acknowledged status as a major actor in the Augustan program of cultural renewal no longer is in question.<sup>1</sup> Nor do we doubt his genius for creative hybridity, which allowed him to negotiate his sometimes conflicting roles as Hellenistic dynast, head of the Jewish state, and client king of Rome.<sup>2</sup> Thanks largely to the life work of the late Ehud Netzer, Herod's prolific building program is now felt to exceed in cultural importance the material achievements of many Roman emperors — indeed, of *most* Roman emperors, except for the usual suspects such as Augustus, Nero, the Flavians, Trajan, Hadrian, Diocletian, Maxentius, and Constantine. My purpose here is to examine a closely related phenomenon, Herod's cultural significance as a maker and master of gardens. I will present two case studies, one centered on his Third Winter Palace at Jericho and the other on his Summer Palace at Herodium, to consider how Herod envisioned and designed gardens, along with their architectural armatures, as venues of self-presentation and cultural reference.

<sup>1</sup> GALINSKY 2009.

<sup>2</sup> ROLLER 1998; JACOBSON 2001; GRUEN 2009.



Any investigation of this kind has its frustrations. Like a primitive X-ray machine, the tools at our disposal allow us to perceive mere wisps of the 'soft tissue' of our subject matter, the plantings and ephemeral furnishings that invest a garden with its character and vitality. We are left with the 'hard' evidence of architecture, water conduits, and topography, much of which is diminished, dispersed, and hard to interpret in its own right. Since I am neither a garden archaeologist nor an expert in ancient Judaea, I have chosen to take a broadly interpretive approach to the evidence, which I have tried to represent accurately and fairly. I would like to extend special thanks to Kathryn Gleason, who has done far more to change how we think about Herodian gardens than I can possibly do here, and who has generously shared her ideas and expertise with me at length.

Born to an Idumaeian father and a Nabataean mother, Herod professed Judaism more as a matter of family custom or convenience than longstanding heritage. He was a cosmopolitan ruler with international ambitions who turned Roman dominance, and its promise of greater stability in the Near East, to his own advantage. Granted the Second Triumvirate's blessing to rule Judaea in 42 BCE and again in 40,<sup>3</sup> he actively sought the approval and friendship first of Messalla and Antony, then Octavian and Agrippa, the latter of whom remained the king's fast friend until his own death in 12 BCE. Herod's early building focused mainly on defense and consolidation.<sup>4</sup> His prodigious program of civic and palatial construction began around 35,<sup>5</sup> and continued with variable intensity until around 10 BCE; after this, activity tailed off precipitously until his death in 4 BCE. He built major palace complexes at four different settings, two of them inherited from his Hasmonean predecessors (Jerusalem and Jericho) and two virtually on

<sup>3</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* 1, 243-244; 281-285.

<sup>4</sup> NETZER 2006, 202-217; NETZER *et al.* 2010, 106-107.

<sup>5</sup> NETZER 2006, 45.



virgin soil (Herodium and Caesarea). Archaeology and literature confirm that all of these courtly residences were abundantly appointed with irrigated gardens. Those at the Promontory Palace of Caesarea and the fortified palace in the Upper City of Jerusalem were doubtless splendid, but they may have been confined to courtyards or small dependent zones with groves.<sup>6</sup> Of Herodium, I will have more to say below.

### I. The Sunken Garden at Jericho

The palace complex at Jericho, on the other hand, was part of a vast irrigated Hasmonean estate principally devoted to the cultivation of two cash crops, dates and balsam. Strabo and Josephus both marvel at the great irrigated royal plantations in the region.<sup>7</sup> The Hasmonean and Herodian residences at Jericho were secure but had no confining fortifications, seeming instead to have been annexed directly to the surrounding groves. By the end of Herod's reign three palace complexes sprawled over a vast area straddling the Wadi Qelt. The third and last of these, begun around 15 BCE, has justifiably attracted much attention because of its interesting variations on the model of a Roman pleasure villa, complete with hypocaust baths made of imported Italian concrete and, south of the wadi, a domed pavilion that seems to be of pure Roman inspiration (Figs. 4.1-4.2). Parts of the palace are even made of Italian-style *opus reticulatum*, which led Netzer to believe that Agrippa himself had furnished the builders.<sup>8</sup>

I want to focus on a feature just northwest of the pavilion that is unique in the Herodian repertory: the Sunken Garden. Its northern boundary has completely eroded away, but the rest of its perimeter can be reconstructed from the architectural

<sup>6</sup> IOSEPH. *BJ* 5, 176-181; GLEASON *et al.* 1998.

<sup>7</sup> STRAB. 16, 2, 41; IOSEPH. *BJ* 4, 459-474.

<sup>8</sup> NETZER 2006, 55-57.



remains. In its essentials the garden was a flat, rectangular terrace,  $145 \times 40$  m in area, cut into the wadi bank. Its south side consisted of a *nymphaeum*-like façade serving as a retaining wall for the entire length of the cut, but broken at the center by an axial *exedra* banked and stepped like a theater *cauea*. Double-aisled stoas embellished each short side, their floors at an intermediate level between the garden terrace and the upper terrace.

Apart from a few test trenches at its fringe, the central expanse of the garden has never been excavated; consequently we know very little about its plantings, paths, or water features. Pritchard found a perforated planting pot for a shrub or vine in 1951 near the façade; Netzer and Gleason recovered another from a sounding at the western edge in 1975, along with fragments of a third.<sup>9</sup> We may presume that many more — perhaps numbering in the hundreds — occupied the central area. Of trees we can say nothing at the moment. Evidence of trees is not abundant in other well-excavated garden zones at Jericho, such as the apsidal Ionic peristyle in the palace proper, where apart from three or four trees shading the northern *exedra*, the entire central area was dominated by regimented rows of planting pots.<sup>10</sup> We might extrapolate further from the arrangement of beds and promenades recently excavated at the Great Peristyle of the Villa Arianna at Stabiae.<sup>11</sup> Roman gardens seem to have varied more in the types and combinations of plants displayed than in their formal arrangements, which usually stuck to some version of the orthogonal grid. At Stabiae, hundreds of root cavities are preserved, revealing linear arrangements of a wide variety of shrubs and small trees (Fig. 4.3).<sup>12</sup> Water features and the architecture of the

<sup>9</sup> PRITCHARD 1958, 52, cat. no. 30; GLEASON 1987-1988, 33-35; NETZER 2004, 290; GLEASON & BAR-NATHAN 2013, 335.

<sup>10</sup> GLEASON 1993.

<sup>11</sup> GLEASON 2010; HOWE, GLEASON, & SUTHERLAND 2011.

<sup>12</sup> A similar practice is evident in the courtyard of the Temple of Elagabalus in the Vigna Barberini at Rome; see VILLEDIEU 2001.



perimeter also lent individualism and character to these spaces. Notably, the remains of the circular pool in the Villa Arianna garden suggest that the garden's cliffside edge, complete with its boundary colonnade, broke outward in a roughly semicircular *exedra* resembling the Sunken Garden's south side in plan.<sup>13</sup>

At Jericho we are reduced to imagining the garden by proxy of its architectural container. I begin with a medium-distance, macroscopic view. To begin with, the Sunken Garden is physically separated from the palace proper by the wadi, and thus most resembles Inge Nielsen's second type of Hellenistic palace garden, which she calls *kepos* or *alsos*.<sup>14</sup> Its architectural influences are numerous, but the general form and patterns exemplify a strongly Hellenized Roman aesthetic. At least superficially it calls to mind Domitian's garden-stadium on the Palatine, which is a similarly oblong shape enlivened by an exedral feature at the center of one long side. The garden's relatively low elevation would have maximized its visibility from the palace proper, perched on the far bluff of the wadi; but it simultaneously *reduced* the garden's visibility from the hilltop pavilion to the southeast. To be sure, the former view was the most important; but if mere visibility from that vantage had dictated the garden's disposition, it could have been achieved even more effectively with a series of shallow terraces down the gentle slope, as Herod did on a smaller scale at the Second Palace just to the north. As so often in the Herodian landscape, the goal was to render nature in pristine, rational geometries — and in this case, specifically to create a distant scenographic display of the Southern Façade, a distinctive ribbon of texture and color serving as a backdrop to the garden. But the façade had a northern exposure, leaving it buried in

<sup>13</sup> In profile, of course, the Villa Arianna *exedra* is a reversal of the Sunken Garden's, the former being a protruding mass at the top of an escarpment and the latter a void hollowed into one.

<sup>14</sup> NIELSEN 2001. However, she categorizes the Sunken Garden as a successor of her first type, perhaps because of the garden's continuation uphill for an unknown distance.



shadow most of the time, especially during the winter when the palace was in use; so it would not have offered a very lively backdrop from a distance. While we cannot reconstruct the garden's northern boundary with any assurance, like the many other gardens clustered around the Hasmonean and Herodian buildings on this site it was certainly immured, probably by a retaining wall fronting an artificial embankment to serve as a flood barrier.

As so often in Hellenistic and Roman architecture, the eye is drawn along a strong central axis but physical access to the space is oblique. Crossing the wadi from the palace on a narrow footbridge, a visitor entered the garden complex by either one of a pair of modest doorways in the wall constituting the outer enclosure on the eastern side. These opened into blind antechambers; only after a right-hand turn did one gain entry to the double stoa opening out to a view of the garden. A similar arrangement is found on the southwest side of the garden, which allowed entry by identical means, though the way of approach seems to be from the south. This side also incorporated a complex sequence of utility rooms, probably for storage and the accommodation of villa staff. The right-angle turn in a confined space, sometimes called the 'bent' entrance, is a security measure characteristic of Persian and Babylonian palace architecture and is often adopted in Hellenistic palaces.<sup>15</sup> Clearly the garden was designed for control and surveillance of visitors at critical chokepoints. It signals that the king himself was often present there among his subjects and guests. The sheer monumentality of the space, and its potential for scenographic spectacle and display, might suggest the presence of an expanded roster of participants — as would the enormous rectangular swimming pool to the west, which awaits full investigation. From the flanking stoas one descended to the

<sup>15</sup> NIELSEN 1994, 52-59; 116-117; 122; 187; 207. Following standard Herodian practice, the core block of the Third Winter Palace seems to have no monumental entrance at all. Entry was gained through a particularly confined and labyrinthian suite of rooms designed to disorient potential assailants.



garden by narrow open-air stairways in each corner of the south side.

Following Gleason, we should probably imagine the space not as a formal parterre with neatly bordered beds set in geometric patterns, but rather as zones of regimented rows of plantings divided by linear paths and punctuated but not dominated by shade trees. However, this space is architecturally unique among Herod's known gardens, and uniquely monumental. A preference for fairly low shrubs would have ensured that the theatrical south wall remained mostly visible from the palace. The central *exedra*, with its *cauea* countersunk into a straight terrace façade, may be of Italian inspiration. The immediate formal impression is that of a Hellenized hillside sanctuary such as those at Tibur, Praeneste, Pietrabbondante, and Gabii — the last of these furnished with a planted grove in the colonnaded temple precinct directly behind the theater<sup>16</sup> — and that formal parentage is reinforced by the abundance of *opus reticulatum* employed in this part of the palace complex.<sup>17</sup> A similarity is also visible in the Sanctuary of the Syrian Gods at Delos, which may even have inspired the architecture of the Italian hillside sanctuaries (Fig. 4.4).<sup>18</sup> Here a cultic theater similarly connects an oblong, rectilinear terrace to an adjoining terrace above. Herod probably never saw the Latin sanctuaries, but he was no stranger to Delos; both he and his son Antipas evidently were commemorated in inscriptions on the island, and Herod's inscription would seem to suggest that he sponsored a building project there.<sup>19</sup>

The long south wall, with its alternating curved and rectilinear niches divided by colonnettes, evokes a widely recognized

<sup>16</sup> COARELLI 1993.

<sup>17</sup> NIELSEN 2002, 180-189. Sensibly, Netzer sees in this architecture the hand of Agrippa.

<sup>18</sup> La ROCCA 1986, 29; NIELSEN 2002, 250-254; WILL 1985. On the Italian connection, see COARELLI 1983, 192-195.

<sup>19</sup> *IG* XII 5.713.6; *OGIS* 417; MANTZOULINO-RICHARDS 1988; ROLLER 1998, 128; 225-226; 243.



type of *nymphaeum* façade (Fig. 4.5), even resembling the *pulpitum* of Herod's theater at Caesarea, which had a similar alternating pattern of niches, some of which were fitted with fountains.<sup>20</sup> In general inspiration, with engaged semicolumns of *opus reticulatum* embellishing the piers between the niches, it has cognates in Roman villas of the early Imperial era.<sup>21</sup> At Jericho, however, the curved niches were significantly deeper than the rectilinear ones, leading Kelso and Baramki to postulate that they enclosed statues. Netzer, always insistent about Herod's fundamental aniconicity, imagined potted plants in the niches instead.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, it seems absurd that Herod's palaces, where he held court for his largely Jewish constituency, would have flouted the Second Commandment prohibiting graven images of gods or the proscription of Jewish law against statues of human figures. Netzer, who was uniquely positioned to evaluate the totality of the evidence, remains my touchstone on this issue.<sup>23</sup> However, there is another detail to consider. In the small sector where the niches survive to their full height, Kelso and Baramki observed distinct markings in the centers of the curved niches about two thirds of the way up from floor to crown (Fig. 4.6). These seem to have been apertures in the masonry that were subsequently blocked up. No evidence of water lines was found at the time, but the conclusion seems inescapable that these niches originally contained fountain spouts.<sup>24</sup> In fact, the surviving outer niches of the *pulpitum* of Herod's theater at Caesarea were fitted with water pipes in a similar way, but the catch basin consisted of the floors of the

<sup>20</sup> FROVA *et al.* 1965, 88-92; Fig. 72.

<sup>21</sup> E.g., the Villa Claudia at Anguillara, recently dated to the Augustan period; see THOMAS 2012. I am grateful to Annalisa Marzano for referring me to this article; see the discussion following this chapter.

<sup>22</sup> NETZER 2006, 66.

<sup>23</sup> NETZER 2006, 66. ROZENBERG 2008 registers no figural material at all. For a discussion of how Herod reconciled his apparent sympathy for certain pagan cults with his Judaism, see JACOBSON 2001 and bibliography.

<sup>24</sup> I am grateful to Kathryn Gleason for bringing this detail to my attention.



niches themselves, which were connected by a narrow frontal channel.<sup>25</sup> At the Sunken Garden, the water probably fell into receptacles in the niches, from which it was discharged into basins standing before the niches at ground level;<sup>26</sup> from these in turn, it spouted into a long, narrow pool paralleling the façade. The pool is largely intact, but no traces of the basins or any other furnishings were recovered.

The longstanding notion that Herod permitted statues on his premises seems to rely on a common misinterpretation of Josephus' description of the king's palace in the Upper City of Jerusalem. More often than not, when this familiar passage is cited, the Loeb translation is transmitted without comment:

"All around were many circular cloisters, leading one into another, the columns in each being different, and their open courts all of greensward; there were groves of various trees intersected by long walks, which were bordered by deep canals, and ponds everywhere studded with bronze figures, through which the water was discharged."<sup>27</sup>

The term "bronze figures" is misleading. More literally, the critical descriptive phrase is translated "deep channels (*euripoi*) and receptacles (*dexamenai*) everywhere full of works of bronze (*chalkourgêmata*), through which the water was discharged". The most natural reading of the text is to understand the *dexamenai* as basins fitted with many bronze spouts (the *chalkourgêmata* — there is nothing 'figural' about this) which in turn discharged into the channels lining the walks (*euripoi*) — in other words, roughly the configuration I envision in the Sunken Garden, except in the latter I reconstruct two tiers of bronze-spouted receptacles instead of one. That no evidence of these receptacles has been recovered is only to be expected,

<sup>25</sup> FROVA *et al.* 1965, 96; Fig. 114. In a later phase, the entire orchestra could be filled with water for spectacles (91-92; 97).

<sup>26</sup> For a close parallel at the Villa Claudia at Anguillara, see the ensuing discussion.

<sup>27</sup> BJ 5, 180-181, trans. H. ST. J. THACKERAY.



for they would have been systematically removed when the pipes in the niches were taken away and their holes sealed.

The pool continued unbroken for almost the full length of the south side of the Sunken Garden, bending to follow the semicircular contour of the theaterlike *exedra*. As the only water feature yet identified in the garden, it is prone to receive more attention than perhaps it deserves, especially if we consider the likelihood that other waterworks lie undiscovered under the central expanse. But it merits attention nevertheless, if only because it has not been satisfactorily explained. First and foremost, as I have just suggested, the pool was designed as a catch basin for what was, in effect, a *nymphaeum* façade. Later Roman *nymphaea* often featured basins that ran the façade's full length, though they were not typically counter-sunk into the ground.<sup>28</sup> But even if we suppose that this basin's water was still, not roiled by cascading jets, it cannot have been very successful as a reflecting pool (Netzer's hypothesis), because it was not centered along an axial sightline and was too narrow to create a coherent reflection. It bears repeating that the façade was normally in the shade; even a partial reflection of it seen from the east or west stoa would not have created much of an effect.

### *I.1. Comparanda to the Sunken Garden*

At roughly 1.6 m wide and 1.37 m deep on average, the pool was certainly substantial enough to create a physical barrier between the garden and the façade. Thus it recalls a feature that may have impressed Herod on his first visit to Italy in 40: the peripheral *euripus* of the Circus Maximus, recently remodeled by Caesar. Almost three meters wide and deep, this

<sup>28</sup> Well-known later examples include the *nymphaea* at Olympia, Sagalassos, Miletus, and Side, and the Domus Transitoria *nymphaeum* and Septizodium at Rome. See LUSNIA 2004, 525-534.



continuous water channel looped around the track to form an outer boundary insulating the audience from the dangers of the chariot races or wild beast hunts staged within.<sup>29</sup> A basin at the foot of a *cauea* would also have evoked another pastime that was gaining popularity in the West, water theater.<sup>30</sup> At least four examples of theaters fitted with water basins in the orchestra are known from the Bay of Naples, including two that may date to Herod's prime. Over several phases, the orchestra of the theater at Pompeii had no fewer than six water basins of various shapes and sizes, including one that seems too narrow for any kind of purpose other than pure decoration. At the great Neapolitan villa of Pausilypon a long axial pool divided the theater orchestra, which uniquely and remarkably had no permanent stage as a consequence.<sup>31</sup> Modern stagings take place here on a temporary plywood structure spanning the pool (Fig. 4.7). This latter instance is especially intriguing because the villa was built by Vedius Pollio, a friend of Augustus who later fell afoul of the emperor. Herod is known to have entrusted two of his sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, into the keeping of a certain Pollio in Rome, probably in 22 BCE.<sup>32</sup> Scholars have long disagreed about whether this man was Vedius Pollio, owner of the villa, who was remembered more for his cruel and avaricious personality than for his accomplishments, or Asinius Pollio, a great cultural luminary of the Augustan period.<sup>33</sup> If it was the former, then Herod could very plausibly have visited this same villa when disembarking (at nearby Puteoli?) on his second visit to Rome, which he

<sup>29</sup> DION. HAL. *Ant. Rom.* 3, 68, 2; HUMPHREY 1986, 74. The peripheral *euripus* (as opposed to the one commonly running down the central barrier) seems to have been a feature unique to the Circus Maximus at Rome, though it was later copied at Constantinople.

<sup>30</sup> TRAVERSARI 1960; BERLAN-BAJARD 2006, 99-148; 217-73.

<sup>31</sup> Pompeii: SPANO 1912; TRAVERSARI 1960, 68-72; RICHARDSON 1988, 79; BERLAN-BAJARD 2006, 228-231; 446-453. Pausilypon: BERLAN-BAJARD 2006, 229-231; 444-446.

<sup>32</sup> IOSEPH. *AJ* 15, 343.

<sup>33</sup> SYME 1961; FELDMAN 1953; 1985; ROLLER 1998, 23-28.



undertook specifically to visit his sons, in 17 BCE.<sup>34</sup> This sojourn took place shortly before the Jericho palace was on the drawing board. The most interesting theater parallel, however, comes again from Herod's theater at Caesarea, to whose niched *hyposcaenium* I have already referred. Into the orchestra floor was cut a narrow hemicyclical *euripus* paralleling the podium of the lowest seating banks.<sup>35</sup> Lined with extremely fine hydraulic cement, this was certainly an ornamental feature; it also has the closest formal kinship to the Sunken Garden's pool among any extant examples of a Roman theater. The conclusion that they share a common inspiration seems inevitable.

The aesthetic of Herod's palaces was intentionally layered, nuanced, and allusive, in keeping with the ideology of cultured sophistication that dominated them. In one respect, at least, it even seems to have bordered on the international avant-garde. The façade's central 'theater' is *not* in fact a theater; its notional seating tiers were planting beds arrayed with *ollae perforatae* that were discovered in Kelso and Baramki's initial excavation.<sup>36</sup> As such, it occupies an interesting place in garden history, wavering between ancient tradition and precocious prefiguration. On the one hand, as Stephanie Dalley has observed, it recalls in miniature the famous Hanging Garden of Babylon, the appearance of which, in the eyes of Diodorus Siculus, "resembled that of a theater".<sup>37</sup> There can be no doubt that the Babylonian garden was tiered like a *cauea*, though its overall design was more complex and probably lacked the conic

<sup>34</sup> IOSEPH. *AJ* 16, 6.

<sup>35</sup> FROVA *et al.* 1965, 88; 91; Fig. 64; Fig. 72; PATRICH 2011, 30; Fig. 18. This zone was buried under the *ima cauea* of a later phase. The *euripus*, as the excavators call it, had been covered with stone slabs (one was found *in situ*: FROVA *et al.* 1965, 88), but these probably could be removed to display the *euripus* during performances. Various layers of floor decoration in the plaster were designed to terminate cleanly at the edge of this feature.

<sup>36</sup> KELSO & BARAMKI 1949-1951, 17; GLEASON & BAR-NATHAN 2013, 335-337.

<sup>37</sup> DALLEY 2013, 176-177.



concavity of a Greek-style theater.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, the garden-theater prefigures the later Roman fashion of designing garden features in the guise of venues for spectacle, especially circuses and hippodromes.

If, as seems plausible, there is an intentional reference here to Babylon, then we may suppose that the plantings, like those of their prototype, were of a suitably exotic and varied nature.<sup>39</sup> Claiming descent himself from a Jewish family of Babylon, Herod courted the Jewish community of Babylonia ostentatiously to consolidate his own lineage and legitimacy as well as his hold on Jewish favor in the Diaspora.<sup>40</sup> It is quite possible, then, that an ideology underpins his inventive hybrid here, giving symbolic expression to a personal interest in the most famous 'garden city' of antiquity. Herod's allusive garden trope belonged to a thoroughly Roman aristocratic tradition already widely practiced at this time: loosely modeling one's home and villa retreats on famous locales.<sup>41</sup> Cicero's Tusculan villa had its 'Lyceum' and 'Academy', Brutus' garden had famous Spartan places; Augustus's Palatine residence had its 'Syracuse'.<sup>42</sup> The trend continued for centuries thereafter. I hardly need mention the most famous example of all, Hadrian's villa at Tivoli; yet the fact often goes unappreciated that the *stagnum* at Nero's Domus Aurea resembled "a sea circled about by buildings in the guise of cities".<sup>43</sup> These *aedificia* must have been pavilions, each epitomizing in some symbolic or formal way particular

<sup>38</sup> DIOD. SIC. 2, 10. On the difficulties of locating and envisioning the Hanging Gardens, see WISEMAN 1983, 139-141; DALLEY 1994; 2013; READE 2000.

<sup>39</sup> IOSEPH. *Ap.* 1, 141; *AJ* 10, 226.

<sup>40</sup> IOSEPH. *AJ* 14, 8-9; NEUSNER 1969, 34-39.

<sup>41</sup> CIC. *Att.* 1, 11; 15, 9, 1; *Diu.* 1, 8; *De or.* 1, 98; SUET. *Aug.* 62, 1; see VON STACKELBERG 2009b, 65; 80-81. The tradition may extend back as far as early Ptolemaic Alexandria. The royal palace there included a *maiandros*, i.e., a little Maeander River.

<sup>42</sup> The allusions were "nicht geographisch, sondern historisierend, sentimental gemeint": GÖRLER 1990, 169. See also MARZANO, *infra*, 217.

<sup>43</sup> *stagnum maris instar, circumsaeptum aedificiis ad urbium speciem*, SUET. *Ner.* 31.



cities of the Mediterranean. Perhaps Herod's garden, which Netzer regarded as the *pièce de résistance* of the whole palace complex, was the king's 'Babylon', a place to which he claimed a cultural birthright.

Could this very feature, or comparable ones in Herod's repertory now lost, have therefore marked a moment of creative hybridity blending a revival of the Near Eastern hanging garden — a decidedly royal feature — together with the architectural idiom *par excellence* of the Helleno-Roman world, the theater? Could Herod have taken a leading role in laminating these two tropes onto the Roman consciousness? I have no certain answer; as with any novel idea caught up in a moment of creative international ferment, motive force is hard to establish. Herod's seems to be the earliest incontrovertible example of a garden-theater known to the world — and if we think of such a thing as a *hanging* garden in theatrical form, it remains the purest, and perhaps the only, example known from all of antiquity. It has been compared to the so-called Auditorium of Maecenas on the Esquiline Hill, a small, partially sunken hall with a theaterlike *cauea* at its apsidal end.<sup>44</sup> The Auditorium bears a distinct relationship to Herodian architecture, for it resembles the unusual type of *oecus* in Roman villa architecture with a T-shaped plan that Herod so favored in his own palace *triclinia*.<sup>45</sup> Yet its 'theater', which August Mau on no good authority took to be a terraced garden, lacks demonstrably gardenlike characteristics apart from the frescoes of garden scenes surmounting it; given its grotto-like surround, this is more likely to have been a *nymphaeum* in the shape of a water stair.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> LA ROCCA 1986, 27; GLEASON & BAR-NATHAN 2013, 337.

<sup>45</sup> FÖRTSCH 1996, 80.

<sup>46</sup> DE VOS 1996 and bibliography. Outlets for water are still visible in the second tier from the top. Windowless, deeply countersunk into the ground, and confined within a high, delicately frescoed enclosure that probably carried a barrel-vaulted ceiling, this space is unsuited to the cultivation of plants. It seems to have been intended as a stylized summer grotto; see FÖRTSCH 1996, 83.



A closer analogy is found on the Pincian Hill, where Broise and Jolivet investigated traces of an *opus reticulatum* garden-theater near S. Trinità dei Monti in the 1980s and 1990s (Fig. 4.8).<sup>47</sup> The date suggested for the complex is Claudian, but that hypothesis relies mainly on the style of a capital found in the church and on a hunch that the complex was built by Valerius Asiaticus, from whom Messalina seized the property.<sup>48</sup> Thought to have belonged to the Horti Luculliani, this elaborated *cauea* in the terraced hillside was directly on axis with the Mausoleum of Augustus to its west.<sup>49</sup> This telling detail, to my mind, smells sharply of the mad scramble among the landed elite to pledge allegiance to Augustus in the first decade of his rule.<sup>50</sup> Situated in the gardens of the convent of S. Trinità dei Monti, the *cauea* faces away from the Mausoleum, but it was part of a system of terraced architecture, including a niched retaining wall and a grand hemicycle facing the Mausoleum, all of which had a commanding axial presence in the landscape that has led many scholars from Ligorio onward to compare it

<sup>47</sup> BROISE & JOLIVET 1996; 1998, 196-200 with bibliography. The monument had a long life with many remodelings, and in late antiquity — perhaps much earlier — it functioned as a *nymphaeum*. Broise and Jolivet's various reports are distressingly short of details and consistency, making the evidence very hard to evaluate. The extensive waterworks of the garden, investigated farther west, depended on cisterns rather than an aqueduct in the Augustan period. The Aqua Virgo was far too low to reach this hill; but it ran directly underneath the Horti Luculliani, and given Messalla's friendship with Agrippa and Augustus, we may conjecture that he had a special dispensation to haul up water directly from the channel, perhaps using a precursor of Camillo Agrippa's hydraulic device of the 1570s, designed to raise water from the very same aqueduct for the Villa Medici. It may not be entirely serendipitous that Messalla was later appointed Rome's first *curator aquarum*, effectively taking over, in public guise, Agrippa's private water commission after his death in 12 BCE (FRONTIN. *Aq.* 98-99).

<sup>48</sup> DIO CASS. 60, 27, 3; TAC. *Ann.* 11, 1, 32; 11, 1, 37; see VON STACKELBERG 2009a.

<sup>49</sup> COARELLI 1983, 200-206.

<sup>50</sup> While Herod would not have seen the Mausoleum personally until his visit to Rome in 17, he would have known it by reputation and may have had it in mind when he was contemplating the design of Herodeion; see MAGNESS 1998.



to the Praeneste sanctuary.<sup>51</sup> The evidence is very fragmentary, and there was no opportunity for the excavators to investigate the *cauea* of this structure; nevertheless, it seems to be the best exemplar from imperial Rome of a theater in a garden context. But things get even more interesting. We know that by 25 BCE the Horti Luculliani belonged to none other than Messalla Corvinus — an Antonian who then had gone over to Octavian, but also a longstanding friend of Herod's and a key player in his rise to power.<sup>52</sup> The prospect that Messalla commissioned this garden-theater, in its early outlines, seems to me irresistible. Agrippa, a great friend of Augustus, Messala, and Herod alike, built the Pantheon almost due south of the Mausoleum, and it too was directly on axis with it. He and Messalla, it seems, were in friendly rivalry<sup>53</sup> to build monuments declaring their fealty to the emperor by aligning their magnificent architecture, rather like satellite dishes, directly to the broadcasting center of empire. Visiting Rome in 17, not long before his new palace initiative at Jericho, Herod would surely have called on Messalla. There is every reason to believe that he set foot on this very site.

As for the disposition of Herod's villa relative to its gardens, it bears comparison to Agrippa's brand-new abode on the right bank of the Tiber, the so-called Villa Farnesina, which Herod

<sup>51</sup> Direct evidence of the niched hemicycle remains elusive, but the striking resemblance between Ligorio's rendering of it and the hemicycle of the Villa Claudia at Anguillara, possibly even belonging to a successor of Messalla as *curator aquarum*, might suggest that both are Augustan; see THOMAS 2012, esp. 71-72 and 75-76. Numerous details of the argument fail to convince, but the Augustan connection is sound.

<sup>52</sup> *CIL* VI 29789; ROLLER 1998, 13-15; 30-31.

<sup>53</sup> Their closeness is explicit in DIO CASS. 53, 27, 5, according to which Augustus gave them jointly a house formerly owned by Antony on the Palatine. The same passage may also reveal a rivalry, for Augustus compensated them differently after the house burned down. Messalla received money, but Agrippa got an invitation to live as Augustus' guest, a gesture he accepted with great pride. It seems that Agrippa, at least, was living at the house when it burned. The fire evidently happened before 20 BCE (the date of the next event in Dio's chronicle), and certainly before the Villa Farnesina was ready for occupation. Messalla, of course, could live at the Horti Luculliani.



would also have seen in 17 (Fig. 4.9). The Horti Agrippae, planned at about the same time, have been variously situated within the western Campus Martius. I favor Coarelli's original proposal that they occupied a vast zone directly across the river on the left bank, easily accessible from the villa by means of Agrippa's own private bridge, the Pons Agrippae. This zone extended northwest, following the riverbank from that bridge to the great riverbend at the extreme northwest of the Campus Martius.<sup>54</sup> To water his gardens and nearby *nemus*, as well as the enormous Stagnum and baths to their northeast, Agrippa had introduced the Aqua Virgo to the Campus Martius only two years before Herod's sojourn.<sup>55</sup> So it is entirely plausible that Agrippa's villa overlooked a pendent garden, with water features, directly across the river from it. If this reconstruction is correct, the parallels to the Third Palace at Jericho are both obvious and provocative.

Potentially, then, Herod lavished upon his two best friends in Rome the sincerest form of flattery when he returned to Jericho with vivid memories of their *horti* in his head. His singular innovation, perhaps, was to take Messalla's *cauea-nymphaeum* idea and plant it with shrubs. Such hanging

<sup>54</sup> COARELLI 1977, 815-837; GRIMAL <sup>3</sup>1984, 182 and n. 1; TAYLOR 1995, 82-87; 2000, 146-149. See GRIMAL 1942-1943 on the original identification of this zone with Agrippa's bequest of his private property to the public. COARELLI (1997a, 548-554) has modified his original hypothesis and now situates the Horti Agrippae north of the Euripus; but this detaches the gardens from the *privatum iter* of Agrippa, recorded on a *cippus* near the Pons Agrippae (CIL VI 29781). No *cippus*, he now contends, would have been needed if the private street had been within Agrippa's gardens; but if it lay along the eastern extreme of the gardens, as one would naturally conclude from his original hypothesis, then there is no difficulty. And if Agrippa had a private road either in the Campus Martius or the Transtiberim leading directly to a private bridge, then *in either case* the road and bridge must have given access to substantial private property directly across the river. Under those circumstances, it is hard to understand why either road or bridge needed to be private unless there was contiguity between Agrippa's two riparian properties. Indeed, a private street traversing public space seems implausible under most circumstances. On the ideological significance of these and other *horti* at Rome, see VON STACKELBERG 2009b, 74-86.

<sup>55</sup> GRIMAL <sup>3</sup>1984, 181-184.



gardens never caught on in the Roman world,<sup>56</sup> but connotations of the theater persisted in garden and landscape design. Herod's Sunken Garden remains the best example — and quite possibly, a very early model — of an architectural elaboration of cultivated space as a venue for stately drama. The great rectangle of the Sunken Garden with its central, theater-like *exedra* is generally treated as a self-enclosed unit, but it communicated conspicuously with an upper terrace that has never been investigated. The connection was by way of an axial staircase dividing the *exedra*.<sup>57</sup> The only truly conspicuous means of ingress and egress visible today, it generated a dynamism shared by other multi-terraced structures in antiquity. But it also allowed for a dignified and theatrical entrance by the king; approaching from his first palace to the south, he could descend in pomp with his courtiers to meet or address the guests gathered below, looking not so different from the neo-Assyrian king preparing to descend the axial ramp of a hillside garden at Nineveh, as represented on a famous relief in the British Museum.<sup>58</sup> A small bridge probably crossed the *euripus* at the foot of the stairway.

The sheer scale and formality of this space contrast with the other enclosed gardens among Herod's palaces at Jericho; and among his other known palaces, they compare only to the Pool Complex at Greater Herodeion, which I will discuss below.<sup>59</sup> To accompany its difference in form and layout, we may conjecture variance of function as well. Though secure, this garden

<sup>56</sup> The Garden Stadium at Hadrian's villa shows no clear evidence of plantings in the *cauea*. The only other example with demonstrably tiered plantings is a late phase of the Herodian *praetorium* at Caesarea, dating probably to the Arab conquest in 649 (PATRICH 2011, 149-154). There was nothing 'theatrical' intended by this, but the nearby presence of Herod's tightly tiered gardens, or later filiations of his style in the region, probably suggested this technique to the occupiers.

<sup>57</sup> KELSO & BARAMKI 1949-1951, 17.

<sup>58</sup> British Museum 124939b.

<sup>59</sup> For a complete reassessment and update of the gardens at Jericho see GLEASON & BAR-NATHAN 2013.



was an occasional space, its aesthetic qualities quite distinct from the more intimate enclosures such as the peristyle gardens of the Third Palace or the *triclinium*-pool enclosure of the Second Palace known as the Eastern Court. In its Herodian phase this latter was an ample garden with plantings around its square pool and a tree-shaded, U-shaped open-air *triclinium*; there was plenty of waterplay nearby, including a three-meter cascade just to the north. This was a more intimate kind of venue, suited to conversation, contemplation, or play. Like most of the other garden enclosures so far investigated at the Jericho palaces, this was a space given to small nodes of inwardly directed activity of a spontaneous, unstaged kind. By contrast, the Sunken Garden draws attention southward to the façade wall by agency of its striking, articulated geometry. The focal hanging garden was made even more the center of attention by the polychrome mosaics on its walls; this decoration may have extended to the cornice crowning the façade as well. The *nymphaeum* façade was probably painted in the aniconic style known from the rest of the palace, and many fragments of molded stucco have been found in the vicinity too.<sup>60</sup> The rigid symmetry, its echoes of the theater and of terraced sanctuaries, bespoke tightly orchestrated, even staged ceremony and spectacle; and its visibility from the villa proper lent it a far more extroverted quality than the other gardens and groves at the Jericho palaces. This was Herod's principal venue at Jericho for royally sponsored religious festivals and courtly pomp.

## II. Herodeion

My second case study is centered on the Summer Palace at Herodeion (Fig. 4.10). The great Mountain Palace-Fortress crowning a massive artificial tell, the huge residential and recreational complex below, and the recently discovered theater

<sup>60</sup> KELSO & BARAMKI 1949-1951, 17; ROZENBERG 2008, 227-232.



and tomb midway up the slopes underwent numerous phases of construction from about 28 BCE down to Herod's death in 4 BCE.<sup>61</sup> I begin with Josephus' brief description:

"This fortress, which is some sixty stades distant from Jerusalem, is naturally strong and very suitable for such a structure, for reasonably nearby is a hill, raised to a (greater) height by the hand of man and rounded off in the shape of a breast. At intervals it has round towers, and it has a steep ascent formed of two hundred steps of hewn stone. Within it are costly royal apartments made for security and for ornament at the same time. At the base of the hill there are pleasure grounds built in such a way as to be worth seeing, among other things because of the way in which water, which is lacking in that place, is brought in from a distance and at great expense. The surrounding plain was built up as a city second to none, with the hill serving as an acropolis for the other dwellings."<sup>62</sup>

Today Herodeion is a fairly barren place, but in Herod's day it was mantled in green, thanks to the introduction of a branch aqueduct from Solomon's Pools northwest of the site.<sup>63</sup> As Josephus implies, the water supply was intended for Greater Herodeion, not for the citadel, which being well above the level of the aqueduct relied exclusively on cisterns.<sup>64</sup> It is possible that the great cone of the tell was planted in some way, either for adornment or to deter erosion. The surface of its first phase had a paving of sorts consisting of limestone rubble, chips, and gravel,<sup>65</sup> but we should not discount the presence of plants. Gleason's work in the Ionic Peristyle of the Third Palace at Jericho has indicated that the plantings there were deposited in discrete pits cut through a layer of plaster that had been applied to a subsoil of pebbles and cobbles.<sup>66</sup> A Herodian

<sup>61</sup> NETZER *et al.* 2010, 106-107.

<sup>62</sup> *AJ* 15, 324-325, trans. R. MARCUS & A. WIKGREN.

<sup>63</sup> AMIT 1994.

<sup>64</sup> NETZER 1981, 53.

<sup>65</sup> NETZER *et al.* 2010, 86.

<sup>66</sup> GLEASON 1993, 157-158; GLEASON & BAR-NATHAN 2013, 325-333. The Corinthian peristyle to its east, however, simply had a layer of soil over coarse



garden could, in effect, be paved to maximize water retention and drainage in the arid climate.

### *II.1. Herod's tomb and its gardens*

Since the recent excavations on either side of the monumental entrance stairway on the northeast, it has become abundantly clear that the cone was far from a simple, unelaborated form (Fig. 4.11).<sup>67</sup> According to Josephus, Herod died at Jericho and his body was transported to Herodeion, where it was buried in pomp.<sup>68</sup> For decades, Netzer searched in vain for a structure he could identify as Herod's final resting place. Finally, in 2007, his team discovered it about halfway up the cone, just to the left of the grand entrance stairway. The monument was seated on one of a series of terraces, while on the right of the stairway was a small theater with an elaborately decorated imperial box — the site of Netzer's tragic death in 2010. Cisterns are clustered around and under the stairway at two elevations. Three near the bottom of the cone have a total capacity of about 2,500,000 liters; the easternmost one directly underlies Herod's tomb. Two more have prominent entrances just above the theater.<sup>69</sup> Any or all of them could have been used to assist hand-irrigation of gardens on the tell.

Herod chose a tomb design squarely rooted in the Helleno-Roman tradition, with a conventional *tholos*-on-cube and a tent-style roof. Its striking resemblance to the Tomb of Absalom at Jerusalem was noticed immediately upon excavation. It has been reconstructed, along with the sarcophagus that likely held the king's remains, for the lavish new exhibit on Herod at the Israel Museum. Around it, the king chose to

gravel, with no evidence of planting pots; see GLEASON 1987-1988, 33; GLEASON & BAR-NATHAN 2013, 333.

<sup>67</sup> NETZER *et al.* 2010.

<sup>68</sup> *BJ* 1, 667-673; *AJ* 17, 195-199.

<sup>69</sup> NETZER 1981, 85; 141 nn. 29-30; 2006, 188.



reprise the idea of a hanging garden. A layer of dark brown soil on some of the terraces around the tomb and an irrigation pool just to its west led to the conclusion that the whole precinct was designed as a formal terraced garden.<sup>70</sup> The pool, I surmise, was filled with water drawn from the cisterns. Everything but the tomb and some of its terraces seems to have been demolished and buried under the fill of a second phase, a massive augmentation of the mound undertaken shortly before Herod's death. Parts of the augmented tell's new surface were sealed over with large stones (Fig. 4.12).<sup>71</sup> The graphic that accompanies the preliminary report of the excavations presents a stark, treeless landscape, but we should imagine the terraces at least to be planted in some fashion, and perhaps parts of the tell around them.

To my knowledge no botanical finds or planting pots from the site have been reported; consequently little more can be said about the site's character as a garden. Of course, Roman tombs were habitually situated in gardens, and burial in an ancestral tomb at a country residence became increasingly popular among the aristocracy from the late Republic onward. For Jewish kings, however, this practice was evidently rare.<sup>72</sup> In this case, as in so many others, Herod was going his own way, making grand rhetorical gestures in a solidly Romanophile idiom but always with an idiosyncratic vernacular twist: in this case, a marriage of the thoroughly Near Eastern topoi of the

<sup>70</sup> NETZER *et al.* 2010, 90.

<sup>71</sup> NETZER *et al.* 2010, 104-105.

<sup>72</sup> Manasseh and his son Amon, kings of Judah in the seventh century BCE, were buried in the gardens of their residence at Uzza, probably near Jerusalem. To suggest, as WISEMAN (1983, 143) does, that in ancient Israel the practice of situating tombs in gardens "was deplored, perhaps for its association with fertility rites and sacrifices", is at best an exaggeration. Although the Bible portrays Amon as a bad king, Manasseh was praised for renouncing his youthful idolatry and ruling righteously (II Kings 21-22; II Chron. 33). Josephus describes Manasseh as a reformed man who was righteous in his later life and worthy of emulation (*AJ* 10, 37-46). There is nothing in the sources to suggest that the burial of either king in a garden, even one attached to a residence, was in any sense blameworthy.



man-made tell and the hanging garden. The striking silhouette of this lone tower-tomb, nestled in a graded stack of planting beds against a bleached backdrop of the almost featureless mass of mountain, is truly singular. Babylon, it seems, returned to the stage in Herod's parting message to the world.

## II.2. *The Course and its pavilion*

With the discovery of the mausoleum, Netzer put the finishing touches on his longstanding hypothesis that Herod had planned a monumentalized funerary route at Herodeion from an early phase of its development, at least the time when the lower palace was laid out.<sup>73</sup> This he envisioned hypothetically running through a garden arranged around the long, narrow Course, which consists of a shallow terrace between Herod's residential complex uphill and the huge Pool Complex downhill (see Fig. 4.10). Aligned at one end with a monumental vaulted hall controlling an open line of sight down its axis, the Course does seem suited to an occasional function;<sup>74</sup> and it is easy to envision it within a garden context. This basic plan — a niched, grotto-like *diaeta* aligned axially with a *grande allée* — has numerous echoes in Roman architecture, most famously the Canopus at Hadrian's Villa. While the Canopus is unique in its massive deployment of water features, the Monumental Building is not entirely without them; excavations in the 1990s uncovered a transverse rectangular pool, some 3 × 12 m, directly in front of its entrance, strengthening Netzer's original hypothesis that this was a dining or viewing

<sup>73</sup> NETZER 1981, 45; 2006, 196-199; NETZER *et al.* 2010, 107.

<sup>74</sup> NETZER 1981, 36-45; 2006, 196-197. HUMPHREY (1986, 531) observes that another viewing pavilion, this one projecting out from the residential complex about halfway along the south side of the Course, has some of the properties of the *puluinar* of a circus. This may have been yet another fashion-forward architectural quotation by Herod, since the *puluinar* as an exclusive box for the ruler seems to have been Augustus' invention at Rome (HUMPHREY 1986, 78-79).



pavilion.<sup>75</sup> The main point of this pavilion was evidently to provide a commanding prospect down the Course from a position of controlling stasis. Its easterly exposure ensured that the heavy, vaulted room would remain cool and shaded in the summer afternoons while the descending sun would bathe the view in light. Netzer may have been right that Herod envisioned the Course and its dependencies as a venue for his funeral ceremony, but I see no reason to believe that it was designed *principally* for this purpose. Like Hadrian's Canopus, it should be seen as a combined *triclinium-ambulatio*, a place where the king could dine before a magnificent, controlled view or stroll with his courtiers in the linear, reciprocal fashion that anticipated one well-known variety of Roman *ambulatio* — a long, narrow promenade (*ambulacrum*, *peripatos*, *xystus*), often of a prescribed length, where one could walk in laps while engaging in conversation with companions.<sup>76</sup>

Along the northwest part of the Course, beginning at the Monumental Building and extending for 40 meters, are the remains of a 3-meter-wide colonnaded walkway (see Fig. 4.10).<sup>77</sup> Its existing remains extend slightly beyond the rectangular Pool Complex abutting the Course; thus it may have run the full length of the *ambulatio*. Whether a twin colonnade answered it on the south side remains to be seen; nor has any evidence of planting pots or trees emerged. In the Roman repertory, the closest parallel to the Course is probably the *ambulatio* of the Southern Sector at Baiae (Fig. 4.13).<sup>78</sup> This too is a long, narrow, architecturally defined zone toward the bottom of a terraced hillside with a vaulted pavilion at one end. In this case, it substituted as a kind of *palaestra* for the two bath structures

<sup>75</sup> NETZER 2006, 196.

<sup>76</sup> On the Roman *ambulatio*, see GRIMAL <sup>3</sup>1984, 256-259; CIMA 1986, 53-55; COARELLI 1997b. On the culture of walking in ancient Rome, see O'SULLIVAN 2011.

<sup>77</sup> NETZER 2006, 196.

<sup>78</sup> YEGÜL 1996, 142-144. Originally the apsidal room at the end of this *ambulatio* had eight small niches with fountains, leading Maiuri to regard it as a *nymphaeum* (MAIURI 1969, 76).



appended to it on the uphill side.<sup>79</sup> But it was too narrow to be a functional exercise ground, except maybe for foot races; Yegül suggests, attractively, that it was a planted space intended for leisurely walking and thus a sunnier alternative to the covered *ambulatio* farther up the hillside.

Just as Herod's Sunken Garden provides an early instance of a garden-theater defined literally — a centered space implying a stage, and therefore a certain degree of fixity both in action and in the audience's expectations<sup>80</sup> — the Course looks forward to the aleatory dynamism of the garden-stadium. Instinctually, they represent the two sides of spectacle: drama, with its scripted narratives; and sport, with its pleasing open-endedness, its stories born and lived out in real time. Leisurely walking might not literally qualify as sport, but in courtly environments it bespoke unpredictable contention and uncertain outcomes — the stuff of debate, counsel, or even Socratic discourse. In a classical context, at least, the garden-stadium seems a more natural trope than the garden-theater. A preference for elongated forms may have been predicated on something as simple as the Roman aristocratic enthusiasm for taking walks in a continuous loop; but additionally, from a historical perspective, the sporting theme carries a more powerful metonymic current through Greek garden history than the thespian or oratorical. Gardens had long coexisted with venues for games and entertainment. The concept of a gymnasium within a garden goes back at least as far as Plato's Academy, and may have applied to the palace at Alexandria.<sup>81</sup> In 165 BCE, in the great sanctuary-grove of Apollo and Artemis at Daphne on

<sup>79</sup> The Course also communicated with a bath building on its uphill side near the Monumental Building, but it was not of the Roman type; it enclosed a Jewish ritual pool or *mikveh*. Roman-style baths were behind the Monumental Building at the southwest corner of the Pool Complex (NETZER 2006, 192-195; 196).

<sup>80</sup> On the performative aspects of gardens see VON STACKELBERG 2009a; 2009b, 80-86; 132-140.

<sup>81</sup> LA ROCCA 1986, 29; NIELSEN 1994, 131; 2001, 167.



the Orontes, a town of high significance to Herod later,<sup>82</sup> the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes had held extensive games accommodating both Greek- and Roman-style contests.<sup>83</sup> A gymnasium is specifically mentioned as well as gladiatorial contests and beast fights. Probably other Hellenistic palace complexes, such as those at Rhodes, Mytilene, the island complex at Antioch, Pergamon, and Alexandria, blended gardens with performance architecture.<sup>84</sup> Shortly after Herod's death, Augustus himself would surround his great *naumachia* with a huge memorial garden west of the Tiber, the *Nemus Caesarum*. I will return to that monument presently.

Yet the garden-stadium or garden-hippodrome motif had to wait until the Flavian period to enjoy its florescence.<sup>85</sup> Did it have anything at all to do with the Course at Herodeion? Hard to say; but we might inquire, with all necessary caution, whether it was the Jewish War of 66-70 CE, and the reacquaintance of Roman aristocrats with the startling creativity of Herodian architecture, that brought the idea back home. Nowadays scholars are quite comfortable asserting that Herod was not just a borrower of ideas circulating in the Helleno-Roman world, but also a source of them, both in his own time and in later generations.<sup>86</sup> His material accomplishments, and the sheer power and expressivity of his unique, hybrid architectural creations, would not have failed to impress the Roman commanders who occupied his redoubts, cities, and palaces during and after the war.

<sup>82</sup> ROLLER 1998, 82-83; 214-216. Herod's first contact with Romans was at Antioch, and at nearby Daphne Messalla defended him before Antony against the recriminations of Jewish deputies in 42 BCE (IOSEPH. *BJ* 1, 243-244). This marked the beginning of Herod's political ascendancy and its inextricable connections to Rome. Strabo calls the sanctuary an *alsos* (STRAB. 16, 2, 6).

<sup>83</sup> POLYB. 30, 25-26; NIELSEN 1994, 115.

<sup>84</sup> GLEASON 1996, 212; NIELSEN 2001.

<sup>85</sup> GRIMAL <sup>3</sup>1984, 249-255.

<sup>86</sup> MACDONALD 1993, 399-401; GLEASON 1996, 208; ROLLER 1998, 254-262.



### *II.3. The Pool Complex and its comparanda*

A stairway led directly from the Monumental Building down into the Pool Complex, a huge peristyle garden measuring  $130 \times 110$  m built on a massive terrace thrown athwart the old wadi. Within it, on the west side, was the large rectangular pool, measuring  $69 \times 45$  m (see Fig. 4.10).<sup>87</sup> Meant for swimming and perhaps punting, it was built in a style familiar from the Jericho and Caesarea palaces, fully 3 meters deep with stairs at each corner and a continuous bench around its inner periphery. The pool's capacity was about 9 million liters and, in Netzer's view, it doubled as a reservoir for irrigating orchards on the slopes of the now-blocked wadi to its east.<sup>88</sup>

Except for its scale, there is nothing unfamiliar about the pool's schematic arrangement; if we disregard the buildings around its periphery, it resembles Herod's redesign of the old Hasmonean palace at Jericho.<sup>89</sup> After the earthquake of 31 BCE, he combined adjacent twin pools into one by partly removing the partition between them, and the paved area around the pools was converted into a garden. In rows paralleling the pool's long side, and set about 2.4 m apart, hollows were hacked into the plaster pavement to accommodate planting pots; then the whole area, pavement and all, was covered over with a thick layer of garden soil. In place of a former pavilion aligned with the pools to their south, a dovecote was constructed.<sup>90</sup>

The garden plots of the Herodeion Pool Complex have not been excavated, but again there is no reason to suppose that their plantings differed appreciably from those at Jericho. The most striking feature of the architecture is the pool's circular

<sup>87</sup> NETZER 1981, 10-30; 2006, 190.

<sup>88</sup> NETZER 1981, 28; 2006, 191.

<sup>89</sup> NETZER 2004, 70-139; GLEASON & BAR-NATHAN 2013, 318; Figs. 16.9, 16.10.

<sup>90</sup> Dovecotes seem to have been popular fixtures of palaces at this time. Herod's palace in Jerusalem evidently had several (IOSEPH. *BJ* 5, 181).



island, which Netzer reconstructs as a colonnaded *tholos*.<sup>91</sup> Its floor, which seems to have borne a mosaic, may have been set only slightly above water level; the foundations were completely submerged when the pool was full. Without a substantial crepidoma or podium to elevate the structure, its profile must have produced a slightly haunting effect, especially at times of day that created strong reflections. This top-heavy visual conceit provided a piquant affront to the Vitruvian dogma of *symmetria*.

Once again, Herod's precocity brings us up short. An island pavilion within a large pool within a garden *seems* like a familiar topos, given the Romans' love of miniaturizing and epitomizing famous places and geographic features in their villas; yet I know of only one conceivable precedent in the Greco-Roman world — the island palace of Qasr el-Abd in Jordan — and, as far as I can tell, the motif was never common at the height of the villa culture of imperial Rome.<sup>92</sup> Only pharaonic Egypt, where large artificial palace pools and pavilions are widely encountered, seems to preserve evidence of artificial garden pools with islands.<sup>93</sup> But recently a closely comparable example has been investigated at Petra that might shed some light on Herod's pool complex. Excavations alongside the Great Temple have revealed a similar arrangement of garden, pool, and island pavilion, only on a smaller scale.<sup>94</sup> Leigh-Ann Bedal has dated this complex to the reign of the Nabataean king Aretas IV (ruled 9 BCE - 40 CE). The principal garden

<sup>91</sup> NETZER 1981, 13-15; 2006, 190; LICHTENBERGER 1999, 108-109.

<sup>92</sup> On the palace of Tyros (Araq el-Emir, Qasr el-Abd) see WILL & LARCHÉ 1991; NIELSEN 1994, 139-146; ROLLER 1998, 95; NETZER 2000; 2006, 289-290; ROSENBERG 2002. On large constructed pools in a variety of ancient Mediterranean contexts, see BEDAL 2004, 107-119.

<sup>93</sup> I am grateful to Christian Loeben for this information. On Egyptian gardens with pools (most without islands, but often with pavilions nearby), see WILKINSON 1998; NIELSEN 2001, 172; 180; BEDAL 2004, 110-111; 128-133; KAPPEL & LOEBEN 2011, 7-12; and LOEBEN, *supra*, 32.

<sup>94</sup> BEDAL 2004; BEDAL, GLEASON, & SCHRYVER 2007; 2011, Fig. 1; BEDAL *et al.* 2013; EVYASAF 2010, 33-35.



occupied the rectangular terrace north of the pool. It has yielded evidence of tree and shrub pits, root cavities, and planting pots as well as a gravel path dividing the terrace transversely. The path has a heavy stone border that suggested to Gleason a stylobate for the columns of a pergola. West of the central axis, the border broke into a small semicircular *exedra*, evidently a fountain. Another seems to have answered it on the north side, and a tree may have stood between them in the center of the path.<sup>95</sup> Preliminary soil analysis suggests that date palms were present, as well as grasses requiring heavy irrigation.<sup>96</sup> Several architectural features of uncertain function were set on the main axis of the garden, and the profusion of water conduits and tanks would suggest that the garden terrace was a veritable showplace of waterplay.

The upper terrace, designed on the same central axis, had the most interesting architectural feature: a large rectangular pool, 43 × 24 m in size, and, like Herod's pools, deep enough for swimming and diving at 2.5 m. It lies transverse to the main axis and occupies almost the entire surface of the terrace. In its center was a large rectangular pavilion connected to the north side of the pool by a short vaulted bridge.<sup>97</sup> It has been reconstructed as a *Cyzicene oecus* with a vernacular flat roof. Its principal view, and the entrance, were oriented to the garden below. Though smaller than the one at Herodeion, this pool nevertheless held about 3.1 million liters of water — a massive volume for any purely decorative or recreational purpose. Sitting on the higher of the two terraces, with a distribution tank on axis just to its north, it manifestly served as a reservoir for irrigating the garden below it<sup>98</sup> — just as Netzer imagines that

<sup>95</sup> BEDAL, GLEASON, & SCHRYVER 2011, 324-325; 327.

<sup>96</sup> BEDAL, GLEASON, & SCHRYVER 2011, 315.

<sup>97</sup> BEDAL 2004, 50-59; BEDAL, GLEASON, & SCHRYVER 2007, 159-160.

<sup>98</sup> A lead pipe found *in situ* seems to have drained water from the pool into this *castellum*, which in turn served water features around the garden and perhaps also irrigated it. The *castellum* had independent sources of water as well, and its precise function remains obscure. See BEDAL 2004, 61-63.



the Herodeion pool watered the wadi valley. Uphill from the pool terrace, a cave and a possible waterfall feature have only begun to be investigated; but Bedal suspects that this area too, intentionally left in a rustic state, contributed to the meaning and the aesthetic of the whole.<sup>99</sup>

Situated in the city along a busy street, this garden at Petra seems to have had a strongly public character. But like the great temple next door, with which it shared a magnificent triple portico taking the form of a covered *ambulatio*, its columns crowned by the famous elephant-headed capitals,<sup>100</sup> this garden benefited from patronage at the highest level. Of course, the formal similarities between the two gardens have drawn some notice,<sup>101</sup> but the likelihood of a more direct connection has to my knowledge not been explored. Aretas IV, under whose rule this garden was realized, had direct and intimate connections to Herod; he was possibly the king's cousin, and his daughter married Herod's son and successor, Antipas. For his own part, Herod would have known Petra; it was where he took refuge after his retreat from Jerusalem and the battle near Herodeion in 40.<sup>102</sup> His mother Kypros was from a royal Nabataean line and Petra was probably her hometown. It is agreed that at least two other major commissions under Aretas in Petra — the Temple of the Winged Lions and the Large Theater — were inspired by Herodian architecture.<sup>103</sup>

Now we return to the single built precedent in the Hellenistic world for an island pavilion in a grand garden setting: the

<sup>99</sup> BEDAL, GLEASON, & SCHRYVER 2011, 321-322.

<sup>100</sup> JOUKOWSKY 2007, 95-98; 356-363. The triple porticoes flanking the temple precinct belong to the 'grand design' implemented in Phase IV of the temple, dated to around the turn of the first millennium — i.e., contemporaneous with the first phase of the garden. It seems probable that both projects were part of a single monumentalizing program under Aretas IV.

<sup>101</sup> BEDAL 2004, 117.

<sup>102</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* 14, 362; *BJ* 1, 267.

<sup>103</sup> HAMMOND 1965, 62-65; MCKENZIE 1990, 51; 92; SEGAL 1995, 91-92; ROLLER 1998, 255.



palace of Tyros at Qasr el-Abd in Transjordan (Fig. 4.14).<sup>104</sup> This great rectangular structure, built by Hyrcanus the Tobiad around 180 BCE, stood on an island amid an artificial lake. Describing it with greater admiration than precision, Josephus remarks that it was surrounded by a wide and deep *euripos*: some moat indeed! In the cliffs nearby, he continues, Hyrcanus created caves for banqueting and living, complete with artificial waterworks; he also made “enclosures distinguished by their size, which he adorned with gigantic *paradeisoi*”.<sup>105</sup> Since the lake was created by a dam, it probably was used to irrigate the immediately surrounding terrain, like the pools we have just investigated. Can it be mere coincidence that this, the closest parallel to the pool pavilions at Greater Herodeion and Petra in the entire ancient Mediterranean world, fell just on the eastern border of Herod’s realm — and, in fact, was only some 35 Roman miles northeast of Herodeion as the crow flies? I would submit, with all due caution, that this palace, which remains a compelling presence even today, impressed Herod greatly as he sought Hellenistic models by which a ruler could construct his own image in the landscape. It hardly matters that Hyrcanus the Tobiad is strangely obscure in the annals of history; it is enough that his palace constitutes, in Netzer’s words, “the most magnificent remains from the Hellenistic period known throughout the Land of Israel”.<sup>106</sup> If Herod could create a ‘little Babylon’ at Jericho, could Greater Herodeion have harbored his ‘little Tyros’? As often with this king, the direct quotation was avoided in favor of the paraphrase: the reference was meant to be thematic and suggestive, nothing more. Petra’s Garden Pool Complex more resembles a direct theme-park miniaturization of Tyros, with its rectilinear island pavilion opening out onto each short side; even the cave in the

<sup>104</sup> WILL & LARCHÉ 1991; NIELSEN 1994, 139-146; NETZER 2000; 2006, 289-290.

<sup>105</sup> IOSEPH. *AJ* 12, 230-233 (quotation from 233).

<sup>106</sup> NETZER 2006, 289.



escarpment beyond the pool, adjacent to some kind of artificial waterplay, seems to mimic Hyrcanus' palace playground.<sup>107</sup>

All too often Herod, purportedly the quintessential client king,<sup>108</sup> is by extension presumed to be a client builder, a consummate borrower of ideas emanating from Alexandria, Rome, the Bay of Naples, and anywhere else he had been. This is true, as far as it goes; but it is equally true for every patron of architecture, and thus every architect, in the Roman world. To be a master of one's craft was to invent by way of derivation. Herod's architecture was as inventive as any in Rome at the time, possibly even more so because of the multiplicity of its influences. "Ironically," says Duane Roller, "Herod's architectural legacy was stronger outside his kingdom than within it".<sup>109</sup> But this isn't really such an irony. Herod was a thoroughly international ruler; the geographic extent of his building program, which extended far beyond his realm, exceeded that of most Roman emperors, and fell short of only a few.<sup>110</sup> He was a master of connections, gathering and radiating ideas.

I would like to end with one final hypothetical connection, this time taking Herod's influence back to Rome. In 2 BCE, two years after Herod's death, Augustus completed his great *naumachia* in the neighborhood west of the Tiber — at 1800 × 1200 Roman feet, one of the largest excavated bodies of water in antiquity (Fig. 4.15). Its everyday purpose, if we presume that it was customarily full, was ornamental; but its occasional purpose was to function as the venue for semi-staged naval battles.<sup>111</sup> It was not the first of its kind; Caesar had invented the genre of the *naumachia* for his triumphal games

<sup>107</sup> BEDAL, GLEASON, & SCHRYVER 2011, 321-322. Tyros also had a monumental gateway to the estate; it remains to be seen whether the Petra Garden Pool Complex also had one.

<sup>108</sup> For a challenge to this understanding, see GRUEN 2009.

<sup>109</sup> ROLLER 1998, 254.

<sup>110</sup> ROLLER 1998, 259-260.

<sup>111</sup> COLEMAN 1993; TAYLOR 1997; 2000, 169-200; BERLAN-BAJARD 2006; CARIOU 2009.



in 46 BCE.<sup>112</sup> Augustus, however, introduced two innovations. The first was to situate the entire pool within a grove, which in later years became a memorial park known as the *Nemus Caesarum* in honor of his deceased heirs presumptive, Gaius and Lucius Caesar.<sup>113</sup> The second was to furnish this pool with an island. Upon it a memorial (*mnêma*) was erected in a second phase of construction after the successive deaths of Lucius in 2 CE and Gaius two years later. Somewhere near the water, perhaps in the memorial itself, were also statues (*eikones*), presumably of the honorees.<sup>114</sup> Dio's description of an amphibious battle staged here in 80 CE makes clear that there was open ground around or in front of the memorial, since a battle took place for the memorial's capture; in this respect, the island differed from its precedents in the East. Also unlike Herod's island, this one was off center, for we know it was close enough to the bank to be connected to it by a bridge. We can even estimate the distance, because Tiberius' replacement bridge had a deck that consisted of a single beam of larch 120 Roman feet long.<sup>115</sup>

Despite these innovations, the nexus of suggestivity is interesting. Apart from Julius Caesar's *naumachia*, which had serious practical shortcomings leading to its early demise,<sup>116</sup> Augustus' other model in Rome was the *Stagnum Agrippae* (see Fig. 4.15). This was a great pool in the central *Campus Martius* completed around 19 BCE, the year that its water supply, the *Aqua Virgo*, was introduced. Herod would have beheld the *Stagnum*, with its mighty baths and prominent emissary — the *Euripus* — on his second trip to Rome in 17. Annexed to it in some fashion were the *Horti Agrippae*; Tacitus refers to

<sup>112</sup> Proving pestilential, the pool was backfilled in 43; Herod would not have seen it on his visit in 40.

<sup>113</sup> *RG* 23; *Suet. Aug.* 43, 1; *Tac. Ann.* 14, 15; *Dio Cass.* 66, 25, 3; *CIL* VI 31566 = XI 3772A.

<sup>114</sup> *Dio Cass.* 66, 25, 3.

<sup>115</sup> *Plin. HN* 16, 190; 200.

<sup>116</sup> *Suet. Iul.* 44; *Dio Cass.* 45, 17.



an “adjoining grove” and Strabo to a “grove (*alsos*) between the pool and the Euripus”.<sup>117</sup> So the Stagnum was in some sense a garden pond; but, as far as we know, it had no island. Two years later, in 15, Agrippa visited Herod in Judaea just as the king’s building program at home was reaching its culmination; during his visit, he was entertained at Herodeion.<sup>118</sup> The brief sojourn cannot have failed to impress Agrippa, whose own prodigious proclivity for building was rivaled at every turn by Herod’s. Yet the rivalry remained friendly.<sup>119</sup> Over many months in 14, the two men were inseparable, traveling across Anatolia together to Samos; they met again in the spring of 13. In 12, probably right after Agrippa’s death, Herod was back in Rome for the third and final time.

During these years the movement of building materials, techniques, ideas, and even construction teams between Italy and Judaea was frenetic.<sup>120</sup> Augustus probably began work on his *naumachia* and the aqueduct supplying it shortly thereafter. Prompted by Agrippa, who had seen the island at Herodeion, he may even have envisioned the *naumachia* initially as a kind of tribute to his departed adjutant, with an appropriately Herodian twist on the prototype, an island in his artificial garden lake — with or without a pavilion, we cannot know for sure. The island would soon become a proper memorial to his deceased heirs, and that too may carry echoes of the prototype, for Herodeion itself seems to have been a memorial — to Herod himself, of course, but also to the nearby battle early in his career that inspired him to build there in the first place. Josephus refers to the site as a “monument of the victory”

<sup>117</sup> *quantum iuxta nemoris*, TAC. *Ann.* 15, 37, 7; STRAB. 13, 1, 19; COARELLI 1996; 1997a, 548-554.

<sup>118</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* 16, 13-14.

<sup>119</sup> ROLLER 1998, 43-53.

<sup>120</sup> HOHLFELDER 1996; ROLLER 1998, 85-124; 138; NETZER 2006, 302-306.



(*mnêmê tou katorthômatos*).<sup>121</sup> It has even been proposed that the original prototype, Tyros, was itself a mausoleum.<sup>122</sup>

With Herod's gardens, like his architecture, the pungent fermentation of ideas still lingers in the air; the yeasty proliferation of meanings seems inexhaustible. This paper has aimed to advance in a kindred spirit — that is, ripe with suggestion, but lacking in closure. It aims to open a conversation, not to seal an argument; the latter option is probably unavailable anyway, given the fragmentary information at our disposal. But if it offers any hope whatever for getting us closer to actual knowledge, rather than to mere opinion, I would suggest that the way forward, if the political situation in the West Bank permits, is to return to excavation. The zones on which I have lavished the most attention — the Sunken Garden, the Course, and the Pool Complex — have been only selectively excavated, and their planted areas hardly at all. Ehud Netzer demonstrated by his life work that the best way to find Herod is to dig for him. *Alav hashalom*.

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<sup>121</sup> The battle occurred during Herod's desperate flight from Jerusalem in 40. His mother Kypros fell from a cart and nearly died, driving Herod to contemplate suicide (IOSEPH. *AJ* 14, 355-360; NETZER 1981, 102-105; 2006, 179-180). Shortly after the incident Herod reached Rome, where his legitimacy as ruler of Judaea would be reconfirmed — and where he would see Italian architecture, including Caesar's *naumachia*, for the first time.

<sup>122</sup> ROSENBERG 2002.



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## DISCUSSION

*A. Marzano:* You make a compelling argument about Herod's sources of architectural inspiration for his building projects. Particularly in the case of the sunken garden at Jericho it seems to me that the example of the so-called Villa dell'Acqua Claudia near Anguillara Sabazia, with its hemicycle and profusion of water features in garden space, offers a nice parallel from the environs of Rome.<sup>1</sup> It is laid out in a broad arc rather than a straight line, but with a similar alternating pattern of niches and semicolumns in a rough *opus reticulatum*. The niches contained not statues, but large terracotta pots.<sup>2</sup> Also, are you aware of Edmund Thomas' recent article on this villa?<sup>3</sup> He argues that it should be dated to the Augustan period, rather than the late Republic; this would associate the villa's waterworks with the Aqua Alsietina, Augustus' aqueduct leading from the nearby Lacus Alsietinus to Rome. If Thomas is right, this villa and the Jericho garden can be taken as examples of the architectural ideas and fashions that circulated among the Mediterranean elite around the turn of the millennium. Although far apart, the two buildings share a common architectural language and looking at them together can actually help us understand each better.

*R. Taylor:* I am very grateful for this citation, especially since I was unaware of Thomas' recent redating of the hemicycle. Zarmakoupi, I recall, regards the vessels in the niches as flowerpots, but Vighi, the original excavator, took them to be catch

<sup>1</sup> VIGHI 1940; 1941.

<sup>2</sup> VIGHI 1940, 398.

<sup>3</sup> THOMAS 2012.



basins like the ones I postulate for Herod's *nymphaeum*;<sup>4</sup> and I gather that Thomas follows Vighi on this. Overall, the arrangement at Anguillara is more complex than at Jericho, since each niche had a window opening onto a continuous *cryptoporticus* behind. How this arrangement would accommodate the water supply system to the niches, or how the windows would interact with spouts, remains a mystery. But I could imagine various scenarios — none of them, as far as I know, closely paralleled in surviving Roman architecture. If this villa does actually date to about the time of the Aqua Alsietina or its late-Augustan expansion called the Forma Mentis, then it would postdate Herod's garden by 15 to 30 years. That might account for the greater intricacy and sophistication of its architecture, which is daring even by later standards. Incidentally, Vighi's justification for dating this villa to the Republican period rests on the seeming irregularity of the blocks of reticulate, which he regards as a transitional *opus quasi reticulatum*.<sup>5</sup> To the contrary, my colleague Mike O'Neill points out that the irregularity is incidental, stemming from the use of *selce* rather than the ubiquitous tuff. This basaltic lava was sometimes preferred for local masonry, and even much later *selce* reticulate masonry in the Lago Bracciano area is similarly irregular simply because this stone, unlike tuff, is too hard to saw into blocks. Each *selce* block was shaped by fracturing, using a mason's hammer. There is another way that the hemicycle might fit into this picture: it resembles Ligorio's celebrated plan of a very similar façade set into the Pincian hillside, which he assigned to the Horti Luculliani.<sup>6</sup> Broise and Jolivet found no definitive evidence of this feature in their excavations on the Pincian Hill, but the basic disposition of the slope at least admits of its plausibility. Ligorio put the hemicycle downhill from the *tholos* temple. As for the garden theater discovered by

<sup>4</sup> ZARMAKOUPI 2005; VIGHI 1940; 1941.

<sup>5</sup> VIGHI 1941, 146.

<sup>6</sup> VIGHI 1941, 155-156.



Broise and Jolivet, unknown to Ligorio, I can't say whether it lay between the hemicycle and the *tholos*, or downhill from them both.

*B. Bergmann:* The 'villa vocabulary' of Herod's gardens and its resonance with public complexes in Rome, as well as with spectacle architecture throughout the empire, is intriguing. Your comment that for this king "the direct quotation was avoided in favor of the paraphrase" could apply as well to evocations of monumental spaces elsewhere in Roman contexts and specifically in house and villa gardens. Can one say more about Herod's mode of appropriation and how it relates to that of sites like Hadrian's villa at Tivoli?

*R. Taylor:* The point I would emphasize is the radical hybridity and fluidity of Herod's architecture and landscapes. David Jacobson has even suggested that Herod envisioned Masada's northern palace as the prow of a Hellenistic pleasure ship fitted with tiers of colonnaded pavilions!<sup>7</sup> If we concede this is possible, can we not then inquire whether it was inspired at some level by the Tiber Island in Rome, which also acquired a sculpted 'prow' at some uncertain ancient date? When talking about close-up details or even middle-distance views of Herod's palaces, as I mostly did, it is easy to underemphasize the most obvious quotations of all, such as the great mound of Herodeion. Though it was Herod's burial place, it did not in any way refer to tumulus tombs, which generally lack a radial surface staircase and are closed at the top; indeed, its dissociation from tumuli should be clearer than ever, now that we surmise Herod was buried not inside the mound itself but in a monument projecting from its surface.<sup>8</sup> Instead, locals would

<sup>7</sup> JACOBSON 2006.

<sup>8</sup> On Herodeion's purported relationship to Nemrud Dag in Kommagene or to the Mausoleum of Augustus at Rome, see MAGNESS 1998 and bibliography. She suggests alternatively that both the Mausoleum and Herodeion were derived from the tomb of Alexander at Alexandria. But the features that defeat



probably have read it as a place for the living: a tell crowned by a defensive circuit, with a 'suburban' villa adorning the slopes below. But the 'town' at its top, a deeply countersunk miniature villa appointed with Roman baths and a peristyle, was alien to vernacular tradition. The palace and Pool Complex at the tell's base was itself a hybrid, combining Helleno-Roman, Egyptian, and local traditions. So if we speak of a villa vocabulary in Herod's palaces, we must imagine it spoken in a babel of languages stretching from the Tigris to Rome. What distinguishes the overall effect from Hadrian's theme-park villa is that Herod had much more at stake in making his choices. He needed to please the Romans, but he lived among Jews, many of them bitterly opposed to Rome. His symbolism gave voice to more than an exotic travelogue; it was meant to appeal, at some level, to ethnic, religious, and national identities while simultaneously projecting the image of an urbane ruler with connections to the very top. The historical significance of Tyros, either locally or internationally, may remain elusive, but that doesn't mean it didn't exist. The Hanging Garden seems a little easier; its status as a World Wonder ensured its enduring fame. But why an image of Babylon — specifically, the most famous creation of the hated Nebuchadnezzar — would have appealed to Jews is a bit confounding. Here the unspoken language gets complex; while Herod's hanging garden at Jericho and Herodium symbolized the Captivity, they also by sheer metonymy might have conveyed the prestige of the Jews who endured the Captivity and returned to reclaim Judaea. But in the final analysis, Herod may have been playing more to the Romans, and their perceptions of the Jewish people and their history, than to Jews themselves.

*S. Dalley:* Whether or not you think that the Hanging Garden was in Babylon or Nineveh, do you suppose it still

all these analogies are the crater-like sunken villa at the top and the projecting tomb halfway up the slope.



flourished in the time of Herod? Do you think he may have visited it? Exactly which characteristics might he have imitated, and were the imitated features taken through intermediaries who also imitated them? It seems possible to me that Philip of Macedon at Vergina may previously have imitated features of this World Wonder.

*R. Taylor:* I can find no more definitive treatment of the elusive later life of the Hanging Garden than your own.<sup>9</sup> As you are at pains to demonstrate — and yes, I happily accept your daring and completely persuasive relocation of the Gardens to Nineveh — there is plenty of reason to believe that any monument regarded as a World Wonder must have retained some degree of tangible existence into the Hellenistic period. But we can do even better than that. Q. Curtius Rufus declares that the Garden *inuoluta durat* in his own time, the second or third quarter of the first century CE.<sup>10</sup> Such an unequivocal assertion is hard to dismiss. I doubt that Herod would ever have laid eyes on either Babylon or Nineveh, but it is abundantly clear from Josephus that significant populations of Jews still occupied Mesopotamia, and especially Babylonia, during Hasmonean and Herodian times; as you know, we now have evidence that many Jews were already assimilated into Babylonian society in exilic times.<sup>11</sup> Early in his reign Herod sought to press his legitimacy with the Jews of this region, as well as the Parthian king, Phraates IV.<sup>12</sup> If the Garden in Nineveh was still flourishing, Herod doubtless had good reports of it. I can only speculate about the role of intermediaries, but they must have existed. Possibly they numbered among client kings or their families brought up in Hellenistic courts or Roman households; embassies; war captives; or international intellectuals, architects, or engineers. The Parthians, who had more or

<sup>9</sup> DALLEY 2013, 29-41; 152-208.

<sup>10</sup> CURT. 5, 1.

<sup>11</sup> PEARCE 2011.

<sup>12</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* 15, 14-22.



less continuous dealings with the Romans throughout this period, provided the channels of communication and travel that kept Mesopotamia on the cognitive map of the Helleno-Roman world. But in truth, Herod needed little of this; a sketchy evocation of 'Babylon' and its most famous monument was enough for his purposes, which were grounded more in regional politics than in cultural curiosity. Herod's chief advisor, the historian Nikolaos of Damascus, seems to have invented the Babylonian pedigree to please the king.<sup>13</sup>

*K. von Stackelberg:* Herod's garden tomb was found where no one expected it to be, midway along the monumental stair at Herodeion. Could you comment on how this placement illustrates the different aesthetic bases of the ancient world? It appears that the most important aspect of garden placement and design is its relationship to movement: lateral and vertical, ascending and descending.

*R. Taylor:* I confess that before preparing for this conference I rarely paused to reflect on these questions; I felt that too much of what constituted the aesthetics of ancient gardens was beyond recovery. I still hesitate to generalize for the simple reason that absent a framing peristyle, it is too easy to confuse a garden with something more functionally elastic and less easy to define. But from what I can tell, your supposition about movement is right — at least in villas and palaces, where gardens and groves spill out beyond the confines of peristyles. I'm sure that Herod's gardens — or the one at Stabiae, for that matter — would have been pleasing enough to view from a distance, but how different they must have seemed from a formal parterre garden of early modern Europe! The latter can function, in effect, like a framed picture, resolving at a distance into meaningful forms, patterns, and blocks of color. The Herodian garden, it seems, like the Roman garden, had less to

<sup>13</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* 14, 3.



convey from a height or a distance except perhaps the clarity of its paths and architecture. For the most part, Pliny presents his villa gardens at eye level, simulating their enjoyment in real time by emphasizing their sequential variety and capacity for surprise, not their static splendor.<sup>14</sup> And from what I can discern in actual planting schemes, both Roman and Herodian gardens favored immediacy and immersion, not detached rationalism. All of this is predicated on movement and discovery. It may be too soon to process the significance of the design and placement of Herod's tomb and its terraced gardens. Obviously they constituted a secondary landmark visible from a great distance, like the monumental tombs nestled into the slopes of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, but more looming and solitary.<sup>15</sup> Herod's tomb garden must have invited visitors to ascend or descend to it by way of the staircase, which was rebuilt and realigned at the time, and then perhaps to wander laterally among the small, inviting terraces. But this was not only a hanging garden, it was an elevated one: a view from below, revealing mostly trees and mantles of greenery festooning the terrace walls, would only hint at the botanical riches set within each little terrace like jewels in a staggered row of bezels. I know of no comparable aesthetic among Roman gardens.

*É. Prioux:* Deux éléments de comparaison peuvent enrichir la liste des éventuels modèles romains. Strabon utilise la métaphore du décor de théâtre (*skênographikên opsin*) pour évoquer le paysage de la zone sud du Champ de Mars, avec ses collines "s'avancant en demi-cercle jusqu'au fleuve", avec son architecture formant un dense tissu de temples et de monuments et ses gazons.<sup>16</sup> Par ailleurs, le complexe pompéien du Champ de

<sup>14</sup> PLIN. *Ep.* 2, 17; 5, 6.

<sup>15</sup> Remarkably, the theater opposite the tomb was obliterated and paved over at about the time the tomb terraces were built, and the entire tell was heightened; see NETZER *et al.* 2011, 104-105; 107. Perhaps it was thought to detract from the desired aesthetic of the tomb and its garden.

<sup>16</sup> STRAB. 5, 3, 8.



Mars assemble de manière fameuse un jardin et un théâtre et les sources littéraires évoquent les baumes de Judée et palmiers qui furent exposés lors du triomphe de Pompée qui précéda la construction de ce complexe.

*R. Taylor:* I am struck, as was Nicholas Purcell, by Strabo's careful conflation of the language of gardens, the palaestra, the theater, and the heroön — i.e., the mausoleum and *ustrinum* of Augustus.<sup>17</sup> To various degrees these elements, along with porticated architecture, constitute the proper setting for philosophy — specifically, of the Lyceum and the Academy in suburban Athens, perhaps even the garden of Epicurus. For all his capacity for bare-knuckle politics, Herod relished the Hellenistic ideal of intellectual cultivation and scholarship, to judge from the company he kept;<sup>18</sup> and I have little doubt that, when planning his grandest garden settings, he was drawing on the same cultural wellspring as Strabo. As Strabo says, it was Pompey who above all others placed his personal stamp on the Campus Martius. We can at least speculate that those balsams and date palms were transplanted there in some fashion — perhaps not to the Porticus Pompei, which was dominated by plane trees (another import with ideological value), but to the nearby Horti Pompeiani or even the grounds of Pompey's house adjoining his theater complex. Whether these plants could survive the Roman winter is an open question.

*R. Lane Fox:* What part, if any, might Herod's wives, daughters, and dysfunctional family have played in his garden designs and their symbolism? After all, the Hanging Gardens were associated in his day with the wish of a king — Nebuchadnezzar — to please his wife. Later, Herodes Atticus built tombs and landscapes to commemorate Regilla, the wife whom (surely) he had killed; can we draw any parallels to Herod's situation?

<sup>17</sup> PURCELL 1987.

<sup>18</sup> ROLLER 1998, 54-65.



*R. Taylor:* Certainly some of Herod's architectural creations were meant as tributes to family members and friends, for they bear their names: at Jerusalem, the towers of Phasaël his brother and Mariamme I, a favorite wife,<sup>19</sup> as well as the Antonia fortress, named for Mark Antony.<sup>20</sup> Herod, who was unusually uxorious toward Mariamme, reluctantly executed her in 29 on charges of adultery that may have been trumped up by his sister Salome.<sup>21</sup> It is usually presumed that the tower was named before her downfall, but if we believe Josephus, Herod regretted killing her both before and after the fact. So he may have sought to memorialize her and appease their two mutual sons, Alexander and Aristoboulos, whom he spared and later packed off to Rome for the kind of first-rate education that was usually reserved for heirs. As to the personalities behind the gardens and palace landscapes, I have been unable to tease them out. Herod's family situation was blindingly complex and perpetually unstable. But precisely because of his tendency to name monuments commemoratively, and to be intensely devoted to certain people, such as his mother and Mariamme on the one hand, and Agrippa on the other, I think such a scenario deserves further consideration.

<sup>19</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* 5, 166-169; 172-175; *AJ* 16, 144; KOKKINOS 1998, 211-215.

<sup>20</sup> *BJ* 1, 401; TAC. *Hist.* 5, 11.

<sup>21</sup> *AJ* 15, 81-87; 222-230; *BJ* 1, 431-445; KOKKINOS 1998, 178-179.