



Fig. 2: Helicopter photograph of Machaerus (2004) in the first rays of the rising Sun, with the Dead Sea in the background. On the West Bank to the west, Qumran and Jerusalem are visible. (Courtesy of ACOR, The Jane Taylor Collection)

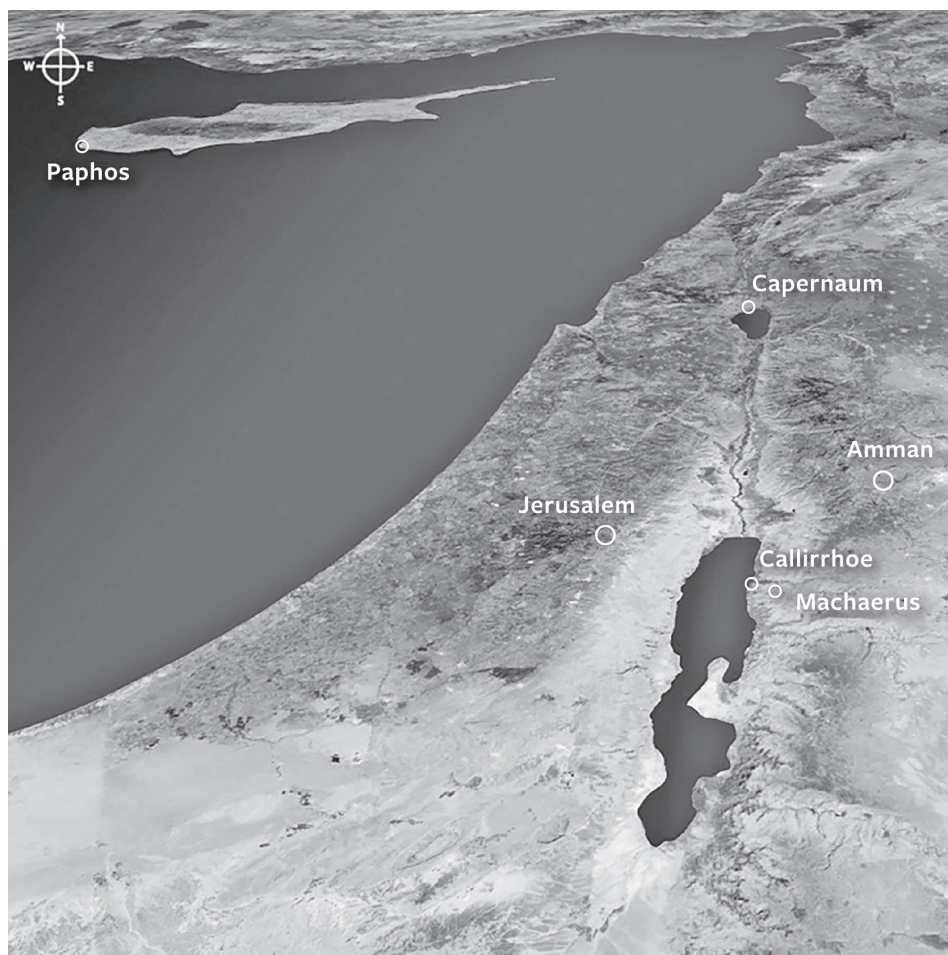


Fig. 3: A satellite image taken by NASA on the Holy Land, view from south. The dominant geographical positions of Machaerus and its royal Dead Sea port, Callirrhoe, opposite Jerusalem, are clearly legible. The imprisoned John the Baptist sent his disciples from Machaerus to Jesus in Galilee, probably to Capernaum (Mt 11:2–6; Lk 7:18–23).



Fig. 4: In the foreground, the Old City of Jerusalem in the afternoon, view from west toward the Dead Sea. The golden cupola of the Dome of the Rock shines like the Sun. In the background, the archaeological site of Mount Machaerus on the far bank of the Dead Sea is encircled on this old aerial photograph.



Fig. 5: On the east bank of the Dead Sea, the green Oasis of Callirrhoe is visible in the foreground; the mountaintop of Machaerus (marked with an arrow) crowns the horizon ca. 1150 m above the Dead Sea (i.e. 699/700 m above Red/Mediterranean Sea levels). View from the Israeli seashore.



Fig. 6: Mount Machaerus, which naturally has a truncated cone shape, looked so artificial in the eyes of members of the American Baptist Mission that they thought the whole mountain was an enormous “tell”, a huge, man-made mound. They printed their Machaerus excavation cards in Kentucky (which then they filled out on the field) with this heading, „Tel el-Mishnaqah.” This photograph, taken in June 1968, right before excavations began, shows the still untouched mountaintop of the archaeological site, with a view toward the Dead Sea.



Fig. 7: This Kodak slide of a field photograph taken in June 1968 depicts the southern part of the citadel with the Dead Sea in the background; view from east. *Area A* excavations are in the foreground (in Sections V₃ and U₃). In the background, on the left, *Area B* (Section S₄); on the right, *Area CV* (sections R₆ and R₇) are observable.

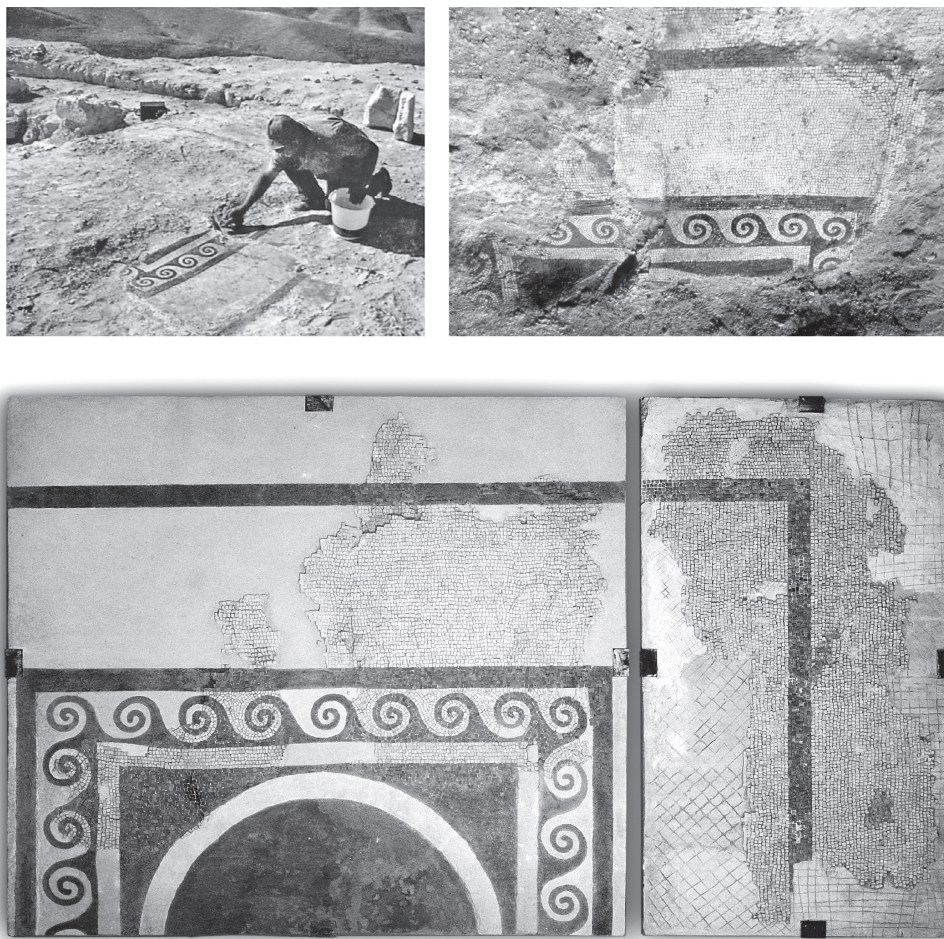


Fig. 8: The 1979 discovery of the Herodian mosaic in the tepidarium hall of the royal bathhouse in Machaerus was a real sensation in scientific and art historical circles. The upper *in situ* photographs and the reconstructed mosaic presentation in the Madaba Archaeological Park are all in black and white tesserae (later, in 2011, we found many red pieces as well). This is the oldest known mosaic art (dating from ca. 30 BC) ever discovered in Jordan.



Fig. 9: Together with the 1979 discovery of the Ionic one, another *in situ* column base came to light during the 1980 excavation season, this time a Doric one (without base decoration). The above photographs of the *in situ* Attic (left) and the “barefoot” *in situ* Doric column bases are presented here with their original place of finding indicated on this 1981 aerial photograph; view from northeast.



Fig. 10: This dramatic field photograph was taken during the Second Franciscan Mission, conducted by Michele Piccirillo OFM, in 1992. As the 9.5-meter-deep Herodian cistern in the Doric royal courtyard was completely excavated, we can see its bottom full of architectural elements, waiting to be salvaged; view from the southwestern corner. During the Nabataean destruction of the Herodian royal castle in AD 36, these dressed stones had fallen into the cistern, which was certainly filled with harvested rainwater in AD 36. This must have been the reason why the architectural elements survived in such perfect shape (together with their *in situ* stucco decorations): the water-head mitigated the gravitational force affecting the heavy stone architectural elements. Before the discovery of this precious treasure-trove of Herodian architecture, only four (!) Machaerus column drums were known, two of which discovered in 1979 and 1980 as *in situ* bases by the First Franciscan Mission (see *Fig. 9*).

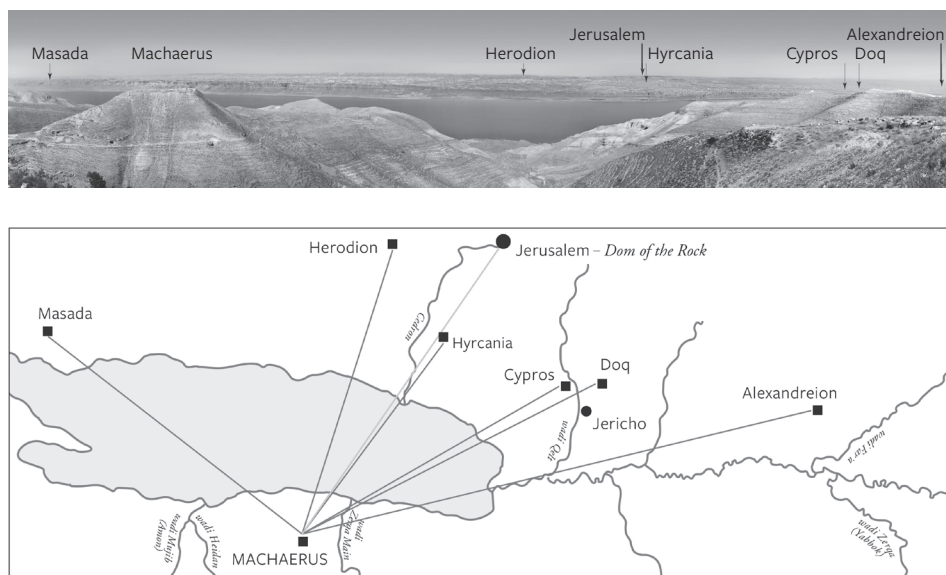


Fig. 11: The above panoramic photograph with its complementary Dead Sea map below demonstrates the direct optical links between Machaerus (on the left, in the foreground) and the important Herodian royal properties on the west bank of the Dead Sea, including the capital of the ancient kingdom, Jerusalem. Machaerus holds a key position in the eastern shield of the Holy City and is a huge sword against the Nabataeans. View and map-orientation toward west. The illustration-pair clearly confirms why Pliny the Elder wrote in AD 77: “next to Jerusalem, Machaerus was the most strongly fortified place in Judea” (Naturalis Historia V. 15, 16). Without Machaerus the Hasmonean-Herodian military network could have collapsed.

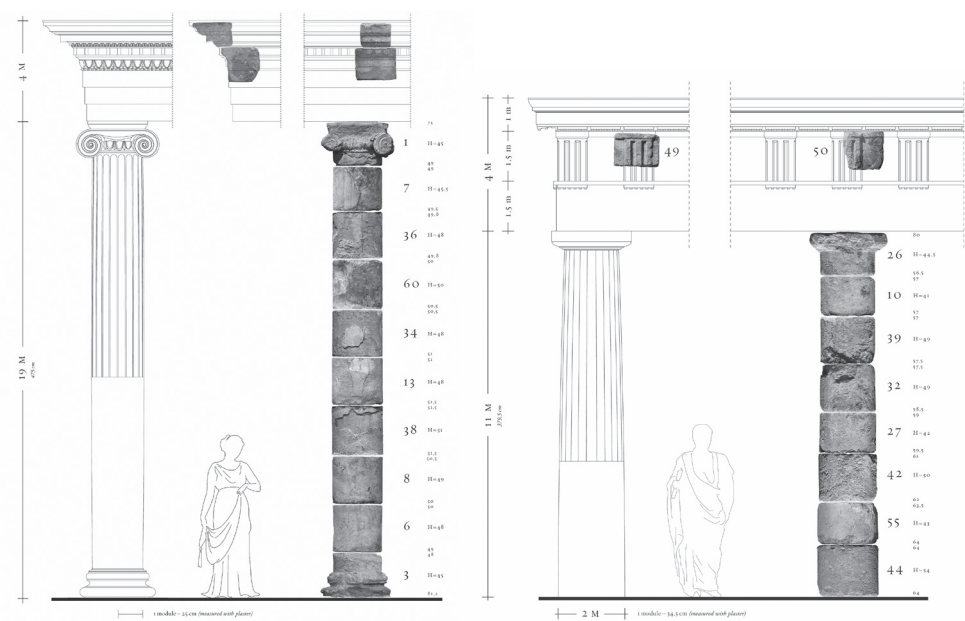


Fig. 12: Theoretical reconstruction of the 475-centimeter-high Ionic column (*left*), and the 380-centimeter-high Doric column, before their re-erection and restoration, with authentic photomontage.



Fig. 13: The author assures members of the restoration team that the capital is perfectly positioned (*left*). As of now, the re-erected Ionic column is the largest excavated and restored archaeological artifact ever among all the Gospel sites. *Right:* Ueli Bellwald and Tamás Dobrosi superimpose the Doric capital while the author (on the right) is directing Khader Apsi on the crane in maneuvering the lifting. Behind the camera, Tamás Dósa Papp; view from east.



Fig. 14: Two re-erected Herodian columns of the Machaerus royal palace, with the Dead Sea in the background, view from northeast. They became international scientific sensations in 2014, as it was the very first time in the Holy Land that complete columns were re-erected from original architectural elements on their original places (the procedure is called anastylosis), from the era of the Royal Herodian Dynasty. They are also the largest, colossus-size archaeological objects ever found and restored at a Gospel site. We re-erected the two Herodian columns of the fortified palace-citadel on the two very spots, where the only two *in situ* column bases (an Ionic and a Doric) were unearthed during the Italian-Franciscan excavations in 1979 and 1980, respectively. As comparative references, please see figs. 9 and 23.